SSHS SEPTEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

SEA STAR HORSE SANCTUARY

53A RILEY RANCH RD. CARMEL,CA 93923

CELEBRATING LIFE

The hot, lazy days of summer brought luxurious warm baths, long naps in sun-drenched, sandy beds, and welcome visits to the sanctuary. Friends and volunteers offered equine massage, music therapy, works of art, and poetry inspired by the herd. The horses continued to be magnetically drawn to all the children. We noticed this summer that even Kiva, who is known to be more interested in watching over his herd than in mingling with guests, was allured and captivated by the little ones.

As summer transitions into fall, temperatures lower. The light begins to diminish a little more each day. These seasonal changes signal to the horses' bodies that it's time to start growing a thicker hair coat and retaining a little more body fat. A horse's connection to the energy of the earth and the elements intuitively prepares them to adapt to change.
Perhaps it is our connection to this very same energy that helps us adapt to change as well.

In May, our beloved Jane passed at the golden age of 35. Twenty-seven of her years were spent at the sanctuary where she was honored, adored and given the freedom to be who she truly was. Days after Jane's passing, a soulful little koi fish named Sumi transitioned too. The enchanting Sumi was lovingly tended to and lived for years in the pond above the sanctuary grounds. A Balinese Buddha statue sanctified his watery home. They crossed over together, the deep, little fish with the larger-than-life mare.

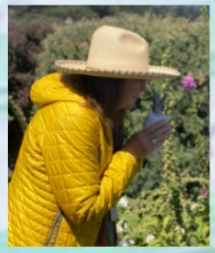
In June, Jane's sanctuary family, equine and human, gathered to celebrate her life. Each detail of Jane's memorial was deeply meaningful and layered with loving intention. There was a palpable feeling of expansive peace in

the air. The quality of the sunlight was luminescent. Jane was most certainly...in some new form... there with us. A vase filled with fresh-cut sanctuary flowers adorned with Jane's photo was displayed on a teak bench surrounded by carefully arranged bags of her ashes, each one marked with a heart. Guitar music set the mood for peaceful grazing as Kiva led his herd to join us on the lawn.The resonance of a crystal singing bowl signaled the opening of the ceremony and our attention was drawn to the royal purple smoke tree chosen especially for our sorrel beauty. In sanctuary tradition, her ashes would be entered into the garden along with a special tree. The smoke tree's deep purple and red foliage will soon change into a spectacular blaze of fall's gold and orange hues. Like Jane, the smoke tree will be strikingly beautiful, perennially aglow with life and deeply rooted in the fields near Point Lobos.

One by one, each person shared a memory or blessing for Jane and then released handfuls of her ashes into the soil that covered the tree's roots. Sharon opened a bag of her ashes for the herd to sniff and understand. Each horse was curious and unique in how they took in the ashes. Kiva and Starberry came forward boldly while Peanut and Bravestar took their time and even tried to taste it. When they were all finished, those ashes were sprinkled around the tree too.

Eloquently and reverently, Sharon recounted the story of Jane's life. "When Jane arrived at the sanctuary, I just let her be." Through patience, respect and love, Sharon was able to truly listen to her and understand her desires and needs. She was free to express her fierce independence or her nurturing maternal nature as she pleased. Sharon discovered who Jane really was and she took great care in honoring this wondrous being for the rest of her life.
After Sharon spoke, she released Jane's ashes to the earth. The ceremony closed with the sounds of the harmonium and a chant for peace for all beings everywhere.

What do all beings inherently need and deserve? To be truly known. To be understood. To be valued and respected. To be loved. To matter. Jane's life is a potent reminder of what is possible when all these needs are fulfilled.



JANE'S MOON

Our beautiful Jane passed away on May 10, 2022. Held in Sharon's arms, she was surrounded by humans and horses who were part of her family. While honoring the release of her vibrant spirit from her almost 35-year-old shell, the loss was felt deeply by all. She had gone to that place where, in the corner of our eyes, we thought we saw her standing in her stall or grazing in her usual places. A place where we talked to her while contemplating how to be with her in a new way.

Five days later, a spectacular celestial event was to unfold. The full May Flower Moon would be a Super Blood Moon with a total lunar eclipse. Weather permitting a clear view, supermoons appear very large because the moon is within its closest approach to the earth. Blood moons occur when light from the sun is blocked during the eclipse. Refracted light

from the earth turns the surface of the moon mysterious orange-red hues. For us, the brilliant full moon going dark for 84 minutes as it entered the deepest part of the earth's shadow had the spiritual significance of Jane's passage. Sanctuary volunteers viewed Jane's Moon from different vantage points: Point Lobos, the cliffs of Big Sur, and peaks above Carmel Valley. One sat in the fields outside Salinas to watch the growing orange crescent climb in front of her, as the sun set behind. Sunsets that week had been rich in flames of orange, red, yellow, and purple, inspiring meditation on the fiercely independent, yet deeply nurturing essence of Jane. She said a prayer for the grieving herd and Sharon, then followed Jane's Moon up Laurales Grade to photograph the full, red orb. She wrote:

Flowers Moon rose with the blossoms of Spring. A celestial night flower.
Super Moon loomed large in the sky, drawing closer to the Earth in orbit. Blood Moon rose red as the Sun set gold.
When the Earth blocked the Sun, the Moon fell into shadow.

The Earth's atmosphere scattered hues of blue, sending waves of orange and red to be reflected.
Jane's Moon was all of these. The color of an other-worldly sorrel mare, whose mystical transition was embodied by the lunar eclipse. Waxing, waning, going dark, returning with an otherworldly radiance. Asking us to embrace change in the circle of life.
She superimposed a professional photo of Jane on Jane's Moon with an iPhone app and sent it to Texasgal Digital Art, who returned a clean, stunning image. Sharon responded: "Thank you for giving Jane the absolute highest honoring of her precious and magnificent being. I could not pass on sharing the intense feeling that I received. All of her herd felt her above them in their pastures last night."

A MASTERPIECE OF LOVE

We wondered what Mary Roos was up to when filling a bag with clumps of the horses' winter coats from the grooming brushes. In secret, she delivered her stash of hair from each horse to a weaver in Santa Cruz: Antoinette Goulet at Little Birds Japanese Weaving. The artisan works on a Japanese saori loom. In comparison with a table loom, it allows freedom in thickness and width. A pre-prepared warp of black thread can be mounted on the loom to get projects underway faster. It is considerably more time consuming for weavers to select the colors and thread the warp themselves, which is the method Antoinette chose for this special tapestry. She had never woven with animal hair before. Horse hair is courser than other materials, but she quickly adjusted to it. Intuitively sensing the sanctuary environment, the colors she chose just came to her. It took five weeks to complete the exceptionally sentimental tapestry for Sharon.
Mary presented the gift with a card homemade from sea glass and a wild turkey feather: "In this sacred weaving, Antoinette captured the ever unfolding richness and essence of a day at Sea Star Horse Sanctuary. From the colorful flowers, the green grass, the blue ocean, and the magnificent sunsets. With the Beloved Beings' hair woven into a masterpiece of love to be cherished. Rest in peace, dear sweet Jane. She is memorialized in this weaving and surrounded by her herd."
Antoinette's tapestries are a beautiful way to honor beloved animal relatives. Her website is under construction. You can reach her by phone: (831) 325-9643.

Five Barn Swallow Haiku

-by volunteer Charlie DeWeese

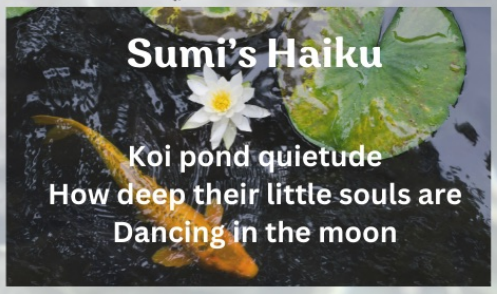
Buff vest, red ascot,
Indigo cap and vestments,
Born in formal dress.

Airborne acrobats,
Aerial artistry, grace...
Catch big juicy bugs.

Silent nestlings wait.
They hear wings flutter...Food! Food!
Briefly satisfied.

Psychic voyagers
North-bound to nest at Sea Star!
Smart little birdies.

Mocking gravity,
Whistling through the wind so wild...
I wish I could too.



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Tiffany Durham grew up in a large family and was introduced to horses as a child by her aunt and uncle. She graduated with a BS in Animal Science from California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo. “I think I took every equine class available. Since then, I have been working with horses in some capacity or another every day since getting my degree.”
Tiffany goes back a long way with the sanctuary. She met Sharon in 2003 when she began working as a veterinary technician at Steinbeck Country Equine Clinic. A year or two later, she teamed up with her husband, Dr. Matt Durham. The two were the sanctuary’s veterinary dream team until November 2021..

An important requirement of the vet technician’s job is to handle the horses to keep them, the vet, and owner safe during exams and procedures. This hands-on work gave Tiffany insights into their personalities, sensitivities, and responses to different situations. She learned how best to approach each one, what worried them, likes and dislikes. “Kiva hated getting shots (as did Peppy when she first arrived), so no one looked forward to vaccinations. Animals don’t normally find veterinary examinations fun, especially if we’re dealing with something painful. My goal was to help them stay in a calm state of mind for the short time we were together. I wanted them to understand that I was there for them and on their side.”

Today, as a part-time volunteer, Tiffany continues to assist with vet visits, consultations, and treating the horses with minor cuts and injuries. She exercises the horses and helps Sharon keep them on their daily schedules. She plays a new role in their lives, but their relationships are already rooted in trust. “I know their itchy spots, where they like to walk, who thinks of themselves as hippos in the mud (Stuey and Peanut). I can tell right away if they’re having a good or bad day and tailor the day’s routine to keep them calm, engaged, challenged, and happy. Sometimes a horse just needs a day off from exercise, so I might groom them, pet them, or leave them alone all together. I get it.”

Learning is a two-way street at the sanctuary and Kiva is a demanding teacher. In her new capacity, Tiffany no longer comes to perform tasks on him (e.g. assist with medical treatments). The work they do is accomplished only in partnership. An intelligent, strong-willed gelding, Kiva challenged Tiffany when he wasn’t on board with her ideas. “Working with horses is a dance, really. Each one of us is changing our behavior based on the cues we’re getting from one another. It happens in seconds, minutes, all the way up to years. When the horse and I understand each other and are in synch, that’s where the magic happens. That’s what makes me the happiest. And I know they’re happy too because they are understood.”

Tiffany’s science background, education and professional experience offer balance to the holistic healing program. Practitioners of other modalities value her sharp eye for detail, analytic thinking, and natural inclination to test assumptions and replicate results. Tiffany appreciates the fact that western medicine does not always have the right answers for every animal all the time. “I firmly believe that veterinary medicine and techniques have their place. I am grateful to have learned all that I have over the years to be able to contribute to the scientific aspects of the sanctuary.”

THANK YOU FOR ALL THE LOVE

We are so grateful to all of our generous donors who helped stock our shelves for Kiva! Your generosity has funded a one-year supply of the BCAA supplement that will be part of Kiva’s care regime for the rest of his life. He continues to regain muscle. He is able to complete his conditioning and strengthening exercises with less effort and more energy. He has even surprised us all by displaying his new vitality in random, energetic bursts of cantering! Thank you for the incredible support!

WHO WE ARE

Founded by Sharon Regan in 2017, Sea Star Horse Sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing exceptional care and lifetime sanctuary to abused, abandoned, and neglected horses. We believe in nurturing the body, mind, and soul of each horse in our loving care. We strive to cultivate “horse wholeness” by providing comprehensive veterinary care, specialized nutrition, natural training, connection-based grooming techniques and holistic care. We respect and honor the essence of the equine spirit.

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