Sound Equine Options

2015 Annual Report

Quest
Sound Equine Options

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501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
Established 2009

Our Vision

A better world for all horses.

Our Mission

Saving equine lives through support, education, rehabilitation, training and adoption.

Board Members

Kim Mosiman
Executive Director, Co-founder, Board of Directors

Elisabeth Wolff
President, Board of Directors

Renee Hoem
VP, Board of Directors

Wendy Geber
Secretary, Board of Directors

Sheila Hornocker
Treasurer, Board of Directors

Marie Naughton
Communications, Board of Directors

Stacie Haynes
Volunteer Services, Board of Directors

Nikki James
Board of Directors
Introduction

In Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington, as in the rest of the country, the number of unwanted horses and horses not receiving basic care exceeds the resources available to assist them.

There are currently no accurate figures on how many of unwanted horses there are, but our research and work with regional animal control officers tell us the numbers are on the rise. People who suddenly find themselves financially or physically unable to care for their horses—usually due to foreclosure, job loss, illness, death or divorce—have very few options for surrendering them, which all too often results in neglect or abandonment.

Although Oregon leads the nation in animal welfare legislation, it lacks the resources to address the increasing numbers of unwanted horses in our area. Unlike cats and dogs, horses don’t have a publicly provided safety net. While no one knows exactly how many unwanted horses there are, we know it greatly exceeds the resources currently available to accommodate them. By caring for abused, neglected and abandoned horses in our area, SEO fills a great need not met by local or state government or other area nonprofits.

Putting an end to the downward spiral of horse-trading, auction dumping and neglect is a top priority for SEO, and it informs everything we do. The best way to make sure a horse does not find itself back in a bad situation is to give it the care and training it needs to be a reliable partner and find a good home. Sound Equine Options’ emphasis on high quality natural horsemanship training sets it apart.

SEO History & Vision

Sound Equine Options was founded in 2009 by Columbia Equine Hospital’s veterinarian, Dr. Scott Hansen, and practice manager and veterinary technician, Kim Mosiman, to address the growing number of neglected and abandoned horses in the community.

Since 2009, Sound Equine Options has grown into a licensed rescue focusing on ending the cycle of abuse, neglect, abandonment and suffering for local horses. Sound Equine Options assists with law enforcement cases and currently has working relationships with law enforcement agencies in Multnomah, Clackamas, Columbia, Marion, and Wasco counties in Oregon, and Clark and Klickitat counties in Washington.

In 2015, SEO changed its structure from a member to a non-member organization to better fulfill its mission and help more horses in need. This move was made to provide the stability and oversight needed to expand SEO’s capacity, grow its donor base, and operate more efficiently.
Horses

In 2015, Sound Equine Options cared for a total of 74 horses. SEO spent an average of $2,300 on each horse, which included veterinary care, rehabilitation and the training necessary to find it a suitable, permanent home.

SEO started the year with 43 horses in our care, which included 14 from law enforcement cases in 2013 that were not released from protective custody in 2014. The others came from various owner surrenders in 2013 and 2014, including groups we called the Parrett Mountain Trio, the Portland 5, and the Christmas 6.

Intakes

During the year, SEO took in an additional 31 horses, more than half of which came under our care within the first three months.

- 16 Law Enforcement Cases (Oregon Humane Society, Wasco and Klickitat Counties)
- 4 Other Rescues (Paws, Strawberry Mountain Mustangs, and Harmony New Beginnings)
- 3 Abandoned (boarding stable and Klickitat County)
- 4 Owner Surrenders (death in family, unhandled)
- 4 Adoption returns (all re-adopted)

Adoptions

In 2015 SEO found home for 30 horses, nearly matching its intake number (97%).

Euthanasia

SEO had to euthanize 8 horses in 2015 for medical reasons ranging from cancer to navicular syndrome.

When making the decision to humanely euthanize a horse, SEO follows American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) euthanasia guidelines to decide if it is in the best interest of the horse. The degree of suffering, as well as the horse's quality of life, are our main considerations when making these difficult decisions, and each one requires a board vote.

SEO ended the year with 44 horses, nearly the same number of horses it had at the start of the year.
Income and Expenses

After several years of fast-paced growth, SEO’s income plateaued in 2015. Total revenue was $201,275, down $12,599, or 6% from 2014.

In 2015, 64% of SEO’s revenue came from direct public support: $78,173 (39%) in individual and business donations and $50,750 (25%) in grants. Fundraising events raised $49,753 (25%) for 24% of revenue, while programs were 11%. Revenue from programs included adoption fees and expenses reimbursed by Oregon Humane Society for assisting with seizures and fostering horses, which covered basic costs for general care such as feed, farrier, and veterinary care.

Revenue by Category
The chart below further breaks down the $49,753 into the percentages contributed by individual fundraising events.

**Revenue by Fundraising Event**

- Poker for Ponies: 45%
- Tack Sales: 32%
- Trail Ride: 13%
- Horse Show: 4%
- Car Show: 3%
- Misc.: 3%

It's important to remember that the above chart shows fundraiser percentages in relation to the portion of income coming from fundraisers alone. Fundraisers totaled $49,753 and were 25% of total revenue. Placed in context of total revenue, the impact of fundraisers on SEO's overall income is clearer:

**Fundraiser Percents of Total Revenue**

- Poker for Ponies: 11%
- Tack Sales: 8%
- Car Show: 1%
- Horse Show: 1%
- Misc.: 1%
- Trail Ride: 3%

- Direct Support: 39%
- Programs: 11%
- Grants: 25%
SEO’s total expenses were $168,170 in 2015. More than 77% ($129,847) went directly to programs. Less than 8% ($12,889) were fundraising expenses and less than 15% ($25,434) were administrative.

Program expenses included veterinary care ($32,623) and feed and supplements ($32,015), SEO’s two largest expenses. These are followed closely by training costs ($28,558) and boarding ($17,581). Together these four represent 85% of SEO’s total expenses.
Administrative expenses were less than 15% ($25,434) of overall expenses and fundraising costs were less than 8% ($12,889). Administrative and fundraising costs included management and general expenses, promotion, office expenses, insurance and professional fees and travel.
SEO Programs

Rehab

Once a horse is taken into our program, it is usually sent to a veterinary facility for triage. This gives us the opportunity to have the horse medically evaluated and monitored. We can also then determine the horse’s personality to better match the each horse to the appropriate foster home.

Most horses need to go into a foster home for a few months to gain weight and recover from mental and physical effects of their previous environment. In the foster home they receive quality nutrition, and are dewormed and vaccinated several times. Often a horse takes 3 to 4 months to recover enough before they can start into a training & exercise program. Our foster home program is the heart of SEO.

Training

Proper training is a life insurance policy for the horses we rescue. Good training makes our horses much more desirable and reliable partners, which leads to more successful adoptions. Some of the horses that come to us have never been handled by a human.

To help ensure stronger matches with potential adopters, SEO has provided training for all adoptable horses since 2011. Training included ground manners, desensitizing, and whenever possible, riding.

Once a horse is healthy enough, it is sent to a Natural Horsemanship style trainer who will usually invest at least 30 days of ground training with the horse to build both its trust and confidence. We believe it is crucial to get these horses to a point where they are well behaved and ready to be ridden. Usually a horse has 60 days under saddle before we feel it is ready for adoption.

Natural Horsemanship focuses on creating a bond of respect and communication between people and horses. It builds a horse’s confidence and is the fairest way to communicate with your horse. The result is a solid partnership and connection between horse and rider.

Adoption

Properly rehabbed and trained rescue horses are as good, if not better, than those available for sale through private sellers.

Sound Equine Options’ horses are offered for adoption to pre-approved adopters that complete our application process and site visit inspection. Adopters must also demonstrate that they have the skills, knowledge and resources needed to properly care for the horse, which must include regular veterinary care, farrier care, and proper feeding. Adopters must agree not to sell or rehome the horse without prior approval of Sound Equine Options. All potential new homes must pass our site visit inspection.
The adoption fees for our horses vary depending on the age and ability of the horse and the amount of training the horse received. Adoption fees also take the kill buyer market into account, as well as the level of resources required to properly care for a horse. The purchase price of any horse is usually the cheapest part of owning a horse.

We are proud that our adoption return rate is very low, and we attribute this largely to the training protocols we have in place. Having happy adopters also helps spread the word about our remarkable rescue horses and increases the number of people coming to adopt our horses.

**Owner Assistance Programs**

When funding allows, Sound Equine Options may also provide temporary assistance to struggling horse owners, such as temporary feed assistance and emergency veterinary care, including gelding and low- or no-cost euthanasia. When supplies allow, SEO also provides donated blankets and other supplies to horse owners who are otherwise able to provide their horses with a basic standard of care that includes proper nutrition, veterinary care, and shelter.