



RIGHT:  
Circle F Horse  
Rescue Society  
rehabilitates  
and re-homes  
horses in need.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOY SMITH

# Circle F Horse Rescue

Freedom from Neglect and Abuse  
Freedom to Have a Good Home

BY MARGARET EVANS

*Little Pride came to Circle F suffering from severe neglect (BELOW). With Circle F's care, she was brought back to full health (LEFT) and now has a new home in Maple Ridge, BC.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOY SMITH

In their journey through life, horses seldom have a say in their destiny. Some are lucky to be in good homes but others face hardship, hunger, or neglect. Then there are those whose trails lead them to a sanctuary in the transition from one home to another. Jack is such a horse. The black appendix gelding once ponied at Hastings Racecourse until his new owner couldn't afford to keep him at the cost of full board. Then there's India, a pretty grey Thoroughbred mare that, unsuitable for racing, ended up at auction where she was rescued and retrained for pleasure riding until lack of finances forced the need for another home. And how about Jessie? Now 21 years old, this appendix pony mare has seen many good times as a child's pony. But now she's moving in her journey through life toward another home. For now her companions are Jack and India alongside their other buddies Elvis, Danny, and Jimmy. In their future is a forever loving home.

What options are there for a person who can no longer afford to keep their horse or no longer has the time to care for it? For many, sending it to auction where it could be bought for slaughter is not an option. Selling by advertising,



ABOVE: Brock, a 35-year-old American Saddlebred gelding who passed away in January 2011, is Circle F's mascot and was part of a special exhibit at the American Saddlebred Museum in 2008.

of course, is a possibility, but in a depressed market, can you be sure of finding a buyer you can trust to really care for your horse?

Enter Circle F.

Formed in 1997 by Sherri Borneman, the Circle F Horse Rescue Society was established to care for horses of all ages that have been abused or neglected, to provide an alternative home to the stress of sending a horse to auction or slaughter, and to provide a home for horses that no longer fit in with an owner's plans so that, when ready, the horse can be placed into a forever loving home. The society is also involved in educating volunteers in the care and management of horses.

The facility is located on several acres in Abbotsford, BC, where horses live outside year round. The facility includes walk-in shelters, mangers, storage sheds and barns, a riding area, and access to trails. A rotation of some 45 volunteers, governed by a Board of Directors, give twice daily care to the horses with feeding, watering, and checking, while additional time is spent in horse selection, placement, facility care, management, and administration.

Circle F has a foundation principle: freedom. Horses should have freedom from neglect and abuse and freedom to have a good home. Thus the name embodies both the message and the philosophy that have made it appealing to the many clients who have given their horses into Circle F's care.

To date, Circle F has re-homed 109 horses based on an average turnaround time of three to seven months with some finding their new adopted home in a matter of weeks. Some stay longer, such as Katy, a 16-year-old Anglo-Arab mare who arrived at the facility in April 2009. She became Circle F's 100<sup>th</sup> adoption when she went to a forever home in Pemberton, BC in April 2010.

"Our greatest success in my opinion was Little Pride, a two-year-old Quarter Horse cross who came to us in 2006 suffering from severe neglect," said Joy Smith, who regularly cares for the horses and volunteers with administrative duties. "We brought her back to (good) physical and mental health. Little Pride and Buddy, a three-year-old Arab-Quarter Horse-Thoroughbred mix, were adopted together and went to their new home in Maple Ridge in September 2006, where they received training."

Circle F's mascot is Brock, a great old Saddlebred gelding who passed away just a week short of his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday this past January. He came to Circle F in 2001 and made friends with all the horses who came after him, making them feel welcome. Brock was an international star and was part of a special exhibit at the American Saddlebred Museum in 2008.

With an annual budget of \$50,000 (50 percent being raised by subletting some of the property), it takes hard work fundraising to meet the balance needed. Adoption fees that range between \$300 and \$1000 help to cover costs. With the elimination of provincial grants, a growing donor base is beginning to help meet some of the operating costs and build a reserve base for those times when issues come up. These include the costs of expensive veterinary care and necessary facility upgrades, such as the need to fix the well.

In October 2010, Circle F held their first poker ride in Campbell Valley Regional Park, Langley, BC. Over 65 horses and riders, 30 walkers, and 20 volunteers attended, resulting in over \$3500 being raised, which helped to offset the \$6000 loss from the cutting of provincial government funding to environmental groups under which Circle F qualified.

An additional service offered by Circle F is that those horse owners looking for a new home for their animals can advertise on the society's website, [www.circlef.ca](http://www.circlef.ca).

This spring, Circle F will be offering conditioning sessions and horsemanship clinics. In the fall their poker ride will be sponsored by High Point Equestrian Estates in Langley. While cash donations and volunteer time are both needed, the organization would also be grateful for any donation in kind, such as halters, lead ropes, grooming supplies, fly masks, tack, saddle pads, rugs, rain sheets, vitamin supplements, hay bales, fencing, gates, lumber, and maintenance supplies. For more information you can reach Circle F at [info@circlef.ca](mailto:info@circlef.ca). 

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