

News Release

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September 25, 2017

GAIT, Inc. rescue horse completes 15 mile CDR Fall Chesapeake Eastern Competitive Trail Ride Assoc.

We are very pleased to announce that Cloverdale Pride & Honor aka "Sophie", a registered Tennessee Walking Horse mare, has successfully completed her first Conditioning Distance Ride (CDR). The ride was held this weekend at the Fair Hill Natural Resources Area in Maryland. The Fall Chesapeake ride was sanctioned by the Eastern Competitive Trail Riding Association and hosted by the Chesapeake Trail Riding Club, Inc. Sophie was trained, conditioned and ridden by Elizabeth Farina of Clarity Riding in Davidsonville, MD.

Sophie is a remarkable mare. As a first-time competitor at the age of 17, just completing a ride at this level is an accomplishment. But when you take into account the circumstances and hurdles she faced leading to this weekend, it's even more exciting. Sophie had lots of strikes against her in the eyes of some of the traditional distance riding enthusiasts. She is an older mare who was not previously fit for distance riding and not experienced in the sport, she is a gaited horse, and mostly, just a few months ago, she was sitting in a kill pen, another unwanted horse that almost fell victim to the booming business of horse slaughter.

Sophie arrived at the rescue in January after a group of private individuals pulled together to sponsor her purchase, quarantine, transport and first 90 days of care. The rescue agreed to take her after speaking with a representative of the group. She arrived on January 17, 2017 directly from a kill buyer in Lebanon, PA and was placed in 30 days of quarantine. She was then allowed to just relax, decompress and be a horse until March. Her initial evaluation under saddle in March showed a very stressed and nervous horse, and while clearly trained to ride under saddle, she was very tense, forward, and untrusting of humans. Her experience had been very traumatic for her. We decided she needed more time to decompress and would then need additional training before being offered for adoption.

Fast forward to August... We received a call from one of our trusted training partners, Elizabeth Farina of Clarity Riding. She was looking for a horse she could work with and condition for the upcoming fall Distance Rides and wanted to know if GAIT, Inc. had any horses that might work. We instantly thought of Sophie and her real journey began. Elizabeth had a lot of work to do. In just over a month, she would need to work with Sophie, build her trust, confidence, and fitness level to make the September event. And that she DID! Sophie proved to be an apt student, instantly taking to Elizabeth's quiet and patient training approaches and enjoying the trails. She showed time and time again that she was a very capable horse on the trails and had the mind and spirit to enjoy her new job training for this event. She confidently led group rides while still being agreeable to following when needed. She did everything asked of her without apprehension and progressed very quickly.

The big day arrived, and Sophie was ready. She was fit, relaxed and confident. She completed the 15-mile ride by leading her group across the finish line. She did well at the veterinary check points, eating and drinking during the ride when offered, her pulse rate came down at acceptable levels during the check points and her pace was within expected times for the event. While the 15-mile CDR was not a judged competition, completion of the full ride is considered a huge accomplishment.

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Sophie, with the help and support of the rescue and her trainer and rider, has shown the equestrian community that a horse does not have to be a young horse bred for the sport to still be successful and happy in the job. This older mare is strong enough to hold her own against much younger competitors. She demonstrated that gaited horses are an excellent choice for these rides with their willing attitude, amazing work ethic, ground covering walk, smooth natural gaits and beautiful canter. And, most importantly, Sophie has proven that just because she was unwanted by a previous owner, that she is just as valuable and capable as any other horse when placed in the right hands and given the opportunity to show her true self and shine as the SUPERSTAR she is.

Sophie is currently available for adoption through Gaited Advocate Intervention Team, Inc. with an approved Adoption Application and Contract process, which includes in-person interviews and riding evaluation between potential adopters and Sophie. Other amazing gaited horses of all ages are also available through GAIT, Inc. Want to help other horses find their Superstar Status through GAIT, Inc.? Please consider a tax-deductible donation, or visit our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Tack4GAITedRescue/> to view some of the great donated items that have been offered for sale to benefit the rescue. Monetary donations can be made via PayPal to GaitInc@verizon.net or by mail to Gait, Inc. 14515 Chrisman Hill Dr, Boyds, MD 20841. GAIT, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) horse rescue based in Maryland with a national presence. To learn more about the rescue, Sophie and our other adoptable horses, please visit www.gaitrrr.org or like and follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/GAITRRR/>



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