



How Wellpride Omega-3 For Horses helped an OTTB heir to Secretariat find his stride.

Todd Pletcher knows a good horse when he sees one.

So when a two year-old chestnut gelding named Chisholm, by WinStar Farm's Congrats (AP Indy/Secretariat) out of the Bold Ruler-bred Icy Warning, entered the racing stable's program after consigning for nearly half a million dollars at the Ocala Breeders' Sale, the seven-time Eclipse Award Champion Trainer and 13-time Leading Trainer at Saratoga was pretty sure he had another star in the making.

But Chisholm, aka "Busy Chizzy," had a different destiny in mind.

"His racing record doesn't nearly reflect the quality of horse he is or what they thought he would be. They truly thought he would be a graded stakes horse," says Sarah Coleman, of Lexington, Kentucky, Chizzy's owner since 2014 and director of community and public relations for the New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program, a nonprofit racehorse rehoming organization focusing on rehabilitating, retraining and rehoming retired Thoroughbred and Standardbred racehorses.

Finding a New Home for “Busy Chizzy”

Chisholm raced twice – at Saratoga and Belmont – and earned \$7,000 before retiring as a three year-old with a small bow to his left front tendon. He was donated to New Vocations, whose program leads the nation in racehorse adoptions (over 500 horses from 30 different racetracks are helped annually at facilities in KY, LA, NY, OH, PA). Several former Pletcher trainees are among its success stories.

“I adopted Chizzy the day after my birthday,” she says. “Both the Kentucky facility director, Melissa King, and Kelli Cross, who oversees some of the rehabbing, had been telling me about him since he came into New Vocations. They said he was silly and kind and lovely – and that I should go see him. Then Anna Ford, the Thoroughbred program director, called me up and literally said, ‘Go get that horse!’

“I am so thankful they insisted I bring that silly beast home.”

No Stranger to OTTB Horses

Sarah was no stranger to off-track Thoroughbreds. Growing up in a small farming town in northeast Ohio, she “pretty much rode anything anyone would let me swing a leg over,” and her first horse was an OTTB. “It was all my family could afford. It took time to win that horse over but from him I learned that, once a Thoroughbred gives you its heart, it’s yours forever. That horse not only taught me how to ride but to ‘feel’ a horse. I fell deeply in love with the breed and have never owned another.”

She was competing as an adult amateur in equitation and three-foot hunter classes but her then-OTTB partner, Bayou Brass, was aging, and her trainer, Nori Scheffel, encouraged her to find a new project.

Rehabilitating “The Little Horse”

“I had never owned a young horse. It took some getting used to.” The skinny, slab-sided colt his adopters had nicknamed Little Horse weighed barely 1,000-pounds and had no shoulder to speak of. “I always felt like my saddle was too far forward and I was sitting behind his ears!”

Indeed Chizzy was silly and kind and lovely, but still no more than a three year-old off the track, and that, she knew, came with its own set of instructions.

“At the track, horses are stalled 23 hours a day and only taken out to work and walk. When a horse comes off the track it is generally harder to get them used to turnout than to a new job as a riding horse. Chizzy was no different. He was what we call a ‘stall baby.’ He LOVED his stall and LOVED to sleep. He can nap like no other horse I have ever known.”

In Kentucky the weather is mild enough that many horses, including those at elite breeding barns, traditionally live outside 24/7. A “free range” environment proved a big adjustment for her stall baby: “I had to watch Chizzy like a hawk when I put him in a stall to eat, because as soon as he was done he would fling himself down and have a nap, knowing I was too much a sucker to wake him up to go back outside.

“Now he loves living outside. He’s dubbed ‘the welcoming committee,’ as he loves to show other horses in the field: Here’s the water, here’s the best grass, here’s the neighbor’s cows. He’s hilarious!”

She also credits his ability to move and graze 24 hours a day as equally instrumental to his health and wellbeing as his nutrition. Which has always included Wellpride omega 3 supplements for horses.

An EPM Diagnosis

“Chizzy has been an interesting horse and a very quick study. When I got him in 2014, we worked on all the basics. He also began to grow quite rapidly as a four- and five-year-old. So much so that he would fall off his leads behind, in both directions.”

As a four-year-old, he was also diagnosed with EPM (Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis), an evasive neurologic disease that affects the central nervous system. “This played into why his lead issues were difficult to diagnose as something more than a neurological deficit.”

Enter Sarah's "amazing" veterinarian, Dr. Martha Rodgers of Shepherd Hill Equine, an expert in equine lameness and acupuncture whom she credits with "helping me through so many weird, horse things including EPM in both my horses."

"After Chizzy recovered from the EPM," Sarah says, "she felt his lead issues were caused by weak stifles, from growing so rapidly, as he had no other physical issues."

Dr. Rodgers' prescription to strengthen Chizzy's hind end included lunging on hills, cavaletti and trot pole work, and backing. But after months of work he was still falling off his leads.

"She suggested injecting his stifles," says Sarah, who had never owned a horse that needed a joint injection. "Even my 22 year-old, who raced until he was nine, jumped three-foot courses for years and never had a joint done!"

Supporting Stifle Treatment with Fish Oil

When Dr. Rodgers injected Chizzy, she also suggested putting him on fish oil, specifically Wellpride™, America's number one fish oil for horses. In contrast to most equine omega supplements, Wellpride contains high levels of EPA and DHA (which have potent anti-inflammatory benefits).

"Dr. Rodgers noted how stifle issues treated with fish oil responded particularly well," Sarah says, "and, since that one injection years ago, Chizzy has never needed another."

"Now he gets two ounces of Wellpride with his feed every day. I think it took about 60 days to see the difference," she says. But once the transformation began, Chizzy was the equine equivalent of the Incredible Hulk. "Not only did he go back to work and feel like a million bucks, he really started to pack on the weight! I think the injections and fish oil made him feel better so he worked better; and the fish oil allowed him to absorb more nutrients from his feed."

"I am not kidding when I say that I get compliments on his weight and size every single time I take him off the farm. People are even more impressed when they learn he is an OTTB and, even though he grows a very thick winter coat because he lives outside, even as a hairy monster his coat is healthy and shiny!"

The Happiest Horse

Sarah is proud to report that, in 2020, Chizzy will celebrate his ninth birthday, standing 16.3 hands high and tipping the scales at just over 1,300 pounds.

The former Little Horse also has a new nickname: The Happiest Horse in the World.

"Because he loves everything," Sarah says. "Kids, dogs, cats, ponies, puppies, foals, people, food, you name it." And that includes Wellpride.

Find the Wellpride pair ("If all goes as planned!") showing at the World Equestrian Center in Ohio, and at Kentucky's New Vocations All-Thoroughbred Charity Horse Show, and Thoroughbred Incentive Program Championships, although Sarah laughs, "I run that one so there's no time to show too!"

Learn more about Wellpride Omega-3 for horses at www.wellpride.com . Press release provided by AHP.