



O.A.T.S. hrh, Inc.
Offering Alternative Therapy with Smiles, Incorporated
Horseback riding for the Handicapped



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Elf” Finds New Home for the Holidays

Special needs horseback riding facility rescues “special needs” horse

Clarkston, Mich.—December 21, 2011—O.A.T.S. (Offering Alternative Therapy with Smiles), a therapeutic horseback riding facility in Clarkston, has been improving the lives of individuals with special needs since 1997. They also provide a new purpose in life for elderly horses and for the first time, a horse with “special needs.”



“Elf was born with those ears,” explains O.A.T.S. Executive Director Nancy Heussner. “His previous owners thought he was an eyesore and decided to put him out for kill (slaughter).” Luckily for Elf, he was saved, “And a wonderful gentleman who believes in O.A.T.S. thought of us first for this great guy.”

Elf’s ear deformity is “Quite unusual,” says Dr. Don Ryker, an equine veterinarian in Ortonville. “It may affect how well he hears since his ears can’t function as sound collectors like normal horses. It’s also possible it affects his ability to communicate with other horses.”

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What it won't affect is Elf's potential for becoming one of the O.A.T.S. horses that provide the many physical and emotional benefits of therapeutic horseback riding. "We are getting him ready to be a part of our program," says Heussner. "He was ridden for the first time on December 20 and did very well.. He tried our trails and was great. I guess he likes nature as much as our riders do."

O.A.T.S. hrh Inc.—Offering Alternative Therapy with Smiles, horseback riding for the handicapped—is a 501(c)3 non-profit, all-volunteer facility founded by Heussner in 1997. A PATH Intl. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) premier center, the O.A.T.S. program is the only one in Michigan to run year-round, providing the valuable emotion and physical benefits of riding to more than 100 special needs children and adults each week. Volunteers and donations are always welcome! For more information, visit www.oatshrh.org or call 248.620.0505.

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