



August 2019 – Lady Bug

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12

With an explosion of new students under the age of eight at True Vine Equestrian Center, our Shetland pony Stacy was ridden by many of these young riders who loved her calm nature and small size. I (Vickie) had a growing thought that True Vine may need another pony. I prayed asking the Lord for His direction.

The first week of September rolled around with a light schedule so I decided to take a few days of vacation and visit my cousin Donna. She was staying at a campground near Jonesville Michigan and I was looking forward to a few days of relaxation. It soon became apparent that my visit was not just about rest for me. Donna had been going through a rough time and needed encouragement and a listening ear.

That evening as we sat around the camp fire as we talked and laughed, I mentioned my thought of adding another pony to our equine bunch at True Vine. Donna looked up, “Jessica, my granddaughter’s riding instructor has a pony for sale. I saw it on her Facebook a couple of weeks ago.” Donna messaged Jessica who had rescued Ladybug to see if she still had the pony for sale. “Yes.” Jessica told Donna, and then added, “Ladybug is blind in one eye but she gets along just fine.” Arrangements were made to go look at her the following day.

Jessica had taken her in earlier during the summer. A family down the road from her had Ladybug and another horse. Jessica noticed as she drove by each day, the larger horse was becoming thin while the pony remained fat. One day she decided to stop. The people who owned them were new to horses. They had purchased both horses at an auction in the spring and were open to Jessica’s offer to help. Ladybug’s halter was on wrong and the horses had not been dewormed or vaccinated. Jessica began giving their daughter riding lessons as well as teaching them proper horse care. The people were told that Ladybug was broke to ride and drive. They really didn’t want Ladybug and offered her to Jessica who was glad to take Ladybug off their hands.

Donna and I arrived at Jessica’s farm the following day during her riding lesson time. One of her students, who had been working with Ladybug led us to a black and white pony that stood calmly tied to the fence. “This is Ladybug,” she announced. Ladybug was as cute as her name and the perfect size for young riders at True Vine. I led her to the round pen to do some ground work with her. “She is a quick learner and has a sweet temperament,” I told Donna as she took pictures and watched. After a short time, Ladybug joined up and began to follow me around the enclosure. Donna mentioned the connection that had quickly formed between us and then added, “You know, Vickie, her disability could

be used as a teachable moment with students too.” I agreed. Ladybug was calm and trusted me even when I was on her blind side.

Jessica finished teaching her lesson and put a saddle and bridle on Ladybug so we could see her ridden. “She needs work,” Jessica said, “and I’m not selling her as a kid-broke pony.” Jessica walked and trotted Ladybug around the arena. “I rode her on the trail and she went pretty much where ever I asked her to go, including crossing a creek. Her blindness doesn’t seem to bother her at all.” Jessica finished.

I told Jessica I would let her know in a couple of days if we would buy her. “I don’t see any red flags with this pony,” I told Donna. “I need to pray and talk to our board of directors before I give Jessica an answer.

After spending the night praying, I woke up with a peace about getting Ladybug. True Vine’s board of directors were all in favor of bringing Ladybug to True Vine, but there wasn’t any extra money to help with Ladybug’s cost. Ladybug had a place at True Vine as long as her purchase price of \$500 came from donations and fundraising efforts. Jessica was very excited that True Vine would be Ladybug’s new home.

Letters were given to students and volunteers asking for donations to bring Ladybug to True Vine. The generosity of volunteers, students and their families allowed us to raise enough funds for her purchase, transportation and first three months of care.

Volunteers are currently working with Ladybug to help her get ready for lessons sometime this year. She still needs quite a bit of training before she becomes as steady as Stacy, but she is a sweet pony and loves hanging around the other ponies at True Vine. It’s still sometimes difficult for Ladybug to listen because she wants to look at everything with her good eye. However, she needs to trust people to take care of her, rather than always trying to figure out what’s going on, just like we need to trust God when we don’t understand everything that is going on.

Currently, Ladybug is only partially sponsored. Her current needs are \$400.00 to help pay for some formal training, and she still needs \$75.00 each month to help with her expenses.

Please consider sponsoring Ladybug as God continues to use this cute little pony to teach students and volunteers about Him. If you are interested in helping fund Ladybug’s needs please call 269-501-0529.