

Max began sessions at HRHF during the Winter 25' season. He is calm and quiet, and always listens carefully. He learned to groom and lead the horses safely, and paid attention to himself and his surroundings. His ability to follow safety instructions and take in new information showed that he was ready to learn something new.

In recent weeks, our sessions have been more focused around the mini horses. One of the days, Max was partnered with Mint the mule. We explained that Mint can be unpredictable at times, and that we would need to take it slow with him. Max was patient and gentle, and showed Mint each brush before he groomed. Mint stood still and was happy to have the love and attention from Max.

When Mint and Max seemed more comfortable, we decided to let them try something more interactive together. Mint is clicker trained, and knows that the sound of a click means he did the right thing and he's getting a treat. Max became his trainer, holding the clicker and the treats, and began to encourage Mint to follow him.

At first, Mint walked between Max and Grace as they were leading at liberty (without a leadrope). The more comfortable they got, Grace was able to back away and let Max be Mint's leader. Max got Mint's attention by himself, and signaled to follow him. The more they practiced, the more Mint respected and listened to Max. Max seemed happy and proud, with his quiet smiles as they were walking together.

Max showed everyone that being calm and quiet is an effective way to form a bond with a horse. The subtle cues that he sent to Mint helped him understand that he could be trusted, and that they were a team. As they learned to trust each other, Max and Mint created a partnership that allowed them to learn and enjoy the time together.

