

### **Skyler + Aurora - A Friendship in Bloom**

Skyler and Aurora are two participants who began sessions this winter. They were both quiet at first, and usually worked with different horses. During the first few sessions, while they were individually mindful grooming, they started to open up and share more. They both had prior horse experience and were excited to share the things they had learned before. Whether we were brushing the horses or drawing on them with chalk, Skyler and Aurora enjoyed the time with the horses.

Once the weather allowed us to have session out in the pasture, Skyler and Aurora started working as partners. Each week when we would assign groups, the girls would look at each other with big smiles when we said they were together. Their friendship began to bloom more and more as we practiced leading and haltering the horses.

As Skyler and Aurora began to trust each other, they would lead Coco together. One of them would hold the leadrope, while the other held the halter on the other side of him. Together they walked him over the bridge, around the circle, and over the poles. They also used the chalk to decorate Emmy, giving her pretty pink and blue highlights in her mane and tail.

At the end of the sessions, they often share that they are proud of and inspired by each other. They help the volunteers put away grooming totes and other tools at the end of sessions. When carrying the heavier things, they each grab a side and move it together. Watching Skyler and Aurora become friends and build a bond has been truly heartwarming. Their kindness towards each other creates a loving atmosphere for the horses, volunteers, and other participants.

