

Garth receives Heart of the Horse Award

WATERVLIET — Earlier this month, Therapeutic Equestrian Center awarded a longtime team member, Garth, with its Heart of the Horse Award.

The Heart of the Horse Award was established by Cathy and Bill Alwine in 2013, as a way to honor their own horse, Boru, who had a heart as big as he was. Boru stood 17.1 hands high and embodied a kind, gentle spirit.

The award isn't about singling out one horse, but rather about celebrating the "heart" of horses across the Michiana area. It's meant to recognize the impact a horse can have on the people it touches during its lifetime, according to a news release.

Boru was an Irish Draught/Cleveland Bay cross imported from Ireland. His original owners gave him to Jancien Pasquill after an injured retired him from his career as a fox hunter. He served as a babysitter for Pasquill's younger horses, took beginners on rides around the pen, and was a therapy horse until early 2013.

At that point, he came out of retirement and was leased to the Alwines to serve as Cathy's dress-



Photo provided

Longtime Therapeutic Equestrian Center team member Garth was honored with the 2021 Heart of the Horse Award.

sage riding partner. Boru died in the fall of 2013 after being struck by lightning.

Garth is another gentle giant. At 29 years old, he has served as a therapeutic horse making "I did it!" moments happen for participants at TEC since 2008.

He's a Haffinger Quarter Horse cross that stands 14 hands high. Being as tall as he is wide makes him ideal for riders with balance issues who need a broad base of

support. His laid back, patient personality is perfect for participants who may be experiencing emotional outbursts.

"He has been a blessing for TEC. In our 14-year history, no other horse has given more or made such an impact on participants and volunteers as Garth has," Autumn Zick, TEC board president and riding instructor, said in the release. "In fact, I can honestly say that in my 40-year career, he's the very best horse I have worked with."

Many at TEC refer to Garth as a "go-to" horse. He's the perfect size for children and adults, and can sense what each needs. He has energy but also a calm temperament.

Garth has been known to give gentle nudges to riders and volunteers as a sign of encouragement, he's taught countless beginners how to halter a horse, and he's been hand-painted by school children. Words often used to describe Garth, include: intuitive, versatile, uncomplicated, rock solid, a teacher and the perfect horse.

For more information about TEC, visit www.tecfarm.org.