

# The News Ark Valley

The news voice for Valley Center and north Sedgwick County

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Steve and Georgann McDonald talk about Fred, the miniature donkey they adopted from Hope in the Valley Equine Rescue April 17. The animal rescue has adopted out 13 animals since January.

## Rescue has no trouble adopting donkeys

By Chris Strunk

Last Updated: April 23, 2020

No one at Hope in the Valley Equine Rescue could've guessed horse and donkey adoptions would spike during the coronavirus pandemic.

So far this year, the local organization has adopted out 13 horses and donkeys. It's usually about half that many.

"People are adopting," said Hope in the Valley board member Kelly Benton. "For the time of year, it is a lot. Typically, adoptions go with the weather."

The latest to be adopted were four miniature donkeys and a miniature horse that were brought to the rescue in January. After nursing them back to health, Hope in the Valley found them homes.

A couple from Kansas City picked up the first one, Fred, on April 17.

"They're cute," said Steve McDonald, who came to the shelter with his wife, Georgann. "I'd never been up close to one until two months ago, and they're just so cute you can't help but want one."

The couple said they saw news stories about the donkeys and decided to adopt. They already have a miniature donkey at their farm. Georgann McDonald said Ollie wanted a friend.

Ollie was rescued two months ago.

"Whenever he hears somebody even come close to the barn, he just starts calling for us, so he's been wanting a donkey friend," Georgann McDonald said. "We were really excited to give Fred a good home and give Ollie a friend as well."

Benton said the two younger donkeys, Bam Bam and Pebbles, were adopted by a family in the area on April 18. Wilma, who was pregnant, was adopted by a family in Rock the next day.

The scenario may not be so rosy going forward.

Benton said this week the rescue took in a horse that was running loose. When the owners were contacted, they didn't want the horse, saying they couldn't afford to care for it.

Benton said the economic downturn could lead to an increase in animal surrenders.

"We still could see some impact from the pandemic," she said.

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