

## A Dream Come True in Utah

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Every now and then we are privileged to experience a "Dream Come True." This is a story about Sam and his dream come true, a wild horse named "Spud." I hope that it touches your heart as it did mine.

During the weekend of October 29, Intermountain Wild Horse and Burro Advisors (IWHBA) and the National Ability Center (NAC) in Park City, Utah hosted a "Communications 101 course – working with the horse's spirit and mind to form a successful partnership" event. It was a two-day event that included a mini-adoption, hands-on gentling clinic and demonstrations. The event was promoted, organized and conducted by BLM volunteers with the exception of the mini-adoption.



On Saturday morning, a young man named Sam showed up to participate in the Communications 101 course. After his parents signed a waiver for him to be in close contact with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) wild horses and burros, Sam scoped out the three pens, each occupied with a young, ungentled, BLM freezebranded wild horse. After checking out each pen, Sam immediately walked up to Spud, a little bay gelding from the Saylor Creek Herd Management Area located outside of Boise, Idaho and

declared that he wanted to work with him. Vickie Green, one of the experienced volunteers from IWHBA, assisted Sam in the pen, and coached him through the initial wild horse gentling process. By the end of the day, Sam was able to touch and pet Spud.

Sam's family had not planned on attending both days of the clinic, however, Sam would not take no for an answer. So, the first thing Sunday morning, with his cowboy hat on, Sam walked in, ready to go back to work. He donned his helmet and got back in the pen with Spud. Before long, Vickie and Sam were able to get a halter on Spud. They began grooming him and picking up his feet. Sam and his Vickie from IWHBA began the process of teaching Spud to lead. Sam would ask and encourage Spud to take a few steps at a time, and then would go back and reward him. Ever so passionately he would say, "OK Spud, back to work." And off they would go for a few more steps.



Sam's Mom adopted Spud, this young ungentled 2 ½ year old BLM freezebranded wild horse. When Sam was ready to go home, so was Spud. Spud was able to be led into a horse trailer for the ride to his new home.



Some of you might say this is just another story about a young man who has the same dream as many, training their own wild horse. This isn't just another story; this story is about a twelve-year old boy from Romania that was adopted when he was 2 ½ years old as well. To add to his challenges, Sam lost his right leg due to a freak accident when he was 4 years old. Doctors were forced to amputate his leg just above his knee.

Despite the obvious discomfort and insecurities a very young man of Romania faced living in America and our society, Sam was able to find a bonding spirit with Spud. With all of the trials and tribulations this young man has overcome, this is one special horse that has touched the life of one special young man. This is the kind of stuff "Dreams are made of."