

Wrenna started taking horseback riding lessons at the NSCD in spring 2021. She was excited, but also apprehensive to continue riding lessons. She had done some lessons previously and has always loved horses, but her confidence level wasn't quite there yet.

When Wrenna, 11 years old, started working with Tupelo, under Kelly Fowler's careful eye, something clicked for her. She caught the 'fever' as they say about girls and horses. Tupelo has a benign tumor in his mouth that prevents him from taking a bit. He was raised to be a dude ranch horse for C Lazy U, but the growth in his mouth prevented him from serving in that role. So now through a special agreement with the NSCD, Tupelo is able to stay at the ranch during the winter and spend his summer at the NSCD Therapeutic Riding Center at Snow Mountain Ranch.

There is just something special about Wrenna and Tupelo (23). It takes a little more assertiveness and confidence to get Tupelo to do what you want him to. Wrenna is small in stature, a lot smaller than she should be for her age, but that doesn't stop her from communicating really well with Tupelo. And he doesn't seem to mind Wrenna telling him what to do - he really seems to enjoy listening to her. Some of that might have to do with Wrenna preferring to ride him bareback, which helps Tupelo sense what she's trying to tell him better.

Wrenna was born with a very rare birth defect (called a bronchogenic cyst) that caused her left lung to overinflate and collapse her right lung when she was three weeks old. It was caused by a benign growth on her airway. To resolve those issues Wrenna had to have open chest surgery, and then was on oxygen until she was one year old. She was delayed in walking, had unexplained pancreatitis when she was six, and was diagnosed with dyslexia when she was in first grade. But despite those challenges, Wrenna is a determined young woman who seems to have no major residual issues now.

Wrenna says that Tupelo shouldn't be judged for his flaws either. She says she loves Tupelo, and feels a really strong connection to him. This past fall, Wrenna got to canter with Tupelo on the trail for the very first time and truly fell in love with riding. She feels very lucky and thankful that the C Lazy U ranch cared enough to donate him to the program. She thinks that if he didn't have the benign growth in his mouth she might not have had the chance to get to know him. In the same way Wrenna never gives up, Tupelo is also a fighter who deserves lots of love and care. Now all the girls get to shower him with love through the NSCD program. Tupelo and Wrenna are a great pair and look forward to showing everyone how to persevere through whatever life throws at us!