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# Horse to undergo unique stem cell therapy in Indiana

It was her love of horses that almost took her life. But years later a teenager's special bond with Gracie the horse may save the animal's life. Gracie is having a first of kind surgery to be performed in Indiana.

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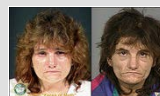
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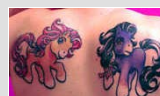
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By Ray Cortopassi

6:04 p.m. EST, December 5, 2011

Daleville, Ind.

Gracie likes to be in front of the crowds, showing her poise and manners as she competes in horse shows. But her real love is Jessie Minneman. The two have bonded since a tragic accident four years ago.

"My dad says we have the same attitude. And that if I'm grumpy, she's grumpy," said Jessie.

Jessie -- who was 11 at the time -- was riding a different horse when the animal was startled, bucking the Milan girl off his back. When Jessie landed the horse rolled over her, kicked her in the head and even stomped on her hand.

"When they loaded her into the helicopter, the medicine they gave

### Ray Cortopassi



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her put her in an **induced coma**," explained Jessie's father, Jim Minneman. "Then they couldn't get her to come out because her brain swelled."

Jessie spent five days in a coma. Her family didn't know if she would even live. A week later she was in rehab.

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"I didn't know if i was going to walk again," said Jessie. "I didn't know if i was going to be able to play sports or ride. I was worried the whole time."

Understandably she was afraid to get back in the saddle, until she met Gracie. From the first look into each other's eyes there was a connection. Gracie gave Jessie the confidence to ride again.

"I personally think this horse, and probably one of the only **horses** that was going to get her back riding," said Jim.

Now it's Jessie's turn to repay the favor. Gracie's career as a show horse is in jeopardy. She has severe **arthritis** in her left hind ankle. It hurts her to gallop around the ring.

Monday veterinarians gave the 11 year old horse stem cell treatment. The procedure has never been done in Indiana.

Doctors at king veterinary service in Daleville removed fat tissue from Gracie. The stem cells are separated and activated, and then injected into her ankle. Within four to six months Gracie should be moving again with little or no pain.

"I don't like to see her suffer and what she goes through," said Jessie. "So hopefully the stem cell surgery will help her and she'll get back to normal."

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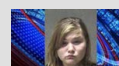
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