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Ph: (256) 632-4165 • Fax: (256) 632-4166
info@continentalsaddlery.com
Toll Free: (888) 730-6464

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What do nearly 400,000 children and 140,000 horses have in common? They don’t have a forever home. I was surprised to find out that there were so many horses that were unwanted, and even more surprised to find out there were so many children in foster care programs around the country. I believe that the members of the Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) can help me make a difference in the lives of many of these horses and children.

My Forever Friendship Pony is a book that was written by Jane Hansen, an elementary school teacher in Palm Beach County, Florida. This book was inspired by her daughter Adriana, who believes that ponies can make all children happy. The story is about a young girl with a stuffed pony named “Little Rock.”

One day the girl was missing someone she couldn’t be with. Little Rock came to life to help her understand her feelings and to not feel so angry and sad. Jane and Adriana’s project is to donate copies of these books and stuffed ponies to young children who are still in foster care. They hope their books will on some level help these children heal their hearts.

My involvement in this project began when my mother met Adriana’s father, Mark, through serving on a charity board. Mark told my mother about the book and Adriana’s love of ponies. Adriana herself had dealt with some loss in her life. At four years old she was in several foster homes until she found her forever home with Mark and Jane. After hearing this story, I knew there was something that we could do to help not only with Adriana, but also with the book written to help other children.
Hannah Bentz (left) helps with the project of donating copies of *My Forever Friendship Pony* books and stuffed ponies to young children who are in foster care.
Six years ago on my 11th birthday, my parents bought me my horse, Crystal. At the time we were volunteering for a program that used horses to work with children with attachment disorders. Most of the children had spent time in foster homes before they were adopted. Many of the children could not control their behavior or express their feelings. They lacked trust and were afraid to bond with their adoptive families. It was amazing to watch these children learn to trust the horses, and use their words to tell the horses how they were feeling. My 
Forever Friendship Pony shows a similar bond between a child and a stuffed pony.

I used to show Crystal in the 2'6" jumper classes until she tore her check ligament 3 years ago. My trainer at the time, told me I should get rid of Crystal, but I couldn’t do that. Crystal was my best friend. Everyone that meets Crystal agrees that she is a special horse. Despite her 16 hand size, she is very gentle and careful, and I really believe that she knows how I am feeling. This past year, Crystal started her new career as a therapy horse. I also enjoy having my young cousins and friends come out to visit with Crystal, and we take her to visit seniors at the retirement community. Last year we invited Adriana and Jane to come meet her. Adriana enjoyed learning how to groom Crystal and then I tacked Crystal up and let Adriana go for a ride. We played “Simon Says” and “Around the World” on horseback. Jane was amazed at how calm and focused Adriana was around Crystal. After seeing the positive effect that Crystal had on Adriana; Jane began taking her for lessons at a farm near her home. Adriana still comes to visit Crystal and they enjoy their time together immensely!

One hundred percent of the proceeds of My Forever Friendship Pony will go back into purchasing more books to be given out to children in foster care. I asked IEA riders to bring new stuffed ponies to post season competitions to donate to this project. I also had the books available for purchase. I hope that IEA teams around the country will continue to collect new stuffed ponies, and help sell books. My Forever Friendship Pony can help any child, whether they are missing someone who is away for a period of time or are missing someone who they have lost. Jane and Adriana worked with the farm where Adriana rides to schedule times for foster children to come and visit with the horses, and they distributed the books and stuffed ponies. This has been very successful and is another great project for IEA teams. I am hoping to coordinate an event that will allow local foster care and adoption programs and families to come and learn about the equestrian programs in the area.

In the future, we hope to be able to provide grants to equestrian programs around the country with the help of the Equus Foundation so that children in foster care will be able to benefit from spending time with horses. This will not only benefit the children, but will also support the many unwanted horses in this country. I have seen firsthand the difference in a person after spending time with horses. Beautiful things can happen when you bring children and horses together.

For more information, or to order books you can email the author, Jane Hansen at myforeverfriendshippony@gmail.com, or you can email Hannah Bentz at Hrbbt2@yahoo.com. Donations can be made to the Equus Foundation at equusfoundation.org and IEA riders can log their volunteer hours collecting stuffed ponies and selling books through the Equus Foundation program, “Carrots for a Cause.”
As I write this letter, the IEA season is at its climax. Hunt Seat Regionals and Zones are finished; Western post-season shows are beginning, and the IEA National Finals preparations are in high gear. I am awestruck when I consider all of the people that make this organization and its events possible.

I’m not sure that it is possible to adequately thank everyone. I wish that I could send bouquets of flowers to all the directors, staff, coaches, parents and students for all they do. I’d also send carrots and peppermints to our priceless equine volunteers. But, I’ll start by using this month’s letter just to express my personal appreciation.

To the Board of Directors and to the staff of the IEA, thank you for your boundless dedication to our mission and to continually working to improve and evolve.

To each Zone Chair and Regional Director, thank you for being a spokesperson and disciple for the IEA, for reaching out to new members, and to actively supporting the teams in your area.

To coaches and team leaders, thank you for taking the brave step to try something new, to learning new rules and competition formats, to sharing your ideas, and to hosting fantastic events for your fellow members.

To the parents of IEA riders, thank you for driving to the barn, spending hours at the shows, bringing snacks for everyone, organizing fundraisers, and cheering on your kids and your coaches when they need it the most.

To the riders, thank you for long hours of grooming, riding, horse-holding, and countless hours of hard work that you passionately dedicate to your equine partners.

To the horses, I am not sure that you know our words, but your soulful eyes tell us that you know our dedication to you, and you give back to us to the utmost of your ability and in every way possible. We will continue to express our thanks to you through our care and life-long commitment to your welfare.

This letter cannot possibly express all of the gratitude that I have for the opportunity to have horses and horse people in my life every day, and to the countless acts that make the IEA possible every year. I’d like to ask everyone to help me “Pay it forward.” Please take a moment to consciously notice your fellow horse lovers that make IEA possible, and make a point of thanking them. (And bring an extra bag of treats to the barn this week too.)

My heartfelt thanks go out to all IEA participants.

Thank you for a great 2013–14 season!
INCE THE INCEPTION OF THE IEA IN 2002, THIS organization, through coaches, trainers and parents, has been shaping the youth of the equestrian industry for horse show competitions with good sportsmanship and lifetime personal success in mind. The results of IEA alums attaining riding and personal accomplishments are now evidenced throughout the country. Because of their training, skill and IEA experience, some riders have received college scholarships to schools such as Oklahoma State University and the University of South Carolina. Riders have competed and been very successful in the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA), National Collegiate Equestrian Association (NCEA) and National Reining Horse Association (NRHA). In addition to becoming leading riders at the “next level,” many alums have found success in the classroom and as teachers, trainers and coaches working in the sport.
This edition of Take the Reins features an update on a group of IEA alums that exemplify the talents and sportsmanship important to ongoing success after the IEA. They are: Trevor Dare, Austin Griffith, Katie Morehead, Cody McMillion and Sarah Shaffer.

**Trevor Dare**

In 1996, as a high school student from Hilliard, Ohio, Dare was the first person to win the High Point Rider title at the IEA Western National Championship Show. He was also a member of the United States Equestrian Team in the AQHA Youth World Cup. He and four other riders comprised the team representing the United States against 16 other teams from countries around the world. He won the reining and was third in the horsemanship for Team USA. Team USA won the AQHA Youth World Cup that year. After high school graduation, Trevor attended the University of Findlay (Ohio) and studied equine business management. While there, he accomplished much competitively, including the IHSA High Point Rider championship and leading his Findlay team to a national title. In January of 2008, Trevor took part in the NRHA Apprentice Program and went to work with NRHA Professional Todd Crawford in Blanchard, Oklahoma. In December, Dare won the NRHA Futurity’s Level 2 Open division championship. He placed in top positions in AQHA and NRHA shows in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and now owns Trevor Dare Reining Horses in Blanchard. Dare feels that the IEA is an outstanding organization that teaches horsemanship skills and good sportsmanship to the youth of the horse industry.

**Austin Griffith**

Austin Griffith is currently a senior at Ohio State University, studying business marketing. In the years following the IEA he has been very successful in the IHSA winning two consecutive High Point Rider titles (2012–2013). Griffith is in competition for high point rider again this year. He has also been the lead OSU rider in both the horsemanship and reining for the past four years, helping his team to a reserve National title in 2012. When asked about his success he said, “I owe a lot not only to my parents who coach the Autumn Rose Farm Equestrian IEA Team and the Ohio State Equestrian Team, but also to the IEA for the five years of experience that I received as a part of the great youth equestrian opportunities.”

**Katie Morehead**

Katie Morehead is now the coach of the KM Equestrian Team, in Findlay, Ohio, where she has an IEA team. Morehead began her involvement in the IEA through long-time IEA coach Linda Dare of Hilliard, Ohio. Morehead rode on the Dare Equestrian Team, where she competed as a senior in the Varsity Open Reining and Horsemanship divisions. She was an IEA Varsity Open Reining National Champion. She is also a three-time All American Quarter Horse Congress reserve champion. After graduating high school and leaving the IEA, Morehead attended the University of Findlay and majored in equine business management. As a college competitor, she was the national High Point Rider in the IHSA and won two national champion open horsemanship titles, all while being...
the high point rider in her region in four consecutive years! She was also named the University of Findlay Female Athlete of the Year in 2008–2009. Since becoming an IEA coach, her teams have enjoyed much success including: High School Western Team National Champion, Middle School Western Team National Champion, High School Western Team Reserve Champions, eight Individual National championships and 10 Individual Reserve National championships.

This success and experience led to Morehead being named coach for the Bowling Green State University’s (Ohio) IHSA team this year. Katie states, “I am so grateful for the IEA and IHSA. Because of these associations I’ve been able to capture my own personal dreams as well as make a living by helping my team riders achieve theirs. IEA helped start it all!”

**Cody McMillion**

Cody has had quite a 2014. Now a junior at the University of South Carolina and on the school’s equestrian team, she was named a second-team All-American. She also contributed much to the Gamecocks terrific year. The team finished as NCEA Reserve Champions. McMillion has been a part of the reining starting line-up at USC while the team earned SEC Equestrian Championships in 2012, 2013, and 2014. In her freshman year, McMillion was named Reining MVP. She has done this while maintaining excellent grades, as evidenced by her being named to the SEC Academic Honor Roll (2012, 2013) and the NCEA Academic Second Team (2013, 2014). This season her record was 9-2-2 with two Most Outstanding Player Awards.

These accomplishments are exactly what one would expect from a “little girl” who always had a passion for riding. The second semester of Cody’s high school freshman year was a huge turning point for her. She, along with a few of her fellow horse enthusiasts at Hammond, got together and set out to start the first High School Equestrian Team in the state of South Carolina. They didn’t know at the time that this endeavor would be a monumental event for the school and all of the riders involved. McMillion, and Hammond, joined the IEA in 2008 and hit the ground running. Cody was very successful as an IEA competitor; always placing high in her events. In her senior year in high school she was Nationals Western Championship Rider.
Cody says, “I have the IEA to thank for much of my success while in high school and now in college. My high school equestrian career allowed me to not only put my name out there for coaches in both the IHSA and NCEA, but also aided me in making meaningful friendships that have lasted for over four years. I must admit, connections are great, but the key to my success in college has been my experience adapting to new horses quickly and calmly. The IEA allowed me to get a taste of what college riding would be like. It took me out of my comfort zone and taught me the importance of basic horsemanship and knowledge. I have learned through the years that a pretty picture of a rider on horseback is no replacement for an individual who can effectively ride and show a horse to the best of the horse’s ability. Without these lessons, I would not be able to compete as successfully as I do.”

Sarah Shaffer
Sarah Shaffer started riding in the IEA in seventh grade. The weekly lessons for fun turned into so much more. She feels that the IEA helped her not only to get a horse and win a world title in 2012, but also allowed her to be comfortable riding all types of horses. Some of her achievements besides the Youth 14–18 NRHA World Champion title include a 2012 Central Ohio Reining Horse Association Novice Horse championship and a Gelding Champion title. This provided a foundation for her success at the Ohio State University (OSU) as an IHSA competitor. Shaffer has done well in the classroom too. Among her notable college achievements at OSU: Honors engineering program, Dean’s List and an undergraduate research office scholarship for equine biomechanics research.

Sarah says, “The Interscholastic Equestrian Association has always meant a lot to me since it is how I was introduced to showing horses. My family did not own horses while I was growing up, and horseback riding lessons once a week were just another extracurricular activity. However, after encouragement from my instructor, I joined the Autumn Rose Farm IEA team under coaches Ollie and Debbie Griffith. I started as a beginner in seventh grade, realized I liked showing horses, and worked my way up to the open division by the time I graduated high school. Showing in the IEA also introduced me to reining horses, and I quickly fell in love with the sport. My parents bought me my reining horse, Roostamatic, while I was a senior in high school, and I have been showing in National Reining Horse Association events ever since. Riding for an IEA team also helped me learn how to ride all types of horses, and the experiences I gained while on the team carried over to my career riding for Ohio State’s Intercollegiate Horse Show Association team.”


WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF

IEA & PONY CLUB?

PONY CLUB INTRODUCES NEW MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES TO MEET YOUR NEEDS.

BY SHELLY MANN, PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY USPC

“IT TURNS OUT THERE IS! The United States Pony Club (USPC) has been hard at work to offer access to educational programming and opportunities to several different membership types so that everyone can share their love of horses. Do you rely on Pony Club as a source of information and camaraderie and value discounts at www.shopponyclub.org? Now you can stay informed with online subscriptions to Pony Club News magazine and the twice monthly E-News. All levels of membership in the United States Pony Clubs develop character, leadership, confidence and a sense of community. Visit www.ponyclub.org and let Pony Club help you reach your goals.

CLUB/CENTER MEMBERSHIP Individuals 25 years of age and under who wish to participate in mounted and unmounted meetings, clinics, rallies, certifications, exchanges or other special opportunities do so by becoming a member through a local Pony Club or Pony Club Riding Center.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP For renewing members aged 18–25 who have achieved a certification level of at least a C-2 Horse Management, National Membership is an option. National Members pay dues directly to USPC, instead of at the local or regional level. In order to participate in club, center or regional activities, they must pay-as-they-go.

HORSEMASTERS MEMBERSHIP is a non-traditional participating membership option for anyone over the age of 25 who would like to begin or continue their journey through Pony Club. By joining through a local Pony Club or Pony Club Riding Center or through the Region, members have the same access as traditional participating members to mounted and unmounted programming as well as participation in rallies, certifications, etc. Horsemasters Members must maintain an Annual or Life Corporate Membership to be eligible.

E-MEMBERSHIP in The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is an interactive, online membership to all things Pony Club and is available for all ages. It allows the member electronic access to the Pony Club News magazine, blog, shopponyclub.org and special offers from sponsors, and other educational opportunities. It is a yearly renewable membership. E-membership dues cannot be applied towards any other Pony Club membership.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP is for individuals 18 years or older and is required for Pony Club leaders and Horsemasters’ participants. But is also a great way for parents and other adults

WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF IEA & PONY CLUB?

I want to join Pony Club but I am not sure how to work it into my schedule. How can I do IEA and Pony Club? Is there a membership option that is right for me?

“I want to ride and take part in the fun with my club or center!”

NON-PARTICIPATING MEMBERSHIP: “I am mostly interested in educational offerings and staying involved in Pony Club but won’t be able to ride or attend regular meetings.”
to support the work of Pony Club at the national, regional, and club levels. As a Corporate Member you will receive a subscription to *Pony Club News*, special notices and updates throughout the year, voting privileges at the Annual Meeting, and a yearly membership directory. Corporate Memberships may be purchased online using our secure server, or by downloading a membership form.

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP** is a Corporate Membership for life requiring a one-time commitment. Life Membership dues are available at a discount price to Alumni between the ages of 21–25. Along with the regular Corporate Membership benefits, Life Members also receive a Life Member pin, a certificate and a special gift. All Life Membership contributions go directly to the USPC Endowment Fund to support future generations of Pony Club members. A Life Membership makes a great gift for that special Pony Club enthusiast. Life Memberships may be purchased online for yourself or as a gift for another individual.

**ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP** is an annual membership for Pony Club graduates of all ages to maintain a connection with Pony Club while supporting the organization at a level below a Corporate Membership. With this membership, you will receive an Alumni Membership pin and online access to the *Pony Club News* magazine and E-News. Most importantly you can continue to be a proud member of Pony Club.

**FRIEND MEMBERSHIP** is an annual membership, open to anyone over the age of 18. It is a way for individuals with an interest in Pony Club to proudly support the organization as a member and is ideal for volunteers, instructors or family members who are not required to be a Corporate Member. With this membership, you will receive a Friend Membership pin and on-line access to the *Pony Club News* magazine and E-News.

Pony Club is the largest equestrian educational organization in the world. The cornerstones of our foundation are education, safety, sportsmanship, stewardship, and FUN. The skills, habits, and values instilled through horsemanship will apply to every part of your life. Good horsemanship extends far beyond skills in the saddle. Pony Club members gain an impressive depth of knowledge in equine behavior, training, health and fitness, nutrition and veterinary care, and the correct uses and maintenance of equipment. Strong business skills are built through stable management: budgeting, record-keeping, and interacting with professionals in the equine industry. Members have opportunities for a host of additional programs such as international exchanges, regional and national clinics, National Youth Congress, and college scholarships.

If you are looking for educational resources and tools to help you learn more about horses while doing well on the written portion of the Horsemanship Test you may want to consider an E-membership. If you would like to participate in USPC Championships, Regional Rallies, or local riding lessons, then a club or center membership is for you. Perhaps your parents would like to know more of the great things you are learning and be comfortable helping meet your educational goals, or so there is a Friend or Corporate Membership for them; even with no prior Pony Club experience, family members can consider a Horsemasters membership and learn to ride and care for horses among other local equine enthusiasts. Browse the Pony Club website, www.ponyclub.org to discover all the great things membership can do for you. Chances are, USPC has a membership that fits into your needs.
CHECK OUT THE VARSITY REINING CLUB WEBSITE!

Get recognized for your involvement outside of the show arena:
- Open to all NRHyA Members
- Earn Scholarships & Other Great Prizes

Check the website EACH MONTH for your chance to earn DOUBLE POINTS!
Young reiners can enjoy the world of Reining with the National Reining Horse Youth Association. NRHyA members can improve their skills at NRHA clinics, experience the thrill of youth competition, reap great rewards (even without entering the show pen) and earn scholarships!

Join today and find...

"The Slide of Your Life!"

NRHyA
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405.946.7400
nrhya.com

Photos by Wolterberry and Mary Frances Sanders
Perhaps the most valuable lesson learned from competing in the Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) is, “It’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you ride the horse.” Unlike other horse shows, the riders are never sure what horse they will randomly draw, or how the horse will behave when they enter the ring. Regardless, each rider must quickly figure out what makes that horse tick and no matter how hard, appear to have an effortless ride. This, of course, is always easier said than done.

In order to qualify for Zone Finals, (there are 10 zones across the country) each rider must earn 15 points in their respective division (separate points for under saddle and over fences classes). Each rider can attend a maximum of five shows locally. At Zone 8 Finals, only the first and second place riders qualify for Nationals (individually), and the top two teams from Zone 8 attend.

The Zone 8 Finals, a competition between four states (Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah) was the culmination of our season and the qualifier for Nationals. As the host barn, Fountain Valley spent weeks preparing, not just the riders but all of our horses and the facility. Together, the team trained for three seasons, hosted other local IEA shows and participated in grueling clinics. With each show came endless hours of work—scrubbing the aisle, grooming and clipping the horses, and painting jumps—but it’s the work, the long hours, and the early mornings that bring Fountain Valley together as a team.

When it comes down to the day you compete, the horse you drew, and the course ahead of you, it’s not just about the best rider or the best horse; it’s about the best horseman. The horses at each competition range from smooth, “perfect,” hunters to unpredictable green horses, and old, trusty school horses. Sometimes you draw the horse everyone wants, but seemingly more often than not you end up with a difficult draw. This is what separates IEA from other types of horse shows or competitions; often you must assess not how you placed, but how you handled the horse you’re given. Some of the greatest memories and successes of our season are not marked by a blue ribbon, but the satisfaction of making the most out of a difficult mount. Our strongest rider is not the
one who wins the most classes, but rather the one who can make a challenging horse look easy.

Not only was this year’s competition nearly doubled, but the chilly, wet weather on Sunday, April 12 had all the horses excited. The morning started off smoothly, but as the day went on the horses were more and more exhausted and anxious, not to mention some of them had shown the day before as well. Fountain Valley’s riders drew several tough horses, but still managed to place well, sending two riders to Nationals in May. We were all grateful to have qualified up to this point, and to have the privilege to host Zones 8 years in a row.

The two riders that qualified for Nationals were Megan Descheneaux, 16, and Lily Harris, 15. Descheneaux was new to Fountain Valley and IEA this year and lives in Saudi Arabia. For Harris, this was her first year showing, and her first year in IEA. After a successful first trip, they both made the call back in their separate classes and were further tested. Descheneaux placed first in her class, Junior Varsity Novice over Fences, and Harris placed first as well in Junior Varsity Beginner on the Flat. Other members of this year’s IEA team who have attended Nationals in past years include; Gracie Phillips, Wendy Conaway, Gloria Deignan, Erin Newell, Skye Brennan, Adde Sharp, and Cleo Mueller. Next year’s regionals will be hosted at FVS, but Zones will be in Scottsdale, Arizona. Nationals this year are in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Perhaps the phrase “luck of the draw” was coined at an IEA show, and this year’s draws for Fountain Valley may not have been the luckiest, yet every rider not only rode well, but was clearly a horseman.

Special thanks to Ann Hanna for her support, coaching, and organizational efforts, which made the event possible; Coach Beth Hyatt for running the back gate and the classes; and to Ruthie Gibson for managing IEA Zone 8.

### Results

#### Individual Event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIDER</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Deignan</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Varsity Open on the Flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin Newell</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Varsity Intermediate over Fences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adde Sharp</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Varsity Intermediate over Fences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Descheneaux</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Junior Varsity Novice over Fences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily Harris</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Junior Varsity Beginner on the Flat</td>
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#### Team Event

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<th>CLASS</th>
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<td>Varsity Open Over Fences</td>
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<td>Skye Brennan</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Junior Varsity Novice on the Flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elly Gluschke</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Junior Varsity Novice over Fences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adde Sharp</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Varsity Intermediate on the Flat</td>
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**Overall Team Score: 8th**

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**About the Author**

Adde Sharp, age 16, was born and raised in Breckenridge, Colorado. Working for a horse rescue ranch for four years instilled a love for horses, the barn, and veterinary care. Now at Fountain Valley School of Colorado, a college preparatory school, Sharp rides competitively for both the school’s IEA team, and on her own. She hopes to pursue a career in Equine Veterinary Medicine and continue working with horses for many years to come.
The Leg Up

STOCK PHOTO

THE 16
TAKE THE REINS  SUMMER 2014 RIDEIEA.ORG

16  TAKE THE REINS  SUMMER 2014  RIDEIEA.ORG
REMEMBERING CLAIRE DAVIS AND SUPPORTING HER LEGACY OF CHARITABLE GIVING.

IN STRIDE IEA TEAM
SUBMITTED BY: REBECCA JOHNSON,
TRAINER & COACH:
LITTLETON, COLORADO
No matter how difficult life is at times, it is people like Claire Davis who remind us how much love and kindness there is in the world and how much we all need to take the time to appreciate one another, to respect each other’s life trials, and to provide a kind word or gesture along the way. Some people just cannot help making a difference in our lives. By simply being who they are they make the world a little brighter, a little warmer, and a little gentler. And when they are gone we realize how very lucky we are to have known them. The world has lost a very special person.

Above all else, Claire was kind and the horses knew this and they loved her.

FIELDSTONE RIDING CLUB
SUBMITTED BY: LISA LUTZ, PARENT:
SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA
When Michelle Pacyna, Teal Pacyna and Liz McKenzie formed the Fieldstone Riding Club (FRC) IEA Team, they took the group to a whole new level. The team wanted to do more than just compete together so they chose projects to help their community. Fieldstone riders served Thanksgiving meals to the homeless, adopted a
family of five for Christmas, and wrapped presents for charitable organizations.

When fellow IEA member Claire Davis from the In Stride Team was killed in the Centennial, Colorado, shooting, the FRC team wanted to dedicate their entire season to the memory of Claire by wearing purple ribbons on their lapels. At a recent IEA home show, there was a moment of silence in honor of Claire. To date the FRC team has collected $500 for the Claire Davis Family Foundation.

The IEA season is coming to an end. Hopefully, FRC will be moving on to Nationals. If not, these kids have had a blast with road trips, sightseeing, helping others, and just being kids. The best group of young people you could ask to be around, they are all there to support one another, which is very refreshing. Well done!

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DARE EQUESTRIAN TEAM

SUBMITTED BY: KAREN HARTMAN, TREASURER: HILLIARD, OHIO

A few months ago, Allison Applegett, President of Zone 5, Region 6 suggested to coaches within the Region that they collaborate to raise funds for the Claire Davis Fund by selling sweatshirts at the Regional competition. A big thank you goes to Allison who suggested the idea and to the Dare Equestrian Team who created the sweatshirt design and handled sales. Many thanks to all of the riders who bought sweatshirts to honor Claire. With their support, the fundraiser was very successful! Zone 5, Region 6 sent over $980 to the Claire Davis Memorial Fund.

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SCOTTSDALE EQUESTRIAN TEAM

SUBMITTED BY: KATHY JOHNSON, IEA ZONE 8 CHAIR & COACH: PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Many IEA teams in and outside of Zone 8 and members from the local equestrian community are remembering and honoring Claire in a variety of ways. HITS Tucson shows held a moment of silence for Claire before the Grand Prix and donated hats and shirts. Armbands with Claire’s name on them were also available throughout the Zone for a donation to be sent to the Claire Davis Fund. At the January IEA show, all of the teams from Arizona wore purple ribbons and armbands in memory of Claire. Thank you to everyone who has helped in the efforts to remember Claire and support the fund established by her parents. [4]

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Does your IEA coach have an inspirational saying, pearl of wisdom, or funny saying? What are the last words you hear at the in gate before entering the competition ring? Share what your coach has to say in the next edition of Leg Up. Send your submission via email to Sue Wentzel at swentzel13@gmail.com.

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CORRECTION

In the Spring 2014 issue of Take the Reins, the headline on page 12 contained an error. The Scott Laffey, Jr. article should have been titled “Breast Cancer Fundraiser.”

We sincerely apologize to the author and readers for any embarrassment or inconvenience that our error caused.

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Zone Finals Fun
Seniors applied for a scholarship in Zone 8 and answered the following essay question as part of their application process, “What lessons in sportsmanship and teamwork have I learned as a result of riding in IEA? How have these lessons affected my life, and how will they help me in the future?”

Kelsey Furlong was the winner of the scholarship contest, and her essay is included, along with several other exemplary essays from the competition.

BY KELSEY FURLONG

When I was told that I would be a co-captain of the 2013–2014 Cheyenne Mountain Equestrian Team, I was overfilled with joy. This position was something I had always wanted to do, and I am so grateful that the opportunity presented itself. From creating a list of items each rider will need at every show (helmets, gloves, sunscreen, etc.), to making sure all of our team horses are clipped and groomed before the show, being a co-captain of a team of 30 requires a tremendous amount of organization and leadership skills.

During my first show as co-captain, an incredibly upset rider left the show ring, complaining about not winning, and whining about having to stay for the rest of the show until our horses were in the trailer and on the way home. I was stunned, as I had never heard such unsportsmanlike words come out of a teammate’s mouth. It was in that moment that I realized what I needed to say to help. This is what I told her:

“Horses have taught me that you cannot always win, but that winning does not always matter. What truly matters is being able to go out into the ring, have fun, feel as if you have done well, and leave knowing there is always something to improve on. Life is not always filled with blue ribbons. There may be new challenges every day—your horse might refuse a jump, you might have to hold horses for your teammates for what seems like hours, but unpredictability is what makes it so enjoyable. When you finally do win that blue ribbon after weeks of training, or help your teammate close the door to the horse trailer after a 12-hour day at the show, there’s nothing better.”

As a leader of the team, I strive to encourage passion for the competition but also work to create an atmosphere where hard work, laughter and smiles are a constant—no matter what color ribbon you win. My teammate, who initially was frustrated with her experience, has a new attitude, understands what it means to be part of a team, and goes out of her way to help other teammates. She now knows that we are all there for the same reason and have the same goals, which is to share in our collective victories and defeats.

Through this experience, I have discovered how much I enjoy teaching and helping my teammates better understand what it means to strive to be our best, pick ourselves up when we’re down, and support each other as athletes and friends. I will bring the skills and philosophies that I have developed in this leadership role to both my academic and extra-curricular activities at CSU. Whether being on a team that presents a marketing plan to fellow classmates or leading the effort to create an equestrian team, my goal is to show others how bumps in the road are new experiences that make us stronger and better.
BY TAYLOR SLEVIN

I have always been a member of sports teams: basketball, softball, football, you name it. I’ve probably played it at some time in my life. Yet on all these teams, I never learned the lesson of sportsmanship and teamwork like I did on my IEA team. In almost every sport, I have been taught to deface my opponent, to not care who they are or what happens to them as long as I am successful in whatever it is my coach asks from me; this is not true in IEA. Maybe it’s that we all experience the same thrill that comes with riding an unknown thousand pound animal, maybe it’s that we aren’t elbowing each other in the face for a ball, or maybe it’s something else entirely. The amount of sportsmanship towards others and teamwork within an IEA horseshow is incomparable to anything I had experienced before. The week preceding a show often consisted of team work in order to get our horses cleaned up, agreements made on whose tack would be used, and the crucial choice of what to bring to share for breakfast on show day. These are just a few examples of how my team worked together within itself. I have to admit it was overwhelming at times but I learned how to communicate with others better and how to voice my opinion in a more respectful manner so as not to aggravate my team or trainers in the process.

On the show grounds, teamwork with my team was found in coordinating who would take care of the horses while others memorized courses and took breaks. Showmanship was shown to every other competitor not only in the applause given at the ending ribbon ceremony, but in the show ring by riding respectfully and by saying a simple “good job” at the end of each class. These are just some small examples of what I have personally experienced, but IEA has also shown me other more significant examples of true sportsmanship. Take for example Claire Davis; an IEA rider who died in a school shooting at Arapahoe High School in Denver, Colorado. None of us personally knew her, yet as a zone we all pulled together and had lunch in her name, held a show in her honor, and every one of us who rode that day wore a purple ribbon to celebrate her life as well as mourn her death. That is sportsmanship; to look beyond the competition and be able to help someone whom you may be in competition with. The lessons and experiences I have had over my two years of team competitive horse riding are things I will use in my career to work with others, my communication skills with those I care about, and how to be a more respectful competitor in everything I do. If there is one thing I could say, it would be “thank you IEA.”

BY KELLY WENHAM

It is a beautiful feeling to land after the last fence in the course, or line up in the center of the arena, knowing that I connected to a horse’s spirit and communicated effectively with him or her without even speaking. Even if the sensation is brief and fleeting, I feel an inner peace when I forget about my real-life problems and concentrate fully on the horse I’m sitting on. What I didn’t fully comprehend until a few weeks ago is that many horses take really good care of me, and that I take their cooperation for granted.

At an IEA show in mid-February, I drew a horse called Dude for my jumping class. He was a pretty paint gelding, and he was perfect for the girl who rode him before I did. In this scenario, it’s true that looks can be deceiving. Dude and I did not get along very well. It wasn’t clear what went wrong between my warm-up ride and entering the competition arena, but as we were turning to the first fence at a canter Dude put his head between his knees and I ended up in the dirt. My first reaction, once I had gotten up and brushed the dirt off of my breeches, was to tell him I was sorry for making him upset. I honestly felt bad for the guy; he was probably tired and didn’t want to tolerate my little mistakes. I hadn’t thought about him in that way when I first mounted, but my perspective was altered as I found myself being gravitationally drawn to the ground.

In the end, I was glad that I fell off. Not because it made me a better rider, but because I took a fall for our team. My good friend and teammate Karlie was supposed to ride Dude after I did. If I hadn’t ridden him and gotten bucked off and requested a re-ride, she might have fallen off too, and that would have been a negative experience for her. I’m glad I fell off, simply because I prevented Karlie from having the same experience.

After that show, I thought about the horses that I ride on a weekly basis. They would never consider putting me in the dirt, and I’m really grateful for that. They take good care of me, which I never realized until I rode a horse that didn’t take care of me at all. The lesson that I ultimately take away from riding on an IEA team as a high schooler is that horses give so much of their lives to humans, and rather than take that willingness for granted and assume that it will always be there, we as riders should reciprocate that care in order to form mutual, trusting partnerships with the horses we ride. I only hope that pursuing a career in the equestrian industry will facilitate my dream of positively influencing as many horses’ lives as possible.
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It’s fun and challenging—and there is no need to own your own horse! Horses are provided to each rider at every event. All mounts are selected by a draw. Moms and dads really like that the IEA provides an affordable format for their child, as they build their equestrian skills. Many of the

IEA senior championship riders receive college scholarships based upon their winning performance at the IEA National Finals, too.

Founded in 2002, the IEA has over 10,000 participants across the United States. For additional information about the IEA or answers to questions concerning team organization, please contact Jennifer Eaton-Membership Marketing Coordinator by phone at 877-RIDE-IEA (877-743-3432), Extension 1 or email Jenn@rideiea.org. You may also visit the IEA website: www.rideiea.org.