



## 2019 Jr/YR Educational & Training Scholarship

### Lauren Kelly

I would like to thank the Lower Puget Sound Dressage Club (LPSDC) for the 2019 Youth Scholarship award and for all their support throughout the year, it sure was an eventful one! My horse, Dublin, and I have had many successes this past year. When I was awarded the scholarship, we were ranked third out of 22 dressage riders in District 4 of the Washington High School Equestrian Teams (WAHSET) program. With a tremendous amount of support from my WAHSET coaches, as well as my trainer, Jill Seely, I finished the season first in District 4 in dressage and earned a gold medal as only a sophomore. We qualified for state championships, but unfortunately our ride at state did not go in my favor and we did not place as high as I would have liked. Though I was disappointed in my ride at state, my dressage skills improved drastically, and I am still proud and ready to take the state finals by storm next year! Dublin and I also finished 7th in the state on an In-Hand Obstacle Relay team and were the first alternate for regional championships. This scholarship also allowed Dublin and I to compete in the LPSDC summer shows this year by covering our show fees; we were able to compete in dressage and improve our abilities outside of the WAHSET season, which runs from October to May. I faced several challenges throughout the summer show season, including soundness issues coming up in the show ring, last minute horse swapping, and trailer injuries, that slightly put me back. Despite the challenges, I am very proud of the growth my horse and I have made, the roadblocks we overcame, and the work we put in over the past few months. I am very grateful that I received the LPSDC youth scholarship this past year, and for all that it did for me. I would like to thank everyone in the club who contributed toward my scholarship, and for the scholarship committee for selecting me.



## Elisabeth Ness

To the Board of the LPSDC Youth Educational Scholarship,

Breeze and I were so excited to be picked for this scholarship. It was important to me to use the money for helping with my goal to be a better rider.

My scholarship money helped me pay for my Peninsula Pony Club Camp at Aspen Farms in Yelm. Breeze and I had so much fun, made a lot of friends, and we had a lot of lessons. I loved learning from Asia Thayer, Piper Newman, Maryn Foster, and my mom Beth Ness.

Breeze and I learned how to have fun trotting through water and riding on a cross country course, how to jump, to ride better corners, to better control my rein length, how to help Breeze stay at a steady trot with my posting without going too fast or slowing down, horse management, and how to sleep with a bunch of girls in a tent. This was a big opportunity for me and the most fun I have ever had with Breeze and we have never learned so much in four days. Thank you LPSDC!

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Ness



## 2019 Vicki Mears AA Educational & Training Scholarship

### Nicole Virden

It's amazing how things in life tend to come full circle, whether you intend it to happen or not. I've been fortunate enough to have horses as part of my life since early grade school. And even in those early years, dressage quickly became my love. It was the Lower Puget Sound Dressage club that helped shape that passion into a full-blown obsession as a junior/young rider in the mid 90's. Like most young riders, I had stars in my eyes and big dreams in my head. Spending countless hours at the barn 7 days a week, rain or shine, loving every moment of it! I had an average horse that I loved to death, and even with excellent trainers it became clear that despite our progress we would never make young riders. I swallowed my pride and moved forward with my riding.



I met my wonderful husband, who was serving on active duty in the Army. We moved all over the country, had two beautiful children, and I put myself through nursing school. And yet though it all, horses stayed a part of my life through leases and catch-riding, since I could no longer afford one of my own. Horses have always been my lifeline, my sanity, my therapy. And when my husband retired after serving 22 years in the military, we were able to come back to the PNW. It didn't take me long before I was looking for another horse to lease, and I found a good match in a quirky but talented Hanoverian mare named Gigi (Glamour Girl SF). Gigi really is a sweetheart! She can often be found searching my pockets for mints and horse cookies or scratching my back as I curry hers. Under saddle, she proved to be a bit of a puzzle. She had some good basics, but some obvious baggage as well. And to be honest, despite decades of experience, I had as much baggage and bad habits myself! I was blessed to be offered a boarding spot at Chalice Farms, which not only introduced me to one of my awesome trainers, Delicia Sorensen, but also helped hook me back up with the Lower Puget Sound Dressage Club from my youth. Like I said, everything comes full circle!

I was honored to receive one of the Vicki Mears Adult Amateur training scholarships, and I quickly put it to good use. With Delicia's patience and guidance, Gigi has really blossomed over the 2019 season. For those who might have seen us at those first couple LPSDC shows, you might remember a horse rearing as I was trying to get on and then spooking around in warm-up. She had to be led into the show arena, and then led back out due to fear of the banners flapping on the rail. By the end of the season, Gigi was starting to look, and behave, like a seasoned show horse! We had a pretty successful year at Training and First level, and Gigi even won her Training level AA championship class at the LPSDC finals. Delicia

continues to be my rock, helping me through the show nerves with her calm demeanor and pushing me to be the rider that she knows I can be. Gigi and I have started working with Kristi Wysocki monthly, continuing to develop the strength and skills needed to move forward. As 2019 comes to a close and I reflect back on the year, I couldn't be more proud of the goals we've accomplished. It's often said that raising children takes a village, and I say that horses are no different. I'm blessed to have my trainers, barn family, and the LPSDC in mine! I look ahead to 2020 with new goals and optimism, and somewhere in the distance, I even see second level beckoning. #adultamateurforlife

### **Meggan Crowley**

I was a recipient of the LPSDC training 2019 scholarship. I was awarded \$250 to use for lessons, clinics or other dressage training.

I volunteered for 2 hours at the Jolly June show. I signed up for show gate keeper in the early morning hours. This was a great choice for me as I know how difficult it can be to get volunteers to arrive early. Chores are done and getting to show with your horse can be difficult. I used sign up genius which made my assignment of hours fast and easy. I signed up for 2 hours and enjoyed having a front row seat to cheer competitors on.

At the Sizzling summer show in July I volunteered four hours as show gate keeper for the Bainbridge Island Saddle Club show. This show allowed me to bring my horse. I signed my horse up for non competing and was able to ride him in the warm up and around the grounds after my four hour volunteer service. This is a great opportunity for horses that aren't quite ready to show but need the show grounds exposure. The non competing horse fee is nominal and well worth it. I look forward to doing this again. I feel that the volunteer hours at the LPSDC shows prepared me to volunteer at the recognized shows. I understand how important volunteers are and will continue to volunteer my time at schooling and recognized shows.

It was difficult to decide how to utilize my scholarship funds. With all the choices we have in the Pacific Northwest it seems as though the choices are limitless. I decided to take lessons close to home and took lessons from the judge of the Jolly June show, Deborah Spence. I learned so much and was able to lesson on both my horses. I took good notes of each lesson in which she gave me several exercises to develop each horse. The scholarship has helped me see that my schooling at home is on track. I learned that I should start to challenge my horses as they are capable of much more than I am asking of them. I learned exercises that will help them in the upcoming levels. I learned from her that everything they need to know is taught in the fundamentals of training scale and from there you add in strength. I learned that it is ok to try new things. It is ok if the things you try don't work and it is ok that the horse and that you make mistakes. With the time I spent with her I took very good notes and drew pictures of the exercises that she taught me. I feel like through these lessons I was able to take away training tools that will help me for months.

The Vicki Mears Adult Amateur Educational and Training Scholarship is a blessing. I encourage anyone who hasn't signed up to do so. The wealth of knowledge and dedication in our dressage community is second to none.

## Jennifer Gillum

First of all I would like to thank the LPSDC Board Members for selecting me as a recipient of the LPSDC Training Scholarship. With the Scholarship I was able to participate in the Andre Ganc clinic on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

I had audited a few of Andre's clinics in the past and at first I was a little intimidated as the riders were riding at upper levels and were more advanced than me and my horse Oly and I didn't want to make a fool of ourselves. I was wrong. Andre is a very gifted instructor who is able to work with beginners and up to FEI. He started us out slowly and worked on getting my horse Oly into his natural frame using my seat and just enough contact in the reins. We also worked on relaxation and to trust myself and trust my horse. By the end of the third day my horse Oly was so relaxed and forward that everything just started to click and I came away with renewed confidence and I can't wait to ride with Andre again.



## 2019 Open Rider Educational & Training Scholarship

### Jessy Olson

To those reading this,

My name is Jessy Olson and I was the very fortunate winner of the open scholarship offered by the Lower Puget Sound Dressage Club. It was a scholarship of \$250 that I knew could be put toward my own training education through clinics, which would in turn help the horses and students under my tutelage.

As soon as I received the scholarship, I knew exactly what I would use it for. The PNW has an amazing dressage community with some outstanding judges and USDF gold medalists. I personally have been able to train under some wonderfully talented nationally and internally known trainers due to my location. One that I am so fortunate to train under monthly is Kari McClain (gold medalist and international judge) due to Jill Seely (L judge and silver medalist) of Clover valley, hosting her regularly. This last year we were fortunate enough to gain another outstanding gold medalist and international judge to the PWN Kristi Wysocki. One of our local barn owners and the current president of the LPSDC Lea McCullough set up a schedule to start hosting Kristi monthly and I knew that I wanted to train with her. This scholarship gave me that amazing opportunity.

Kristi is the kind of trainer who every beginning trainer loves and fears. She has ridden with the best, seen the worst, and most likely has trained both kinds throughout her impressive country wide career. I am a newer trainer, just getting my start and working towards my bronze (only one more score needed), and so having the chance to ride with her was invaluable to me. She quickly picked up on my bad habits from starting young horses and riding western and endurance before the switch to dressage. She helped give new perspective towards the biomechanics and mind of the horse, making sure the rider was consistently putting the horse first regardless of the situation. I personally enjoyed her forward opinions and her different explanations to help each person visualize themselves and their riding.

With the education I was able to get from her I have been able to give back to the community in both riding and teaching. It has helped my seat in all the different horses I ride that vary in age, breed, discipline and level, and has given me a better mind towards their needs. As a teacher to students it has pushed me to get my students to change their frame of mind, fixing mistakes that I didn't take as seriously, and helping them grow in their overall knowledge of the rider-horse relationship with dressage principals.

I did in fact use the whole scholarship for the monthly clinics with her and it covered about 2 rides. Both those rides fundamentally and permanently changed my riding and teaching and inspired me to continue to ride with her currently, with not only my own personal horse Thor the Mustang but also client horses so I can gain continued perspective. I am so thankful to have such an amazing supportive club to be a part of and that the LPSDC encourages all its membership to grow, learn, and have fun.

Thank you! Jessy Olson



## 2018 LPSDC Vicki Mears Adult Amateur Educational & Training Scholarship by Tina Hansen



I used the \$250.00 grant awarded to me to supplement the fees for four Karen Pavicic clinics this summer. Karen Pavicic is a Canadian dressage rider. She represented Canada at the 2014 World Equestrian Games in Normandy where she finished 9th in the team competition and 41st in the individual dressage competition with Don Daiquiri. She is one of the several clinicians that comes to Miari Stables several times throughout the year.

My trainer, Jill Seely, encouraged me to take advantage of opportunities to ride with some of the FEI trainers with more national and international experience that come to our area.

And I decided to clinic with Karen.

My first lesson with Karen was May 7, the day after the LPSDC May show. It was the first show of the 2018 season for us and I was pleased with my partner, What a Girl, aka Missy. She was a true partner at the show. The clinic with Karen helped me to get Missy more responsive to my aids, especially helped me get her to be more forward. She pushed me beyond my comfort zone in asking my her to go forward in the canter work. She had me galloping down the long side, collecting and halting then back up to canter/gallop again. This exercise was huge in helping me overcome my deep fear of a big canter having sustained a broken rib in a big canter/ buck accident several years ago. I realized that it had been a fluke, and not her normal way of going and had to trust her. Karen explained that by holding back on the canter work it was keeping me from tapping into her full potential. And that we needed to push ourselves beyond our comfort zone each day to work to achieve the maximum quality of her gaits. We also worked on straightness by doing serpentine with transitions, canter/walk/canter on the center line, making sure we were straight at each transition. I headed home from that lesson feeling on top of the world with our progress.

In subsequent lessons we worked on exercises down the quarter line and center line to improve her responsiveness to my aids. She had me ask for one stride left in shoulder in, then straight ahead, then one straight in shoulder in right which helped to make her to react quicker and me to ask quicker. We did transitions forward and back, which helped with engagement.

Another lesson included a lot of canter work to improve collection. We cantered across the short diagonal then at the quarter line did a quarter pirouette back to the centerline and pushed the canter bigger, then at the next quarter line another quarter pirouette, then bigger canter. This helped us to keep the engagement as she sat more. These helped with our tempi changes, which are a challenge for us.

I plan to clinic again with Karen in the Spring as I found her style to be very positive and straight forward. When I told her at a break in our first lesson, that I was terrified at the big canter work and why. She said she appreciated my comments, but that we were doing just fine. And she was right.

Thanks to LPSDC for the financial assistance. I encourage others to take advantage of this opportunity offered by the Club.



## Road To Kentucky by Christine Erikson, November 2016

How do I begin to tell you about my Road to Kentucky and the USDF Dressage Finals? It all involves a lame horse, a fantastic generous trainer, a magical pony, strategic focus coaching, unexpected medical diagnoses, incredible friends and a lot of planning (and money).

But let's start from the beginning, shall we?



In 2015 my then 20-year-old half-Arab was starting to show signs of old age and we had periods when he couldn't be ridden. I realized that he will never be able to take me to my goal, to get my USDF Bronze medal. So, what do you do when what you have is a horse, the one you love more than anything and you worry that trying to push him forward might make him feel worse than he is now?

Along comes my trainer for many years, Beth Anderson-Ness, and she offers up her pony Allegria for me to ride, to use for my own development as a rider and advancement. At first I have to admit I was a bit skeptical, a pony? No, I am too big for her! But it only took one ride and I was completely sold! I felt like Ally and I connected right away. I never liked riding big, tall horses and since I'm no longer a "spring flower" she felt comfortable and safe, and that is very important to me.

So what started as a schooling situation turned into an exciting start of the 2016 show season.

Beth was so generous allowing me to take her to a few shows and we had some wonderful successes!

A few years earlier I had Cynthia Collins/Luna Tunes Freestyles create a First Level freestyle for my Arab, one that I really didn't get to ride much, so I thought, why don't I try riding it with Ally and see if it works? Well, at our first show in May we scored an 81%!! The summer went on and we did really well and the decision was made to go to the USDF Region 6 Championships since we had qualified. We qualified with our 1st level Freestyle and 2nd Level. I was excited.

But on July 26, I received the news after a routine mammogram, that I had breast cancer and everything came to a halt. It's kind of funny, but when the doctor told me, my first (honestly) thought was "I won't be able to go to Championships!"

But with the help of a great group of doctors, my family and a fantastic support from my "horse village" I was riding my freestyle at Championships two weeks after my surgery, and I won!!!

That victory lap was so sweet in so many ways!

But that was just a start. My invitation to the Dressage Finals promptly showed up in my email inbox and I started to dream! And so did a lot of my friends! When you live in Washington State it's a daunting (both logistically and financially) task to even think about taking a horse to Kentucky. I had never taken a horse further than Oregon.

But in less than a week a fundraiser was planned, a GoFundMe account opened, a Facebook Page "Road To Kentucky 2016" was up and running, an application to the USDF Region 6 Travel Fund grant was mailed in and the dream was starting to become reality.

There was only one piece that was clouding the plans. While all this was going on I started my four-week radiation treatment and I was due to be done a week and a half before I had to leave for the Final's with no idea of how I would be feeling at the end of the treatment, slightly scary.

Both of us made it safely to Kentucky. I flew and Ally was in the fabulous care of Brooke Voldbaek and Pirouette Enterprises. It took four days for them to get there.

Arriving at the Kentucky Horse Park is a day I will never forget. Everything was huge and so beautiful. Tons of fantastic horses and riders (and yes, we were by far the smallest team, in size, not in spirit!). At first a bit intimidating since this was all new to me, national competition, different ball game! The weather was beautiful and brisk! Clear blue skies and I was so grateful that none of my rides were at 8:00 a.m. in the morning. (think frost)

My first ride in the open competition was Friday and I can't say we nailed that ride. Fatigue from my treatment set in and my sweet little pony kindly "obliged" by working less too. Remember sitting alone at my hotel feeling a bit discouraged, scrolling through

my Facebook and a dear friend wrote something that changed my mood around completely;

"You're down in Kentucky competing after undergoing radiation, you've already won!"

Championship ride was Sunday and me and Beth, my trainer, who had arrived a few days earlier, had figured out our warm up to be as effective as possible, without draining all my strength. My class was big, 26 riders and I was riding as the 6th rider from the end.

The fairytale ending that I kept dreaming about was to be in the Top 10 group. I so badly wanted to check off an item on my bucket list, to ride in the Alltech Arena, and that would be my only chance. As I saw my score after the ride, I knew it was competitive, and with the speed the scores were published I knew I would be in the Top 10 group. Never did I dream we were to place third!

It's hard for me to describe the feeling I had that day and still do every time I watch the videos, pictures. It was by far one of the best days of my life.

Even though me and miracle pony Ally no longer is on "our road to Kentucky" I realize that we are ALWAYS on a road to somewhere/something. My cancer journey will continue for the rest of my life. Lots of decisions, some hard ones, has been made and it's all in the hands of something greater now.

I could never have done this without my Starr Valley Farm peeps, my family and supportive medical staff. As I was last year, I look forward to a new show season with a new second level freestyle, but this year I know better to embrace every single day because you never know what is in store...