

## **Wellington's First Instructor's Certification Program**

### **Ali Perkins**

Ali Perkins grew up in Mollycckett Pony Club (HB) and evented through Training level. She spent the winters of 2013, 2014, and 2015 Lendon Gray's Winter Intensive Training Program. In 2015, she worked as Lendon's assistant for the program. She is now living in Wilton, Maine and running a kids summer riding camp. She holds an education degree and plans to begin teaching elementary school next year while pursuing teaching riding lessons.

In the winter of 2015, Ali was given the opportunity to attend and test for the Instructor's Certification. This program was the highlight of her winter! The education created a concrete system of building blocks in Ali's training and teaching. A major highlight of the program was working with Annie Morris and Bill Warren, and connecting with other youth professionals in the Wellington area. The program was three weeks of three sessions each. Week one was riding, week two was teaching, and week three was longing. Ali found that the riding sessions taught her how to implement the dressage training scale in her riding and training, on her own horse and others. The teaching session pushed her out of her shell. The teaching challenged her to make quick decisions and to differentiate her teaching on the spot. The longing lessons were also a challenge. They required organization, multi tasking, and the ability to evaluate horses gaits, and rider's positions. Ali was given a Dressage4kids horse, Santé, at the beginning of the season. She felt that her participation in this program with

Santé strengthened their relationship and her ability to continue training him under saddle and on the lunge line.

A training tip she would share from the program is for the rider to be as fit and supple as they expect their horse to be! Position work, stretching, and fitness work out of the saddle will bring success! Ali would like to thank Dressage4kids for giving her the opportunity to participate in this program. She plans to continue the workshops and tests for the higher Instructor's Certifications.