

Jordyn Shaw

Dressage4Kids Lendon Gray Scholarship Report

Heather Oleson Clinics

I would like to share a huge thank you to the Lendon Gray Scholarship Award Committee for generously granting me the funds in order to participate in a few clinics with Heather Oleson at the beginning of this year. With the help and support from this amazing program, I was rewarded with great pleasure to gain experience and knowledge from Heather Oleson, an FEI dressage rider and trainer. Heather has all three of her USDF medals, as well as competed in the USEF Festival of Champions at both Intermediare I and Grand Prix.

Riding with Heather has not only given me a great experience, but it has also helped me in the training of my horse. Heather has a wide range of teaching experience and exercises that she shares with everyone who participates in her clinics and for all of the auditors as well. I have learned many new exercises to help with the training of not only my horse, but any horse I ride and myself, too. One exercise in particular is to help in the process of flying changes. I am schooling third level with my Thoroughbred gelding, so we are starting to develop flying changes. This is my first time teaching a horse changes, so it is a new concept to me, as well. My horse, River, understands the cue for a change, but he lands half of a stride late behind. We have been struggling to find ways to fix this for a few months now. Heather had us ride half of a ten meter circle, then back to the rail in counter canter. Before the corner she had me ask for the flying change. At first, I didn't set River up properly and the change was half a stride late behind, like normal. She then went on to explain to me the importance of moving his shoulder towards the rail and his haunches to the new inside in order to have him set up correctly. River likes to throw himself onto the inside shoulder during the flying change, which then changes the front end first. Towards the end, I began to understand the concept better and the changes

were not only closer to being clean, but also more controlled. Heather also put a lot of emphasis on the canter quality itself. If the canter doesn't have enough jump and the horse is not responding to your aids quick enough, when you ask for a change they won't jump through with the hind end immediately.

Thanks to the generosity of Lendon Gray and the scholarship committee, I have grown in both the training of my horse and also my education in dressage as well. Heather Oleson is a wonderful clinician with a plethora of knowledge and I am very thankful to have had the amazing opportunity to work with her.