

Conrad Schumacher and Lilo Fore Clinic
Region 8 Junior / Young Rider Fundraiser

By Grace Brennan

My name is Grace Brennan, I am 14 years old and have been riding since the age of 4. Dressage is my passion and sport of choice. This year I branched out from 7 years of Pony Club to pursue my goals to one day represent my Region 8 at the NAJYRC. With the support of family and friends and specifically, Dressage 4 Kids, my journey began.

On May 1 – 3, 2015, I attended my first major clinic with Conrad Schumacher and Lilo Fore. I had seen Mr. Schumacher before and was thrilled to have the opportunity to be a rider now, along with Lilo Fore who I knew as a judge, but never had the chance to ride in front of her. Mom always talked about them, so it was really amazing to experience myself about their training techniques. The way they taught all of the riders made so much sense! As the lessons progressed the positive changes were not only felt by the riders, but seen by the auditors.

In my lessons with Lilo Fore, we worked to create exercises that were clear and understandable for me in order to prepare for the more complex movements. We were very eager to work on flying changes, however, there were still some basics that my pony and I had to work out, like balance on both sides of his body. The right rein connection was my issue and the exercises developed consistent contact on both reins, creating more opportunity for half halts and balancing. “Two reins, two legs...now go!...”

When I wasn't riding, I spent my time watching the other riders. This was also very beneficial to see what it looked like and then translating it to my own riding. I was able to see all levels of riders, from Training to Grand Prix, on many different horse types. There was a common theme – Every effort should be a positive one. Even if you don't receive the reaction or movement you intended for, the horse did try and that is a positive. Mistakes are part of the learning experience and you learn from them.

Thank you so much Dressage 4 Kids! Also many thanks to Nancy Later and Ashby Stock Farm, for putting together such a fun event. I am grateful to have had this opportunity!

Grace Brennan