

When I first learned that I was accepted into Lendon Gray's Winter Intensive Training program my life all of a sudden became surreal. Phases of excitement, nerves, anticipation, and joy filled me at once. I have never felt so many emotions at once. Suddenly my dreams were coming true. I was getting to work first hand with Lendon, attend lectures with top professionals, audit many fabulous programs (Robert Dover's Horse Mastership Clinic, USDF Trainers Conference, etc...), and learn how to provide top care to the equine athlete. Little did I know, there was so much more in store for me.

Lendon brought accuracy and efficiency to my life. I tend to over practice things. I remember clearly the day when I realized what Lendon was trying so hard to get through to me. She said something along the lines of, "why must you insist on doing your half pass poorly a million times when you can do it well once and move to something else?". I had never thought of the fact that if I was only more accurate and meticulous, then the job would be done in half the time. This also has a lot to do with the wear and tear on the horse's body. When the horse repeatedly preforms it strains the horse. In order to keep our athletes safe, it is essential that we take precautions in every day work. This gave me a new outlook on how I plan my rides to be more efficient and productive.

One of the most substantial out comings that I gain from Lendon's program was the vast array of connections. The Winter Intensive Training program enabled me to meet professionals in every aspect of the equine industry. Whether this was nutrition, saddle fitting, show secretaries, grooms, breeders, instructors, trainers, riders, owners, stable managers, etc... I was consistently given the opportunity to meet a plethora of professional. Not only did this give me connections as a future equestrian, but it allowed me to learn and associate with some

of the most elite equestrians in the world. Every lecturer that Lendon brought in provided a wealth of knowledge. Throughout the program Lendon enabled the WITee's to attend a wide range of events. Lunch and Learn was a weekly program that brought in guest speakers to listen to while enjoying a lovely lunch. These talks ranged anywhere from stall surveillance cameras to specific veterinarian findings. Lendon also enabled us to attend many informational dinners. These dinners were put on by companies like Nutriena, Triple Crown, Palm Beach Equine Clinic, PS of Sweden, etc... Not only were these informational, but we were allowed to make a face to face connections with more professionals. Each and every person was more than willing to answer questions and provide contact for future questions or inquiries.

Throughout the WIT program, I had a hard time horse wise. My gelding was sent home after the first month due to needing to retire to the lower levels of dressage. Unfortunately, he proved to not be happy in Florida and the best thing for him was to head back up North to home. Luckily enough my trainer had a horse that she was able to send down for me to ride. I neither Lendon nor I had met or worked with this horse before. One thing that WIT taught me was to roll with the flow. I tend to like a plan that I can stick to and follow. Having a plan is a good idea, however you have to be able to be flexible. The more flexible I became throughout the program, the more opportunities started arriving at my door. Altering plans prior to the program was hard for me. WIT really showed me how to have a productive plan, yet be open to other opportunities that may arise.

Dressage for Kids has provided me amazing learning opportunities over last five months. I could not be more thankful for the many doors that Lendon has opened for me. I made a tremendous amount of growth during the program and I am looking forward to continue

growing in the years to come. The Dressage for Kids grant enabled me one month of learning. The amount that I learned in the barn, on my horse, through professionals and the Wellington community is beyond belief. I have come home with a vast variety of knowledge and have enjoyed teaching and sharing my findings among other young riders in my radius. Dressage for Kid has changed my life as an equestrian and being. I will be forever grateful.

Thank you!

Sarah DeGrasse