

Emma Szegvari  
Scholarship Report 2015

I am writing with gratitude for awarding me a D4K scholarship in 2015. Through this scholarship I was able to take more lessons with my trainer Kim Litwinczak as I prepared for and reached my goal of representing Region 8 at NAJYRC as a FEI Junior rider as well as at AGCO/USEF's National Championship as a FEI Junior rider.

Ringmoylan, "Ringo", is a very hard working, loyal horse. He was imported from Ireland in 2004 for a career in foxing hunting. David and Karin O'Connor later trained him for eventing where he competed for several years at both the Intermediate and Advanced levels before severely bowing his superficial flexor tendon. As a result of this injury, Ringo moved into his third career of dressage at the age of 15. Although talented in his own right, Ringo, now age 18, was not the typical horse competing at these competitions. Both he and I needed help in order to prepare to the greatest extent possible.

In my lessons with Kim we worked on getting Ringo to move with more expression and energy in his trot. To do this, Kim got me to think of asking for passage. As I half halted with my seat, I simultaneously moved him forward in the collection. These subtle transitions within the gait got Ringo more elevated in his shoulders and bearing more weight in his hindquarters.

We also worked on balancing his extended trot. He typically is very balanced in his extended trot until we reach X. Then he gets unbalanced and begins to run. In order to help Ringo balance in this movement, Kim taught me an exercise where we get an extended trot to X and then immediately collect and begin leg yielding back to the rail. This exercise had me ending the extended trot before Ringo started to rush and had me half halting to get back in control of the trot. After doing this exercise a few times in each direction, Kim had me go onto the diagonal and do the extended to X as well as do the half halt but then continue in extended. After the half halt Ringo anticipated the leg yield and collected further creating an even better extended on the second half of the diagonal.

Finally Kim and I worked on getting more bend in my lateral movements. For both shoulder-in and half pass Kim had us combining them with circles and half circles in order to get more bend and suppleness. She had me ride a 10m circle and then ride shoulder-in never letting the shoulders leave from the feeling of the 10m circle. At the end of the shoulder-in, I rode another 10m circle continuing to ask for the consistent bend. In order to add more bend and fluidity to my half passes Kim had me do 10m circle to another half 10m circle and then half pass to centerline. We did this exercise in both directions and it helped us significantly as it increased Ringo's suppleness and allowed me to get more bend throughout his body as well as add fluidity throughout the half passes.

D4K has supported me in so many ways these past few years. I am grateful to have had such support and the opportunity to represent Region 8 this past summer. Thank you D4K!