



Quick quiz - what was the first Dressage4Kids Program?

Lendon's Youth Dressage Festival, started in 1999!

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Dressage4Kids Calendar

<https://dressage4kids.org/news-events/event-calendar.html>

D4K Weekend Equestrian Program - Registration is Open!

The Dressage4Kids™ Weekend Equestrian Program virtual educational series is back! We are excited to announce a great line-up of speakers, including:

February 6th

Katie Duerrhammer

"The journey to the World Dressage Championships"

February 13th

Dr. Heather Beach

"Anatomy and function of the horse's head and related structures such as the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and teeth"

February 27th

Dr. Lauren Holley

"The horse's respiratory system, including anatomy and function"

March 6th

Steve Kraus

"The horse's hooves, including anatomy and function"

April 17th

Emma Ford

"World Class Grooming"

April 24th

Robert Dover and Steffen Peters

"Dressage Training and Competition - how it has changed and where it's headed"

[Registration in advance is required. Click here to register.](#)

D4K Winter Intensive Training Program

Are you interested in a full training program for you and your horse?

Do you want to experience all that Wellington has to offer?

The Dressage4Kids™ Winter Intensive Training Program provides an overall educational program for riders under age 26. Participants have a full schedule of learning that includes rider fitness, riding theory, tests, riding lessons, field trips, and lectures on many pertinent subjects. It involves three months of pure growth and first-hand experience to open the young rider's eyes to how they can best reach their full potential as a dressage rider.

[Interested? Click here for more information.](#)

D4K Youth Dressage Festival - Prize List Available

We are pleased to announce that the prize list for the Youth Dressage Festival is now available!

August 10-12, 2023
HITS-on-the-Hudson Showgrounds
Saugerties, New York

[Click here for the Prize List.](#)

Nuggets of Wisdom from the 2023 USDF FEI Level Trainers' Conference

Credit: Eurodressage.com

[Link to full article available here.](#)

I think I shared the same sense of excitement with more than 300 attendees for the return of the USDF FEI Level Trainers Conference on 16 - 17 January 2023 after a couple years of hiatus because of Covid.

The speakers chosen for this year's Conference were all members of the FEI Judges Supervisory Panel (JSP): Linda Zang, Lilo Fore, Henk van Bergen and David Hunt. It is important to know what the function of the JSP is to understand why they are here. Without a doubt, we were treated to two wonderful educational days filled with detailed information, each one with its own style.

On Monday night Dressage4Kids hosted a round table with the panelists. Lendon Gray introduced her many programs to develop youth in this country. It was a fun and relaxed event where they were asked a few personal and theory questions like when they started teaching, how you introduce a double bridle to the rider, what trainers don't pay attention to with the riders, and which exercise people aren't doing enough. The event was sponsored by Tuny Page from Stillpoint Farm.

[Click here to continue reading.](#)

Credit: Eurodressage.com

D4K Training4Teaching Panel Discussion Summary

A Training4Teaching Evening

with the Experts of the USDF FEI Dressage Trainers' Conference:
Lilo Fore, David Hunt, Henk van Bergen and Linda Zang

written by Beth Baumert

When Lendon Gray, founder of Dressage4Kids (D4K) sees an opportunity for education, she makes it happen. And when Tuny Page of Stillpoint Farm sees an opportunity to support a great cause, she makes it much easier to happen. So on Monday night, January 16th, it happened—a panel discussion with four of the best instructors in the world who had convened near West Palm Beach, Florida for the annual USDF Trainers Conference. The panel was moderated by another of the best instructors in the world—Lendon Gray. Lendon conceived of Training4Teachers as an offshoot of D4K, because after all, kids graduate from D4K and many of them become teachers. Most of them know about riding and the theory behind it, but there's not much training available in "how to teach." So, once again, Lendon made it happen. Here's a sampling of the gems that were shared that evening.

Lendon: Can you explain how you introduce the double bridle to a rider for the first time.

Linda Zang: I attach both the snaffle and curb reins to the snaffle bit in the beginning until the rider is comfortable managing two reins.

Lilo Fore: I want to stress that the snaffle bridle is what trains the horse the most, and it's important that the rider be able to ride well in the snaffle before being introduced to the curb. The double bridle is to be respected, and it is an honor to ride with one.

Lendon: How do you manage a walk that is not naturally a 4-beat walk. That is, when there is a rhythm problem not caused by poor riding.

Lilo Fore: You have to ride and train in the walk. Too many people just educate their horses in trot and canter. Poles are also useful in training the rhythm of walk.

David Hunt: It's all about throughness. If your horse is through and in front of the leg, then your horse is probably going to have a good walk.

Henk van Bergen: In the walk, the horse tells you the truth!

Linda Zang: Riders need to be careful not to collect the walk too soon. That's a common cause of a poor walk.

Lendon: Can you each give us one example of something you think riders don't pay enough attention to.

Lilo Fore: Independent aids and body awareness.

Linda Zang: Rider balance and the horse staying up in the outer shoulder. Also, poorly-fitting saddles often cause position problems in the rider.

Henk van Bergen: Riders specialize too soon.

David Hunt: Forward, straight and through. When those conditions are met, the rider automatically sits well.

Lendon: When should a rider start to ask for more expression?

David Hunt: The horse must be comfortable and balanced in a natural trot and canter. When he's relaxed then you can start asking for more. Acceptance of the bit creates that relaxation. Relaxation doesn't create acceptance. The horse has to give himself to you.

Lendon: Can you give us advice on when and how to teach reinback?

Lilo Fore: Babies learn how to reinback long before they're ridden. Then under saddle they already know it. By nature, they don't want to step back. Practically speaking, they'd rather simply turn around. But when they learn it as babies, there's never tension associated with it.

Linda Zang: At the top levels, there aren't many good ones. Even in the judging at the World Championships in Herning, Denmark, the reinbacks were weak.

Lendon: What exercise would each of you say is not practiced enough.

Linda Zang: Turn on the forehand

Lilo Fore: Halt

Henk van Bergen: Proper transitions

David Hunt: Accuracy

Thanks go to Lendon Gray, Stillpoint Farm and a great panel of experts for their wisdom.

D4K Training4Teaching Panel Discussion Video Recording

Many thanks to Stillpoint Farm for sponsoring the Dressage4Kids Training4Teaching Program! Speakers Lilo Fore, David Hunt, Henk van Bergen and Linda Zang join Lendon Gray for a discussion about Dressage and teaching.

[Click here for the video recording.](#)

D4K Horse Donation Program

For those interested in leasing a horse through the Dressage4Kids Horse Donation Program, have you filled out an application? More information is available at <https://dressage4kids.org/programs/dressage4kids-horse-donation-program.html>.

Newly available:

A very nice PRE, young and sound has been offered but will need time as is quite nervous and quick - potential for experienced rider and rider should not be planning to compete for probably a year. Contact [Lendon Gray](#) for more information.

The Importance of Auditing Clinics

By Lori Barrett

Published in The Chronicle of the Horse

Do you know how you get really, really good in a horse sport? There are some truisms: Just keep doing it; take lessons; hopefully have your coach help with your horse occasionally. But here's the thing a lot of people miss: ... riding isn't the only option for learning. In almost every part of the country, dedicated local trainers work to bring in more experienced competitors and trainers to teach occasional clinics. Watch for these opportunities—while you might not be jockeying for a riding spot, clinics are almost always open to auditors. Take a notebook, take an open mind, and take advantage of these opportunities whenever they present themselves in your area.

[Click here for the full article.](#)

Pro Tip: Boot Cleaning with Will Simpson

Watch as Will Simpson, Professional Show Jumper and Olympian, walks through the best methods of cleaning and caring for your boots. This video is brought to you by Ariat and features the new Ravello boots.

<https://youtu.be/p7BStO7kL3o>

About Dressage4Kids

Dressage4Kids, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated for the express purpose of providing educational and competitive opportunities for youth riders and the adults who support them.

<https://dressage4kids.org>

[Check out our videos on YouTube](#)

Dressage4Kids | d4k.org@gmail.com | dressage4kids.org

See what's happening on our social sites:

