

Hadley Perkins Scholarship Report 2015

I used my Lendon Gray scholarship money to pay for a program called boot camp. Boot camp is a three day camp that prepares the Riding Right Youth Dressage Team for the Youth Dressage Festival. We work on our dressage tests, have practice equitation classes, groom our horses, and study for the written test. It is a fun time, and we all enjoy it. This year was one of the best.

The first day this year I worked on equitation. The second day I rode my dressage test during a clinic with local judge Gail Kapiloff. On the third day everyone split into two groups, and one group gallivanted around the arena trying to have an efficient warm up, while the other studied. The other days we studied too, mostly in the afternoons. We also cleaned tack and groomed the horses, with us ending up dirtier than our equipment. In short, we had a great time.

Several things helped improve my rides. In equitation I worked to find my seat at the halt by taking my feet out of the stirrups and bringing my legs up in front of the saddle, on my horse's shoulders. Then I scooted around until I found the deepest part of the saddle. This is what improved my seat when I resumed my position. This exercise is not a good idea on a flighty horse, but if your horse doesn't care it is worth a try. That was what I did in equitation.

With Gail I did an exercise to get Lear (the horse I ride) more supple. In this, we did a ten meter half turn at C then returned to the wall in reverse direction at E. We did another turn beginning at A, coming back to E again and turning at C. This looked like two ice cream cones. We repeated this several times in the walk and in the trot. This helped Lear bend in our test as he became more supple.

Thank you to the donors for the scholarship money which funded my camp. I had an excellent time. Lear and I were well prepared for the Youth Dressage Festival. I hope what I shared in this report will benefit others too.

Hadley Perkins.