

To whom this may concern,

I am so thankful to everyone who made this clinic possible for me to participate in even though my horse was not able to come with me. My mom did everything she could to make this work out, I was so sad and upset Casey could not come. We worked so hard to bring Casey along to be prepared (we sent in so many videos of his progress) we were super excited to work with Lendon. But a few days before the clinic we got the awful news that Casey had a Torn Suspensory Ligament. Our vet did an X-ray and then a few days later she did an Ultrasound and told us he would be off work until spring 2022, I was so sad – this was my time to shine with Casey!!

Our dear friend Bobbie Gordan allowed us to bring Flyer to the Lendon Gray clinic in Wadsworth, Illinois at Tempel Lipizzan Farms, so I didn't have to miss the clinic I worked so hard for this last year with Casey, the horse my mom and I own.

Flyer was the first horse I felt comfortable cantering on and had helped me build my confidence when I was 8 yrs. Flyer is a 21 yr. Registered Oevero Paint, back in the day he was doing Tempis – he has such a big heart. Flyer had just been cleared from Cellulitis and he had just started back to light work. It was so devastating to hear the news about Casey and I was extremely upset while working with Lendon, knowing that I should have been there with Casey. I just couldn't get it off my mind no matter how hard I tried. A huge thank you to everyone who was there and was so understanding and helpful. Even though Casey wasn't there and I was just working with Flyer, Lendon found a way to keep Casey included that really meant so much to me. Yes, the first day was tough (we did a private lesson) and Flyer was stiff and sore. The first real day of the clinic we gave him some Bute as a recommendation from Lendon which really helped him a lot. On day 1 we really focused on quarter-line leg-yields and straightness going the center line focusing on his hind end. On the 2nd day Lendon had me really focused on lateral movements with Flyer because how experienced Flyer was, he was showing me the way and making me a better rider. I definitely struggled with staying square and not turning my hips when doing a shoulder in and haunches in. Lendon even taught me how to do a Renvers, which is when the shoulders are off the wall and the haunches and the horse has to stay straight. It took me a few tries but with Lendon's encouragement I felt like I could really do it and by the end of our 2day clinic I was able to; even with a big smile on my face. I did feel a connection with Lendon – like my mom says "I'm the little engine who could."

The D4K Program is really so much more than just riding – it's the people you meet – I actually took a lesson with Rosie Simoes before Casey's injury and when she came to speak of her experiences with Lendon at Tempel Lipizzans, I got so excited and even more motivated to keep working hard and staying focused! I am the only one in the Fox River Valley Pony Club that focus is in Dressage.

Thank you again for allowing me to be part of the TEAM.

Sincerely,
Madalene Meckl