



Quick quiz - when was the first D4K Weekend Equestrian Program?

The Dressage4Kids Weekend Equestrian Program started in 2003!

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Dressage4Kids Calendar

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

Dressage4Kids Zoom Series Continues

Registration in advance is required. For more information, including how to register, go to: <https://dressage4kids.org/programs/weekend-equestrian-program-2023.html>

Monday, April 17th at 7:30pm EDT via Zoom

- *Discussion with Emma Ford and Cat Hill about World Class Grooming*

Monday, April 24th at 7:30pm EDT via Zoom

- *Discussion with Robert Dover and Steffen Peters about Dressage Training and Competition - how it has changed and where it's headed*

Monday, May 8th at 7:30pm EDT via Zoom

- *Discussion with Laura King about Sports Psychology*

Monday, May 22nd at 7:30pm EDT via Zoom

- *Discussion with Georgia Vigo about applying to college as an equestrian*



Join US

via Zoom

Monday, April 17th at 7:30pm EDT

Dressage4Kids™ Weekend Equestrian Program
educational series welcomes:

Cat Hill and Emma Ford

Authors of *World Class Grooming*, *World Class Braiding*,
and *The Kid's Guide to Horsemanship and Grooming*

Registration in advance is required at www.dressage4kids.org



Join US

via Zoom

Monday, April 24th at 7:30pm EDT

Dressage4Kids™ Weekend Equestrian Program
educational series welcomes:

Olympians Robert Dover and Steffen Peters

“Dressage Training and Competition –
how it has changed and where it is heading”

Registration in advance is required at www.dressage4kids.org

How Bend Affects Your Dressage Horse's Straightness and Balance

[Published in Dressage Today](#)

by Felicitas von Neumann-Cosel

Almost everyone has come across these comments from judges or trainers: “Too much bend in the neck.” “Not enough bend in the body.” “Shoulders are falling out or in.” “Loss of balance in the corner.” “Need more angle or too much angle.”

The common ingredient that would help solve these problems is the understanding of how to develop a horse who can bend equally in both directions without losing self-carriage and lightness, in order to be able to maintain balance through a turn or lateral movement.

A horse who is bending properly has to flex laterally in the poll and neck while keeping the neck centered between both shoulders. He has to pick up his rib cage on the inside without bulging too far out to the outside. His jaw, shoulders and hips will align with the line of travel, almost like a little shoulder-in and haunches-in at the same time. A horse who is uniformly bending gives the appearance of having a curved line throughout his body. The famous sentence by dressage master Gustav Steinbrecht “ride your horse forward and straighten it” relies on the rider’s ability to create relative straightness through curved lines.

[Click to continue reading.](#)

Are Your Memberships Up-to-Date?

Time for a little spring cleaning!

Are all your memberships up-to-date? For the horse, rider, and owner?

USEF

USDF

FEI Passport

your local GMOs

Breed associations

SafeSport Training

Is your horse up-to-date on his vaccinations? His dental care? Hoof care?

Have you discussed parasite control with your vet? Do you have a plan for fecal egg counts and de-worming?

Have you sent your applications (or applications of intent) in for awards, NAYC, Festival of Champions, or anything else that requires applications?

Have you checked the competition calendar? Do you know which shows you want to enter and when the opening dates for entries are?

Dressage4Kids Winter Intensive Training Program - Rider Spotlights

For more information about the Dressage4Kids Winter Intensive Training Program, go to:
<https://dressage4kids.org/programs/winter-intensive-training-program.html>



Tessa Holloran

"Training in the WIT program helped me with challenging horses and introduced me to an incredible support system. Thanks to WIT, I have wonderful friends for life. It's an amazing experience that you never forget."

WIT Participant 2017 & 2018



Tessa resides fulltime in Florida and is a Freshman pursuing a Business Degree at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton. This is her fifth season working for and training with Ali Brock in Wellington.



Jessica Gaston

"WIT changed my life's trajectory by opening doors and giving invaluable education and opportunities. I am so thankful for the lasting experience and friendships that the program gave me!"

WIT Participant 2014



Jessica is a professional rider and trainer at her business Majestik Dressage in Ohio. She achieved her USDF Bronze, Silver, and Gold medals on a D4K donated horse.

Scholarship Report from Bridget Kelly

I was graciously presented with a scholarship to attend the USDF New Test Symposium with Kristi Wysocki at HIPICO Santa Fe as a 1st level demonstration rider, and I learned so much from Kristi's knowledge, expertise, and creative analogies. The entire weekend was so much fun, and such an incredible opportunity and experience.

Day one: Confidence is key

The first day of the symposium was focused on the demonstration and development of the new 2023 Training level through Developing Prix St. Georges dressage tests. Kristi gave the audience insight into what judges look for at each level, always referring to the purpose of the level, which is listed on every single test sheet. While performing our first test, 1st level test 2, I was quite nervous, but nevertheless we had a solid ride that Kristi scored in the mid 60s. After we finished our final centerline and halt, Kristi addressed the audience, asking whether my rider position score would be different or the same as my rider effectiveness score, and why. After several audience members chimed in with their opinions, Kristi clarified, stating that my rider position score would have been slightly lower, due to the fact that I was looking down the entire time! She called this "riding with a bowling ball on the horse" and advised me to open my upper body, lift my chin and eyes, and push my belly button/belt buckle forward, as it is simply impossible to look down when doing this.

Kristi, an avid eventer herself when she was younger, had heard from the president of the Dressage Club of New Mexico that I had won the Junior Beginner Novice division at the 2022 American Eventing Championships, and asked me to tell the audience about this. I shyly and quietly told them that we had won our division, but Kristi made me continue to say what we had done over and over again. At first, I was confused, until she began saying, "I don't care what you say, I care *how* you say it." It wasn't until I declared it loudly and confidently that she allowed me to stop repeating our title. Addressing both me and the auditors, Kristi began talking about how so many riders put themselves down and don't really celebrate their victories. She tied it in perfectly with her last point about how I looked down; doing so causes me to curl up the rest of my body and to consequently, when I am nervous, revert to riding in a timid, reserved manner – the same manner in which I talk about my accomplishments in front of others. Kristi had me hop off, walk to the mirror, and high-5 myself until my self-doubt disappeared and I really put some feeling and confidence into it (my homework is to do this 5 times every day before I get on). After I mounted again, she encouraged me to be bold and go for it in my next ride; telling me to always remember that when riding a test, at a show, clinic, symposium, or whatever, it is *your* 6 minutes in the ring, and you need to ride with exactly that type of confident mindset – your horse feels the energy you put out, and if you set the tone by riding actively forward with a bold, self-assured, confident attitude, the horse will rise to the occasion, and the judge most certainly can tell when you are putting such feeling and expression into your ride. Never question if you deserve to be where you are, doing what you're doing. She concluded by saying that our ride of 1st-2 was just missing a bit of exuberance and activity. Before performing 1st level test 3, we performed a few circles at the canter to warm up again, and as we were doing so, Kristi coached us on developing a little more hind activity, telling me to not lean back and sit behind the vertical so much and to instead let my shoulders come forward and allow my hips to really swing with the jump of the canter. It wasn't long before she said, "There's your working canter!"

It's crazy to think that focusing on the psychological aspect was able to completely change the way I rode and the test we performed in the way that it did. All I can say is this: attitude truly is everything! As soon as we went down centerline, Kristi said, "I can already tell that there's going to be more activity!" When I rode confidently and boldly from one movement to the next, with my chin up and belly button forward, not only did I enjoy our test even more, but also, our marks improved so drastically that when we finished our final salute, our score was right up there around 70%. Kristi stated how Chai looked like a

completely different horse when I rode her that way, and she also mentioned how our impulsion & submission scores, and my rider position and rider effectiveness scores improved by at least half a point during that ride, just because of the lightbulb that clicked on in my mind regarding being bold and really going for it during your test. "That's the type of ride that is going to put you in the top of your division at regionals," Kristi enthused.

[To continue reading, click on this link and then click on the link titled "Bridget Kelly - Clinic with Kristi Wysocki."](#)



Photo of D4K TEAM member Bridget Kelly entering the covered arena in snowy Santa Fe, New Mexico. Thanks to a Lendon Gray and Dressage4Kids Scholarship, Bridget and her Connemara were able to participate as a First Level demonstration rider/horse pair for Kristi Wysocki's symposium on the new 2023 USDF Tests. Copyright Peter Kelly.

Competitions just for youth riders - Save the Dates!

June 24-25
Region 1 Youth Team Challenge
HITS Culpeper at Commonwealth Park
Culpeper, Virginia
<https://www.lvda.org/youth-dressage-team-challenge>

July 30
Youth Dressage Festival Midwest
Hampton Green Farm
Fruitport, Michigan
<https://www.hamptongreenfarm.com/en>

August 10-12
Lendon's Youth Dressage Festival
HITS-on-the-Hudson Showgrounds
Saugerties, New York
<https://dressage4kids.org/d4k-festival/show-info/prize-list.html>

September 10
Atlanta Youth Festival
Georgia International Horse Park
Conyers, Georgia
<https://www.gdcta.org/youth-programs>

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](#)

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See what's happening on our social sites:

