Winter Intensive Training Program 2020 – Photo Essay

I never trained or competed in Wellington, so it's still a bit of a mystery to me every time I visit. Last year I went for 2 days. This year I went for a whole week… next year… we'll see!

The Dressage4Kids Winter Intensive Training Program (aka WIT) provides tremendous opportunities for its participants (along with those who stop by to audit). In addition to consistent training (daily riding lessons 5 days a week plus one hack day and one day off for the horses), riders have access to a regular fitness program, a multitude of lectures and field trips, competitions (for themselves and to cheer on others), and lessons in horse care and stable management. A normal day starts at 6:00am and might not finish until 9:00pm or later. It is nothing if not intense, but it is also illuminating and invigorating. I returned from my trip refreshed and excited for the year to come, not just for myself, but also for all our current and future Dressage4Kids riders.

Sunday, February 16th

My first day at the Winter Intensive Training Program – cavaletti day!

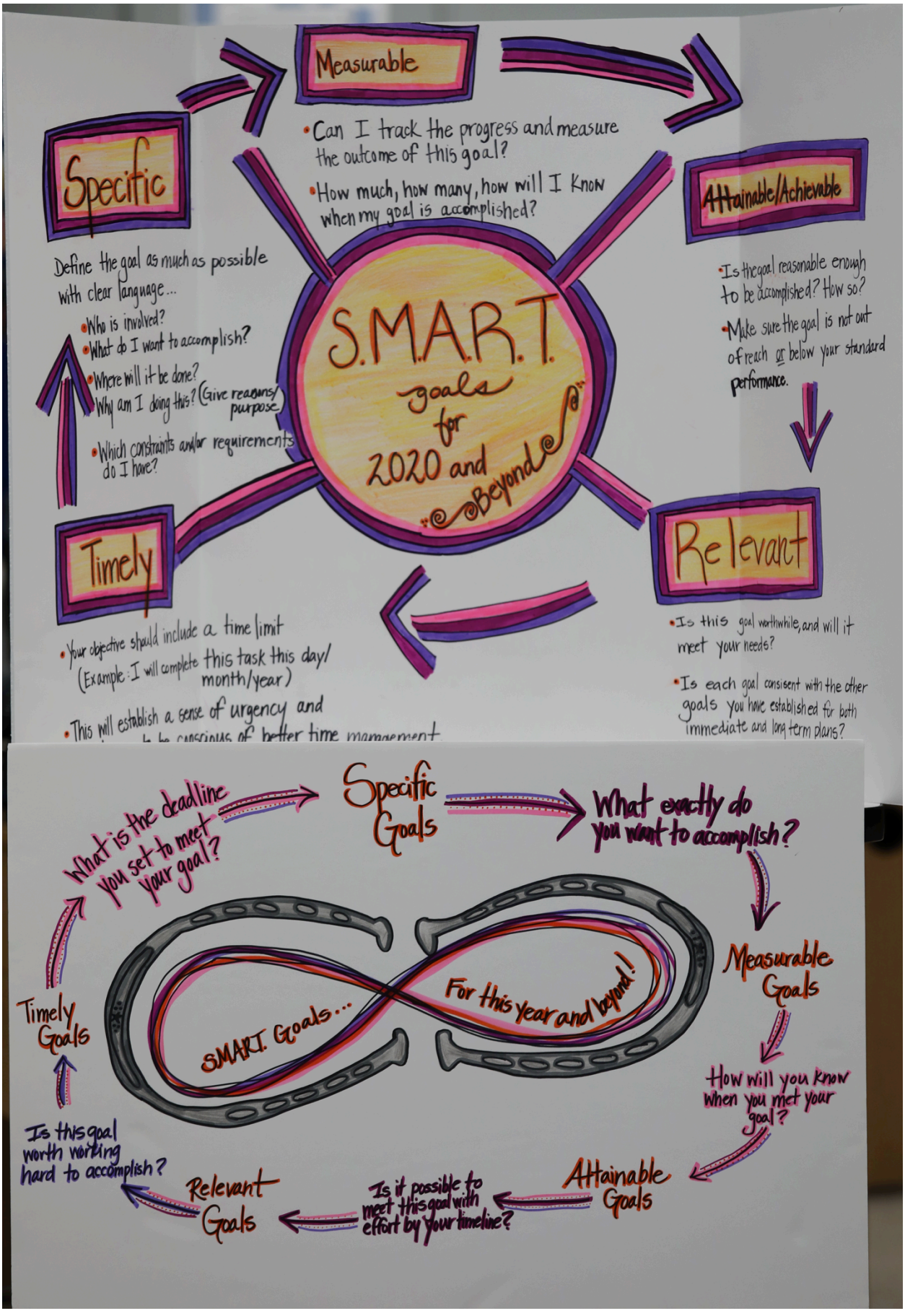






After spending the morning with the WITees and their adorable equine friends, we had a quick break at the swimming pool before heading to the Dressage4Kids Training4Teaching session. Training4Teaching was started by Olympians Lendon Gray and Ali Brock in an effort to continue to support our upcoming and experienced professionals. We expect that riding instructors have the knowledge of *what* to teach, but very few teachers/instructors have had any education about *how* to teach. February 16th was the third in a series of six workshops to be held in Wellington, Florida. On January 12th Lendon Gray and Ali Brock discussed teaching. On February 2nd Laura King discussed Mental Health for Trainers followed by a group discussion about teaching tools. The day that I attended, February 16th, Dr. Marg Watson presented SMART Goals and Learning styles followed by a group discussion about teaching tools.




S.M.A.R.T. goals for 2020 and Beyond
Specific
Define the goal as much as possible with clear language...
•Who is involved?
•What do I want to accomplish?
•Where will it be done?
•Why am I doing this? (Give reasons/purpose.)
•Which constraints and/or requirements do I have?
Measurable
•Can I track the progress and measure the outcome of this goal?
•How much, how many, how will I know when my goal is accomplished?
Attainable/Achievable
•Is the goal reasonable enough to be accomplished? How so?
•Make sure the goal is not out of reach or below your standard performance.
Relevant
•Is this goal worthwhile, and will it meet your needs?
•Is each goal consisent with the other goals you have established for both immediate and long term plans?
Timely
•Your objective should include a time limit (Example: I will complete this task this day/month/year)
•This will establish a sense of urgency and
Specific Goals
What is the deadline you set to meet your goal?
What exactly do you want to accomplish?
Measurable Goals
How will you know when you met your goal?
Attainable Goals
Is it possible to meet this goal with effort by your timeline?
Relevant Goals
Is this goal worth working hard to accomplish?
Timely Goals
SMART Goals...
For this year and beyond!

Monday, February 17th

On to the USDF Sport Horse Development Forum with Scott Hassler and Willy Arts at the beautiful Fair Sky Farm in Loxahatchee. Some of the Dressage4Kids WITees (an affectionate name for those participating in the Winter Intensive Training Program) volunteered for the day.



Tuesday, February 18th

Tuesday morning started with a trip to Loxahatchee so that my daughter could take a lunge lesson with Erin Swaney – after all, when you're around horses for the week, don't you also want the chance to ride one or two? After lunch we had the chance to watch Conrad Schumacher teach at Warren-McMullin Dressage in Loxahatchee. Mr. Schumacher has trained many students to the Olympic level and it was a pleasure to watch him teach. One of his students that day was Dressage4Kids member Kayla Kadlubek riding A Perfect Step (aka Percy), donated to Dressage4Kids by Suzanne Dansby, herself a long-time student of Mr. Schumacher. It was a special moment to see everyone together!

Wednesday, February 19th

Wednesday started early with a 7:30am lecture with Certified Holistic Health Coach Larissa Brazier, who talked about overcoming fear and enhancing performance by moving from fearful to fearless. She had the riders practice Theater of the Mind, an NLP technique focusing on visualization. After the lecture there was time for some jump rope and some lessons with Lendon Gray, before the next lecture with the High Performance Human Science and Sports Medicine Adviser to the USA Equestrian Teams and Director of Eventphysio Ltd. Andy Thomas. After Andy's lecture were more lessons with Lendon before I headed to another stable to watch Dressage4Kids member Tessa Holloran ride with Ali Brock.



















Thursday, February 20th

On Thursday morning we started the day with Lendon and the WITees before heading back to Loxahatchee for another lunge lesson with Erin Swaney. Next up was equestrian yoga, before heading back to Wellington for Leadership Development with JustWorld International and the CDI 5* Grand Prix at the Adequan Global Dressage Festival.







Friday, February 21st

Friday morning we drove to White Fences in Loxahatchee to watch Dressage4Kids member Hannah Irons compete in the FEI Prix St. Georges on Scola Bella, a horse donated to Dressage4Kids. Just as we Hannah rode down the centerline, the wind started picking up, the rain started coming down, and my daughter almost got taken out by a palm frond! Luckily Meagan had quick reflexes and grabbed the palm frond and Hannah and Bella handled the conditions like champs. After that we had a relatively uneventful day back with the WITees, who got to work on natural horsemanship with Doug Walsh.









Saturday, February 22nd

Saturday was another day spent with Lendon and the WITees prior to heading to the Adequan Global Dressage Festival to watch the CDI 5* Grand Prix Special.









Sunday, February 23rd

Our last day! It was hard to believe that the week had already gone by… we had just enough time to watch the WITees ride in a schooling show before we left for the airport. The week was both a typical WIT week and an absolutely extraordinary one. Thank you to everyone who helps make Dressage4Kids possible!







