During my lessons that were paid for with this scholarship, we worked mostly on cantering and my equitation. It's very difficult for the lesson horse I ride to canter and he often breaks pretty quickly. We have been working on this since I started riding him, which was roughly 2 years ago. In the lessons, we got good canters by working on both my equitation and exercises that have proven to help him carry himself better. The parts of my equitation that we tried to fix were mostly flexible wrists, longer legs, closed fingers, and a stronger core. Although I still have some trouble with these, they are a lot better and have definitely helped with keeping the canter. We often work on a strong core and I believe that that has been the most helpful. The exercises that we did were mostly latitudinal and longitudinal movements. We began with quarter line leg yields while trying to get more energy and forward movement. If those were going well, we did a few center line leg yields. After this, we did some transitions to get him moving and engaged. We then tried some cantering, and if it wasn't as nice as we wanted, we did a few more exercises that are a little more complicated like shoulder in and haunches in. I have found that these really help to get not only the horse more engaged, but also the rider. The cues make you think more about your seat and how to communicate with the horse without pulling on his mouth or spurring too much, which in my experience just makes the ride much worse. Our trot is often much better after doing these exercises and that makes the canters better. He was on the bit and carrying himself very well while having a good amount of energy. Thinking back to the first few rides on this horse, I can see how much of a difference all these lessons have made and how much of a better rider I am.

I hope you know how thankful I am for this opportunity after reading this.

Thank you so much,

Isabella Perkins