

## **Kate Seery**

I used the funds generously provided by the Dressage4Kids Scholarship committee to take extra lessons with my regular trainer, Anneliese Gilcrest. During these lessons I rode her Oldenburg gelding who has competed up to third level. While my off the track thoroughbred, Remy, has taught me so much about the challenges and triumphs of training a horse, riding her has caused me to pick up some bad habits that my lessons on Mozambique have help to correct. I kept a riding diary where I would record what I did after most lessons. I used these entries to pull out the following themes and accomplishments.

We spent several lessons focusing on straightness. I have a tendency to drop my right inside hip and block the horse's hind end engagement. Mo is very sensitive to every aid; if I am not sitting perfectly, centered he will become inconsistent and I will eventually lose the vital inside leg, outside rein connection.

Another important aspect of my lessons was improving how I ride the canter. Because Remy tends to explode into the canter I tense up in the transitions, and therefore create even more tension in my horse. I worked on creating a relaxed and clean transition with aids that asked for the canter just as his inside hind leg was coming forward. At the canter I focused collecting the canter while keeping the necessary energy for engagement. Stretching up and sitting very deeply helped me to achieve this while using very few hand half-halts.

Improving the precision and correctness of my aids for lateral movements was also a major area that we worked on. To highlight the difference between the shoulder-in and haunches-in aids, I performed an exercise where I would head down the long side in a shoulder-in then do a ten meter circle at E or B then continue down the long side in a haunches-in.

These lessons have not only improved my equitation, but given me valuable tools that can help me get the best out of my horse. I would thank Dressage4Kids Scholarship committee for allowing me to have the opportunity to take these extra lessons.