

Lyla Andrick D4K Scholarship Report
September 3, 2015

Dear Lendon Gray and the D4K, Inc. Scholarship Committee,

I was able to participate in a Dressage Workshop Week at my stable, Cricket Hill thanks to receiving the Dressage 4 Kids Scholarship Award! During the workshop, I rode twice a day; I had one group lesson in the morning and one private lesson in the afternoon. During the Dressage Workshop, my trainers told me that my body position has greatly improved. My horse and I were able to work together more often and we created an even deeper connection.

One of my trainers, Kira Steins, taught me the “Rocker Theory.” My trainer told me to think of my seat as a rocking chair, or a rocking horse. By “turning my rocker” I help bend my horse using my seat and calves but not leaning to the inside or giving away my outside rein. My horse, Sunny, is stiff when tracking left and I’m constantly getting frustrated when my circles lose shape or my corners look more like quarter circles. By using the Rocker Theory I am able to work on bending my horse on circles and into corners better. When I was having trouble bending Sunny to the left, my trainer told me to exaggerate the bend and apply the Rocker Theory; this produced a gorgeous shoulder-in.

As a former hunter jumper, I have a bad habit of gluing my knees to the side of the saddle. This is not good because this causes me to use my ankles and swing my leg forward. During Dressage Workshop I was able to focus on my lower body during short private sessions; I really improved and Sunny seemed much happier. To keep Sunny cantering without falling on the forehand it is essential to keep my legs from swinging and to use lots of core strength. I was able to focus on this and make the canter easier for both Sunny and me to maintain!

During breaks, my team companions and I worked on practice tests and studied for the written test. I’m so happy that I came in second in the written test!

This January I created the Saddle Club Gazette, a monthly newspaper with stories, advice columns, and events going on at Cricket Hill. I wanted to make a special issue for LYDF to hand out to other riders. During the Dressage workshop, I asked my friends to write stories for the special paper. I was so excited when one of my teammates told me that all the people in the LYDF office were reading the paper when they weren’t busy during LYDF!

This four-day workshop really improved my riding and helped me work with my horse more. My body position improved, I mastered helpful bending techniques and I learned how to make Sunny go round. During the entire camp, roundness was an objective I wanted to achieve. By the end of camp I was able to get my mare round for almost my entire Intro test!

Due to my improved horsemanship skills learned at the Dressage Workshop, I placed 6th in my division at LYDF this year. This was a big improvement over my 14th place in my division at HITS the year before!

I am thankful for receiving the D4K Scholarship and look forward to the Weekend Educational Program in January!

Sincerely,
Lyla Andrick