

Lendon Gray Scholarship Committee,

Thank you so much for the amazing opportunity that you have given me over the past few months. With the financial help that you guys have generously donated to me, I have been able to participate in monthly clinics with Ernst Herrmann and Heather Oleson. I have been working with both clinicians off and on for a few years, as my current trainer hosts monthly clinics with both Heather and Ernst at the barn I ride at, Summerfield Farm in Ridgefield, WA. However, because of financial issues, I am not always capable of riding in these incredible clinics.

Heather has trained many horses to Grand Prix and is a very successful FEI rider. She has participated in many CDI's, as well as the USEF Festival of Champions. She has been teaching dressage for well over twenty years. Heather rode and trained with Ernst Herrmann for many years. She states that he is one of the biggest trainers in her dressage career. Because of this, they have similar theories and techniques when it comes to dressage; however, they come with very different approaches.

I love working with Ernst because he has a great eye for working with juniors. He is very good at making sure that I am paying attention to every detail, every second of the ride, and that I am able to correct things on my own and realize what I should be doing to correct these specific things. He provides great knowledge on the basics of dressage and is clear about knowing the basics before moving up the levels. With the FEI horse that I ride, Ernst works with us on being correctly through the reins and using the horse's entire body before moving to movements like piaffe and passage. He finds a way to explain that these same basics should be used in every horse, no matter the level of experience or training this horse has. Working with a third level horse, Ernst uses the same type of techniques to get the horse to use his whole body and be correctly bending and supple. One of the exercises that we have worked on to achieve this is using trot poles. This gets the horse to relax their body and truly lift themselves over the poles, while staying on the bit and bent at the same time. Ernst is also big on knowing the difference

when you should or should not use a double bridle. In our most recent clinic, he had me ride the FEI horse in a double one day and the snaffle the other day. This shows me that the horse is correctly on the aids and supple through their body in the snaffle bridle, but still having the leverage from the double to help with FEI movements when needed.

Heather is great at explaining why we are doing certain movements and exercises, and how it helps the horse. In one clinic, she had me doing three loop serpentines with 10-meter circles every time I touched the rail. This helped to loosen the horse's body and find the correct bend. She also had me working on riding a straight line in shoulder in, a couple steps of half pass, then straight in shoulder in again. This helped me understand the correct frame a horse should be in, and it really helped to feel how much control I truly had over the horse, and when they started to takeover on their own. Heather also likes to focus on transitions within the gate to focus on collection, as well as reactivity off the leg. While teaching a horse flying changes, Heather makes me realize how precise you have to be with the cue, especially on a smaller horse.

Riding with both clinicians has broadened my education and passion for dressage. I am forever grateful to the Lendon Gray Scholarship Committee for granting me such a large opportunity for furthering my dressage experience and training.

Sincerely,

Jordyn Shaw