

Hadley Perkins
Lendon's Scholarship Report 2018

Eric Horgan Clinic Report

Day 1

The first day I worked with Eric Horgan the main focus was on forward energy. He had us doing walk-halt transitions, then walk-trot transitions, then trot-canter transitions. He wanted all of the horses in our group to move more forward and expressively. This was very helpful because all of us in this lesson were riding school horses who usually have younger riders on them, so they aren't as used to going forward. This stretched out their muscles and got them more on the aids; my horse Lear particularly.

Day 2

On the second day we worked on forward and sideways. Leg yields, crossing over on the open side of a circle, and turns on the forehand were all included. This helped to activate Lear's hind legs, and made him step under his belly, which is his center of gravity. These exercises helped him use his hind legs with more power and lighten his forehand which is very important seeing as Lear is built downhill, with his withers being noticeably below his hindquarters.

Day 3

On the third day we worked a little bit on the goals we had set for the clinic. I wanted to work on getting Lear on the bit. We had all the components to do so, but it was just a matter of how much, how little, and when. Lear and I would get into little head tossing fights, because we couldn't hit the perfect arrangement of leg and seat and rein aids. Eric walked us around on a twenty meter circle, holding Lear's reins in his hands. He demonstrated what he saw as the correct rein aids for us, occasionally telling me when to ask for more forward, or to move more with my seat. As he let go, and walked beside us, we had our AHA! moment. We were able to go round in all three gaits to both directions without head tossing or angry nosewagging. It was a really incredible moment, and it pushed us forward in our training as well as creating a peaceful relationship. We figured out how to get what we wanted without fighting.

As I prepared this week for the Youth Dressage Festival, I found myself going back to Eric's lessons and even spent an evening watching videos my mom took of our work in the clinic. I also watched our dressage tests since then. The things I learned really helped out our relationship, and I think that getting us past our fighting actually benefited Lear more than any of us thought. This is because he recently saw a horse masseuse, who helped him because he was so tight that his C2 vertebrae had rotated, pinching his greater optical nerve and giving him chronic headaches. Looking back at the Eric clinic, I realize how amazing it was that we could figure out all of that peacefully while Lear had a massive headache. Furthermore, the way Eric had us ride probably kept that area from getting tighter by avoiding our little disagreements.

Thank you for helping me go to the Eric Horgan clinic. It not only helped Lear and me as a team, but it helped Lear and his headaches since we learned not to fight. I am really happy that I had an opportunity to work with Eric, as he always inspires me.

Thank you again,
Hadley Perkins