

Receiving this Dressage4Kids scholarship has given me the incredible opportunity that significantly enhanced my growth as a rider and an up and coming instructor. This generous support has not only eased the financial challenges of pursuing this sport but has also motivated me to work harder and continue growing in the sport I love. I am deeply thankful for the faith Dressage4Kids has shown in me, I was committed to making the most of this opportunity.

Thanks to the Dressage4Kids scholarship, I was able to audit and attend a clinic with Steffen Peters, an experience that significantly shaped my growth as a developing upper-level rider. His instruction deepened my awareness of the precision and feel required in every movement. I learned how crucial it is to ride into the canter pirouette in shoulder-fore, ensuring the horse is collected and balanced *before* the turn begins. Steffen emphasized the importance of not just riding movements, but giving them structure such as providing a clear, purposeful ending to both the walk, trot and canter half passes. One of the most valuable lessons I took away was how to help my horse achieve cleaner flying changes. I had been struggling with the changes being late behind, and Steffen showed me how to fix this by riding a canter half pass, ending it without changing the bend, and then asking for the flying change. This helped my horse stay straighter and more through, resulting in more correct and prompt changes. The level of clarity, timing, and finesse that Steffen brought to every exercise has left a lasting impact on how I ride and how I think as an instructor.

Before riding with Steffen Peters, I had the valuable opportunity to audit a full day of his clinic and observe him coach a variety of riders. As someone who hopes to become a professional trainer and instructor in the future, this experience was incredibly meaningful. Watching how he worked through different challenges with each horse and rider gave me new tools and ideas I've already begun using with my own students. I was able to take detailed notes, ask a question, and learn not just what he taught but *how* he taught. What stood out most was how encouraging and patient he was, especially when riders made mistakes. His ability to stay positive while still being precise created an environment where learning could really happen. I was also impressed by how creative and adaptable he was with each pair, tailoring exercises and explanations to fit the unique needs of every horse. Observing that level of thoughtful, individualized coaching gave me a deeper appreciation for what it means to be an effective and empathetic instructor.

I am incredibly thankful to Dressage4Kids for making this experience possible. Riding with and learning from Steffen Peters has had a lasting impact on both my development as a rider and my growth as an aspiring instructor. The knowledge, inspiration, and confidence I gained from this opportunity will continue to shape my journey in the sport for years to come. I am committed to applying what I've learned to improve not only my own riding, but also to support and guide the students I work with. Thank you again for your support and for investing in the next generation of dressage professionals.

