

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude as a recipient of the American Connemara Dressage4Kids Scholarship and the wonderful experience that it allowed me to have. The financial support allowed me to fulfill a long time equestrian goal of training with Robert Dover during a Dressage4Kids Clinic.

In July, I attended the Dressage4Kids Kundrun TEAM Horsemastership Clinic with Robert Dover at the beautiful Bel-Aire Farms in Millbrook, NY with my Connemara Sport Pony, Bitsy's Itsy. The clinic consisted of 3 days of lessons as well as lectures and demonstrations provided by professionals in the equine industry.

On day 1 of the clinic Robert Dover started off the day with a lecture on dressage theory. During the lecture he described the importance and use of the rein of opposition. When I wasn't riding I audited the other clinic riders before me and I was able to take a lot of notes to study in preparation for my own ride. In the afternoon, Itsy and I had our first lesson with Robert. We started off with rubber-banding within the same gait. The exercise revealed a lot of room for improvement on our transitions within the trot. Robert gave great guidance on improving this with more forwardness. We also worked on walk pirouettes where Robert gave me tips and analogies. After all of the rides were finished, we all participated in a yoga session with Samantha Free. We practiced breathing and stretches that opened the hip flexors which is in favor of riding. After yoga, Bel-Aire Farms owner and rider, Clair Glover, graciously hosted a dinner for rider and trainers attending the clinic. It was so much fun to sit with the other riders and talk about our experiences.

On day 2 we had our lesson in the morning. During this lesson we worked in the canter gait doing medium and collected canter, simple changes, and centerlines. Robert not only improved the transitions of the simple change, but also my walk within the simple change movement. Robert taught me how the degree of correction should correlate to the effect. After my ride I audited the next rides before lunch. During these rides Robert described how you should always pat the horse with the inside rein instead of the outside to avoid losing the connection. During lunch we had a lecture with Dr. Cyra Erwin of Millbrook Equine. We learned about common equine diseases and ligaments of the horse. Then I continued to watch and take notes of the other riders. To finish off the day we had a virtual lecture with Laura Stockhaus of Lake Erie College. She educated us on the equine digestion system, microbiome and equine nutrition.

On day 3 Itsy and I rode with Robert at before lunch. I requested to work on trot voltes and some more trot extensions. We practiced keeping the quality of trot that we got from our first lesson throughout the figure. I also discussed my leg position and Robert helped me fix the straightness of my right leg in just a few

minutes. Then for the lunch lecture we had a in-hand demonstration by Fred Win. I learned from Fred how important mutual respect is between you and your horse. Fred complimented Robert's teaching throughout the clinic emphasizing the concept of every turn being a corner. Fred explained the importance of utilizing each corner in the arena to leg yield into and create more bend. Once I returned home I implemented this idea in my own arena, cleared out the corners and now practice going deep into each one.

It truly was an honor to watch Robert Dover over the three days of the clinic and I absorbed so much education that will help me as a dressage rider. Myself and the other riders grew each day and it was so interesting to watch each rider progress throughout the weekend. Working with Dressage4Kids, Lendon Gray and Robert Dover was an absolutely amazing experience and I am so thankful for the opportunity.