

USDF Convention Youth Scholarship Essay by Shirley Stewart

To get the USDF one thousand dollar convention scholarship would mean that I have an opportunity to meet more people who are interested in dressage. It would be a good opportunity to learn more about the sport of dressage. By meeting new people I can pick up different opinions and training techniques. No matter how good you are and how well trained your horse is; there is always something new to learn. This scholarship would mean that I have a chance to get closer to my dream.

My Dream is to someday make it to the Olympics. It is a big dream and it is very hard to achieve, but if another person can make it to the Olympics then "why can't I?" School plays a very important role in achieving this dream. I am an A B student, and working to my full potential is very important. I play the flute in the Lorena High School Band. Other activities include learning how to play the guitar, and trying out teen modeling.

I am a part of the FFA Ag program at school. I recently did Equine Judging in an FFA event. This coming up school year I 'm enrolled in the Equine class so that I can learn even more about horses. My plan for the follow up year is to take the Vet Tech class my junior year, (and to finish up) the advanced veterinary medicine class my senior year of high school.

I will take the Knowledge that I learned at the USDF annual convention and apply it to my riding skills and my overall horse knowledge. I am not only interested in riding horses but also learning about the way there body works. My plan is to go to vet school at ATM University when I graduate high school. I want to be a large animal vet, particularly equine. I was in the pony club for several years; this made me love reading about the horse's structure, the way it uses its muscles, and how to take good care of your horse. I take the knowledge that I have on horse's body structure and apply it to my training techniques. The books and magazines teach you that when the horse is being "bad" maybe it's trying to tell you something. An example would be if the horse isn't quit giving at the pole and it is heavy on your hands maybe you're not sitting properly or squeezing enough with your legs, or perhaps something is bothering or hurting the horse. I am constantly trying to learn how to improve my riding and my training skills.

I am a member of Austin Dressage Unlimited, Houston Dressage Society, Central Texas Dressage Society and Central Texas Dressage JR/YR program. In 2011, I earned my C-1 rating and Bronze Dressage Award in the Pony Club. For school year 2011-2012 I completed the USEF High school program and earned my letterman patch and pin. I'm currently part of the Bachelor Program with Austin Dressage Unlimited's ADU-University program. I have Attended CTDS Mini Shows, HDS Qualified Shows, the Hilda Gurney Clinic, and the Lilo Fore Clinic hosted by USDF. I have also been in two Jeremy Steinberg Clinics. This year I earned my Bronze Medal on a 14.2 hand German riding pony named Osborne and the Rider Performance Award at first level.

Having this scholarship would mean a lot to me. It would give me the opportunity to advance my riding skills, therefore; making me a better trainer with horses and with people.