

CRDA 2018 Scholarship: 2019 Camp Report

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Receiving the 2018 CRDA Dressage Scholarship was a complete surprise and was the best thing for me at this time in my life.

As I was recovering from a traumatic riding accident, I was not sure if I wanted to continue to train and compete in dressage. Mixed feelings and emotions were consuming my thoughts about whether I should even ride at all anymore. I decided I would stay involved as a non-riding participant, going to clinics with friends and attending a few CRDA meetings as well as starting the CRDA merchandise project. My occupational therapy involved grooming my horses and doing very light chores. Minimally, it looked like I could not start riding again until spring 2019. My husband and horse friends were very encouraging with my healing process. There were however, many people who thought I was crazy to even consider getting on a horse again, much less my own mare who was the one involved with my accident. My heart and mind were conflicted with doubt and desire.

Writing the scholarship essay was incredibly therapeutic for me as my aspirations to ride again grew stronger and more positive each passing day. I met with my primary and told her I yearned to start riding. I had to see if it was still “in there”. Denny Emmerson stated my feelings perfectly in a recent Facebook post about his comeback from a traumatic riding accident:

“...I did not want to feel defined by fear and insecurity...neither did I want to feel as if I was incapable. ...I also wanted to see if I would do it with any proficiency. Again, it was a personal challenge, to see if what I had worked so diligently to learn was still “in there”.”

My primary really wanted me to wait until spring to get back on a horse. Being a “horse person” herself, she understood why I wanted to so sooner and gave me the ok. Together we developed a plan for therapeutic and light riding to my existing physical therapy program. Then, to my astonishment, I won the CRDA Scholarship! While at the CRDA Banquet, I set a lofty goal of being healthy and strong enough to ride in the 2019 CRDA Adult Camp. This camp would be my sixth. I didn’t want to miss a year because of the accident, and I couldn’t possibly pass up the scholarship that would pay for camp.

The 2019 CRDA Camp was incredible! I was able to ride with Lynne Kimball Davis and Sharon McCusker, both of whom I admire and have ridden with before. I had only been walking and trotting, and had a few lessons under my belt. Both Lynne and Sharon helped me devise a plan and exercises to continue to develop the walk and trot along with my confidence as well. I was very comfortable working with both of them. I knew they would push me enough out of my comfort zone to help me decide if I wanted to continue riding, training, and eventually to show again. With Lynne I actually cantered for the first time since the accident. It was exciting and terrifying at the same time. We came to the conclusion that the canter should be worked on when I was a little stronger. I left CRDA Adult Camp with the confidence and knowledge that it was still “in there”. I have been riding and training since!

I am forever grateful to Sage Farm for providing the CRDA Scholarship, and the CRDA Board for awarding it to me. This scholarship truly provided me with the incentive to heal and be strong enough to ride in Camp. Without it, I know I would not be where I am today in my healing and riding process. CRDA has been a tremendously positive and encouraging group that continues to provide me with many opportunities to further my dressage journey, goals and aspirations.

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