



AHYA President's Corner

2012 AHYA March Meeting



By Laura Killian - AHYA President
April 2012

There was a large turnover this winter on the AHYA Youth Board of Directors. Several new youth directors came into Denver a day early to attend the Denver City Tour. It was a perfect opportunity for several new youth directors to bond before a weekend focusing on our AHYA agenda. This year's Denver City Tour began with a tour of the U.S. mint followed by a short walk to see the outside of the Denver Justice Building and State Capital. Next, we attended a tour at Hammond's candy store where we watched candy makers hand make hundreds of candy canes. We then drove to Idaho Springs, Colorado and had lunch at a mountainside pizza shop and ending with a stop at Red Rocks Amphitheater. By the end of our fun-filled day I was completely assured we had a fantastic group of girls that will be contributing their ideas to AHYA this year.

This proved to be true during our Board of Director's Meeting on Saturday. Everyone was eager to share their ideas and to contribute to the meeting's agenda. Each Youth Director enthusiastically commitment to turning these ideas into real changes and opportunities that would make a difference for the youth they represent. The AHA Board of Directors also met in Denver the same weekend. We were given the opportunity to share our thoughts with our adult counterparts during a working lunch.

Sunday, we brainstormed ideas for the AHYA Convention to be held July 20th at Youth Nationals. The theme for this year is "AHYA through the Erabs." I know all of the Youth Directors are excited to see what creative ideas you come up with to represent your decade. We are working to put together a Star Panel at this year's convention comprised of well known industry professions. This is an event you will not want to miss!



We also want to hear from all of you! If you have any questions about becoming a delegate, running for an office, or learning about how you can get involved with the AHYA, please email me or your regional director.

Thank you.
~ **Laura Killian**
AHYA President

2011, AHYA President's Report to General Session



**By Sarah Porter
November 2011**

Good morning and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the Arabian Horse Youth Association. My obsession with horses began at a young age on my family farm in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. When I finally outgrew my welsh pony, Cocoa Puff, it was time that I learned to ride our family's Arabian. She was green broke and spirited but after hours at the barn working to improve my horsemanship and gain her

trust, we finally formed a bond with each other so strong that only a true horse person could comprehend. Kirashana was my best friend who would provide me with all the opportunities that a child could only dream of. She helped me grow into the young lady I am today. She was willing, intelligent, athletic and beautiful. I knew that there was something unique about Arabians that made them the breed for me. When she had to be put down suddenly two years ago, I wasn't sure if I'd be able to look at another grey Arabian again without crying. Despite how difficult it was to continue without her after we had been partners for so many years, I made a decision to honor her through sharing my passion for the Arabian breed by continuing to show my half-Arabian MS Spanish Legacy in Region 15, competing in open dressage shows and participating in AHYA programs.

Serving as the Region 15 Youth Director during my first youth board meeting in March 2010, I knew I had involved myself in something great. By July, I was so motivated by this young group of equine enthusiasts that I wanted to dive even deeper into this association and I was elected as Vice President. Today I stand here as the newly elected President and I cannot believe where this wonderful breed has taken me. As President, I have never been more ready to be a leader and role model for other AHYA members. When traveling to events surrounded by young horse lovers, I find it important to encourage these inspiring athletes and horse enthusiasts to speak out because they really can make great things happen despite their age. Youth Nationals was no exception.

Our week began with a productive Youth Board meeting, and an entertaining start to our Annual Youth Convention. This year's AHYA Convention theme was Under the Sea. There were 83 credentialed delegates in attendance who welcomed our Keynote Speaker, Mike Ferrara of Ferrara Photography. He shared a personal story, with a touch of humor, about how he established himself as a notable photographer, especially in the Arabian show circuit. He spoke of the frustration he went through taking photo after photo until he finally was able to consistently capture that animated English pleasure victory pass where you could see the sheer bliss on the rider's face. Convention attendees not only learned how to position themselves for the perfect victory pass in the upcoming week of competition, but also the importance of perseverance in order to achieve all of their goals and dreams in life. Convention sponsors, Kimberly Brown and Karen Homer Brown from HorseShow.com also gave a presentation of their new website program along with an invitation for all Arabian youth to participate in this program of online competitions and critiques. Additionally, Lisa Jo White gave a brief presentation about the

upcoming World Cup tryouts for Saddleseat Equitation riders.

Youth Delegates voted for the incoming 2011-2012 Executive Board of Directors. I would like to congratulate and welcome Hailey Harrington, AHYA Vice President from Region 1, Missy Jenson, AHYA Secretary from Region 5 and Hannah Bell, AHYA Treasurer from Region 2. Our new, eager Executive Board immediately comprised a list of goals for the year. For instance, we are working to reach out to other breed registries and youth associations in order to pool ideas as a horse industry and promote alliances. We want to educate and increase the popularity of our breed by encouraging newspapers, magazines and online sources to publish press releases and articles related to the success of AHYA members and their Arabians. Our youth board is comprised of some of the brightest young equine enthusiasts you will find in any breed. We are hard working, dedicated and passionate. In addition to promotion of our breed and youth members, we strongly feel that there is a need for us to look beyond our own selves and do something more for the greater good. We have been discussing fundraising plans for 2012 to support a national charity organization such as March or Dimes or Breast Cancer Research.

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Our Youth Convention closed with a resolution presented to the floor by the Equitation and Showmanship Committee. It was referring to the Arabian Exclusion of test 16 in the USEF Handbook. The resolution, which was to remove the Arabian Exclusion for Hunter Seat Equitation riders, was passed by the Youth Convention Delegates. This resolution was presented this year for your consideration as Resolution 12-11. This is an example of how our Youth Board and members continue to prove they want to be an active voice in this, our association. The AHYA Board along with the assistance of Angela Mannick, AHA Youth & Family Programs, and our very dedicated volunteers, Debbie Himmel the Youth Committee Chair, Cindy Howey and Stacey Dunn, devoted their week to facilitating our annual convention, youth fundraisers and many other youth activities throughout the week. The Youth Board orchestrated games at the welcome dinner for the first time. Regions bonded while decorating golf carts for the opening ceremonies, the Parade of Regions. Other annual activities were enjoyed by all such as the stick horse workshop and contest, flying pigs, horse judging and hippology contests, ice cream social and our new Poker Run fundraiser. The Poker Run coupled a progressive barn party feel with a competitive family activity for all ages around the grounds. We also held the annual consignment sale, which has turned out to be our most profitable fundraiser at Youth Nationals. Through the hard work of our volunteers and youth directors, we raised over \$20,000 in support of our youth programs associated with the show. AHYA was also presented with a check for \$5,686 from the Arabian Horse Times. The Times held an online silent auction to support our youth programs and we look forward to seeing this partnership grow over the next few years. Our final fundraiser of the year is held right here at your annual convention. Please make sure to stop by the youth silent auction in the Regency Foyer and bid on our wonderful items we have worked to collect all year. There are beautiful jewelry pieces, perfect gift ideas for the holidays and even some spectacular vacation opportunities.

The Youth Nationals show has even gained notability overseas! We had two visitors; Gretchen and Keeley Copeman, come all the way from Australia to attend our national show. Gretchen and Keeley became members of the Arabian Horse Association as they prepared for their trip to the states. Earlier

this year, Keeley entered the AHYA Creative Contest and was honored at convention with awards for her submissions in art and creative writing. Throughout the week, youth board members took turns showing the Copemans around the grounds and ensuring they were having a great time. They watched a variety of classes in Tingly Coliseum. The Copemans were intrigued by the differences in terminology, class specs and attire in the show ring. They were most fond of the native costume class, which Keeley competes in regularly in Australia. Their family also generously sponsored the Novice Judging Contest held at Youth Nationals and they both participated as contestants. Gretchen even received Top Ten honors in the 18 and over division. Keeley had been this year's high individual in Australia's youth judging contest. They both agreed, however; that Keeley would need to study a little harder if she were to ever plan to compete in our National Judging Contest due to the vast difference in class specs.

The National Arabian Youth Judging Contest was held again this year in conjunction with the US Nationals Show in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The contests boasted 34 teams from all over the country in 4-H/FFA, Jr AHA and Senior age divisions. Chuck Mangan did an outstanding job once again gathering first class horses for the contest. We want to thank all of those individuals again who donate their horses each year. Your generosity has allowed this contest to be recognized year after year as one of the most prestigious judging contests around. The contest continues to award over \$10,000 in scholarships and other prizes. This year, with the approval of the Judges and Stewards office, the AHA Board of Directors and the US National Show Commission, the high overall individual of the entire contest was invited to guest judge the Arabian Mounted Costume Class Finals night with the official panel of judges. A young fifteen year old girl from Virginia 4-H, Delaney O'Donnell, was presented with the opportunity. Wearing a borrowed black dress and shoes, her teammate curled her hair and did her make up so she would fit the part of an official on finals night. She stood center ring and had the time of her life. She even managed to pin the champion and reserve champion though she said she didn't get all of the top tens. This small gesture, surely made an impact on this young - non Arabian - girl. And without a doubt she left feeling welcomed and excited about the Arabian horse.

Our AHYA Board of Directors also gathered in Tulsa, Oklahoma to catch a glimpse of finals night and for our annual fall meeting. I was elated to see so many new faces on our youth board. Everyone came to the table ready to work and with many fresh, new ideas on how to make improvements within our organization. Our youth directors continue to do a phenomenal job within their Regions promoting youth programs as well as facilitating projects and fundraisers to better their community. For instance, Region 1 holds a recycling fundraiser to support their youth programs as well as help the environment.

We reorganized our youth committees and elected new chairs to any vacant positions. With the help of Angela Mannick and Debbie Himmel, we outlined new goals for our committees to work on over the next few months. We look forward to the continued support of our adult committee counterparts in communicating current developments and encouraging our youth to pursue our objectives. One continued objective our youth board shares with our AHA President, Lance Walters is the need to focus on growing our youth membership. Kirsten Kimbler, our 2008 AHYA Vice President and Youth of the Year, and past USEF Youth Sportsman Award Winner and Junior Equestrian of the Year was invited to attend the August AHA board of directors meeting in Denver, Colorado. Ms Kimbler was invited to speak about the importance of providing more funding and support for youth programs. Since 2006, youth membership numbers have declined steadily by 10% each year. Coincidentally, this is also when budget constraints stopped all youth related print advertising. We stopped sending our dynamic youth members to leadership events. We also discontinued participating in youth outreach events at the grass roots levels like the annual FFA Convention where we used to reach 60,000 agricultural-oriented kids!

Ms Kimbler's presence sparked many discussions and ideas for supporting our youth programs. The future of this organization lies with our youth members. In twenty or thirty more years, how many of the same faces will you see sitting in the chairs around you? Mr. Walters has avidly voiced his concern for where our youth association is headed. Creating a valued youth association will breathe new life into this organization. When you look into the stands at Youth Nationals or walk the barn isles, for each child participating you have parents, siblings, grandparents and friends attending and supporting their rider. The youth is our future as well as our gateway to thriving. To make these efforts a reality, it is going to take the support of each and every region, club as well as each one of you seated here.

With this weeks board motion for allocating \$25,000 annually to Youth Programs, Our Youth Board of Directors were so excited that we have already been exchanging emails and facebook posts about all the possibilities the next fiscal year will hold. We need to promote the breed at a grass roots level such as 4H, FFA, expos and fairs. We need to think outside the box and find new ways to bring members in our doors, as well as show them the benefits of being a part of a local club.

There is a natural attraction for young children to the horse as an animal. It is our job to show them that the Arabian is the breed of horse they should love. Our breed is a foundation. It is beautiful, romantic and versatile. The Arabian provides us with all of this substance to work with, but it is up to us to take its qualities and deliver them to those first time horse owners and show them why an Arabian is the best of breeds. I challenge you to share your passion, as I have, for the Arabian horse with your community and encourage them to get involved with the Arabian Horse Association.

Thank you.

~ **Laura Killian**
AHYA President

AHYA Welcomes Laura Killian as the 2011-12 AHYA President!

By Laura Killian - AHYA President
September 2011

Hello AHYA!

I am Laura Killian, your new AHYA president. I know this year will be an incredible experience serving AHYA with the new Board of Directors: Vice President Haley Harrington (R1), Treasurer Hannah Bell (R2), Secretary Marissa Jensen (R5) and the rest of the fantastic Youth Directors.

Now for a little about my life and horses...

I am a sophomore in college at Penn State University studying Business Marketing and Equine Science. This year I get to take classes about horse management, horse judging and animal science! How cool is that :-)

I am also the Special Events chair of the Penn State Dressage team. Last year, I was even given the opportunity to compete in Intercollegiate Dressage Association competitions for PSU. I'm a part of a few non-horsey clubs at school too such as the ski club, judo team, THON and some dance organizations. Outside of school, I am the Youth Director of the Pennsylvania Equine Council and spend any free time traveling, enjoying the outdoors, working out or with my family and friends.

I am a member of Region 15, specifically from Lancaster, PA. My mom, Marie Killian, has always been horse crazy so when she married my dad, Rick Killian, she made it clear that someday she'd have horses in her backyard. When I was 2 years old we moved to a small farm, which is where my family still lives today. Our family rented camp horses every winter and this is when my obsession with horses began. A few years later, my family was ready to buy a horse that would be ours forever. We planned on purchasing a safe, older quarter horse. That all changed when a 5 month old Arabian stuck her head out of the stall and began nibbling on my dad's jacket pocket. Kirashana+, affectionately known as Kira spent the first 7 years of her life primarily as a "pasture ornament" while I developed my riding skills as a 4H member with my welsh pony Cocoa Puff. After a few years of showing Cocoa in low hunter classes and showmanship, I was ready to learn how to ride Kira and enter my first A-rate show! Soon Kira and I were excelling in hunter pleasure, equitation, native costume, trail, sport horse under saddle, sport horse in-hand, halter and showmanship. But Kira thought she was too smart to just do rail work, so we switched to dressage so that she'd have to rely on me for cues instead of anticipating them. I fell in love with dressage when I saw how it transformed her mind and body. My family decided to purchase a 7 month old Arabian/Andalusian, MS Spanish Legacy++, to be my next dressage prospect. She is only 4 years old and already had wins a 1st level in open and Arabian USDF shows and is schooling 2nd level movements. She also has showed in halter, sport horse in-hand, showmanship, sport horse under saddle and show hack. Unfortunately, she did not grow as much as we had hoped for my long legs, so we purchased one more addition to the family, Shana's Romance. She is a black 4 month old Arabian/Oldenburg with a star. My family went to see her birth in Albuquerque, New Mexico and I went to visit her again during Youth Nationals, but now she is finally home in Pennsylvania. Speaking of Youth Nationals...

Youth Nationals began with the annual AHYA Convention. The theme this year was "Under the Sea". We started out with some fun icebreakers activities so all of the delegates could get to know one another while our volunteers helped everyone to sign-in. Convention ran smoothly and we had great guest speakers, Ferrara Photography and convention sponsor, Horseshow.com to entertain our delegates in between elections. Next, we held games for the youth during the Welcome Party. Later in the week, we also had the golf cart parade, consignment sale, flying pigs, poker run, stick horse workshop, ice cream social, cutting clinic, dunk tank, hippology contest and novice horse judging contest.

I plan to continue to share my passion for the Arabian horse with others by reaching out to other organizations, such as breed associations, horse councils, discipline specific shows, therapeutic riding groups and youth development programs. I hope this encourages other board members, youth directors and AHYA members to do the same and help the rest of the world to understand why we love our horses.

Feel free to contact me by email at LZK125@psu.edu with any concerns, questions and exciting updates on your Arabians. I'd love to hear from all of you or see photos of the awesome Arabians in your life!

~ Laura Killian
AHYA President