



AHYA President's Corner

2017, AHYA President's Report to General Session



By Emmy Farago
November 2017

Hi everyone, my name is Emmy Farago and I am the Arabian Horse Youth Association President. It is such an honor to be here and I couldn't be more excited to represent the youth that make the Arabian family so great. I am a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. I am currently studying for a Biology major with a Pre-Dentistry emphasis. Along with studying, I am also on the cross country and track team there. One of the best things about going to school at River Falls is not only being about 10 minutes away from my home in Hudson, Wisconsin, but I'm a short 10 minutes away from my horses as well.

I started riding horses when I was 6 years old at LeFever Training Center. It all started when 6-year old me asked my parents if we could get a horse. My parents were not involved with horses, but thankfully my parents were nice enough to agree that I could take a horse lesson. So, my dad called many different horse barns in the area but each of them didn't allow kids to ride. Finally, my dad called LeFever Training Center and they welcomed me in as a new rider. They had an amazing lesson program for new riders like me. I got to ride a horse named Stretch who still gives lessons to new riders today. From what seemed like one ride on a horse turned into lessons, which eventually turned into my first horse show. At 9 years old, I was introduced to a very special horse named Gunner. I showed Gunner in the purebred Arabian western division. Throughout the years Gunner taught me so much more than I can explain. We grew together as a horse and rider and I would not be the rider, or person I am today without him. I can truly say Gunner was and still is my best friend. Today I still own Gunner and he is still my best friend along with my other horse Maverick who is also a purebred Arabian western horse. Growing up with Arabians has truly changed my life for the better. I was so fortunate to have stumbled upon the Arabian Breed, that was so welcoming to me as a young girl with no experience with horses. The Arabian Breed couples perfectly for new and experienced horsemen alike. As a 6-year-old girl, I had no idea how lucky I was to be with people who were so inclusive to a young rider like me. Here I am 12 years later riding with the same barn that welcomed me as a 6-year-old. I cannot thank both LeFever Training Center and my parents enough for opening this door to me. Who knew one horse lesson could change my life so much?

2 years ago, another person opened an important door to me. 2 years ago, I got a phone call from my regional youth coordinator, Joan Rose. I had no idea at the time how much this phone call would mean

to me. Joan asked me if I would be interested in being a Region 10 Youth Director. I didn't really know what this was but I thought "why not?" I am so happy that I made that decision 2 years ago. I can vividly remember going to my first regional meeting and I was very welcomed as a Region 10 Youth Vice Director. That is where I met my fellow youth directors, Hunter Offord and Katie Treadwell, who I can now call some of my best friends. We were all very involved in our region and we all learned so much from our experience. I can't thank Region 10 enough for being so supportive of us every step of the way. Thanks to our region, the 3 of us could travel together to various different places for our youth board meetings. I can still remember my very first youth meeting at convention 2 years ago I was scared to even talk. I barely knew anyone but these strangers welcomed me in and these strangers turned into some of my best friends. It was so great to be with a group of people who shared same passion for the Arabian horse. I would personally like to thank past AHYA presidents Flora ElmColone and Taylor Kyse for being excellent role models and being extremely supportive of this endeavor.

I am so excited to be working with the newly elected board of youth directors. This is an amazing group of individuals that will make a wonderful team this upcoming year. This year at Youth Nationals we held our annual youth convention where we elected the new AHYA executive board. This board includes: Vice President Sarah Porter of Region 9, Secretary Hunter Offord of Region 10, and Treasurer Tabitha Bell of Region 7. This year, the board of directors is going to work hard to increase youth involvement within the board and within all the Arabian Horse Youth Members.

At youth nationals, the board of directors fundraised and organized fun youth activities. The theme this year was "Vintage Your Way". We started off the week with our annual Youth Convention. Youth Convention is always a fantastic way to bring all the youth together and learn about what AHYA has to offer. I have been to Youth Convention for the last couple of years and every year is something special. This year, we had a great turnout, many kids came ready to participate and have a lot of fun. We held an interactive workshop series where the youth could learn how to stay healthy and hydrated at a horse show, how to keep calm in the show ring, and learn the qualities of a good leader. We would like to thank Annalise Himmel, who is a certified athletic trainer, for leading the discussion about keeping hydrated and healthy and for taking the time to share her knowledge with the youth. With all the different activities that we did at youth convention it was great to see the enthusiasm the kids had to bring.



This year we started a new fundraiser selling congrats bears at Youth Nationals. This was a hit and we raised \$1,135. We also continued our flying pigs fundraiser which raised \$640. I would like to thank the youth qualifier t-shirt sponsors for helping to raise \$7,325 to pay for the youth qualifier t-shirts. We continued giving TAIL tours where we introduced parents and kids to the beauty and versatility of our Arabian horses. I would like to thank Miss Debbie Himmel for leading over 170 tours at Youth Nationals. We also held the annual Hippology contest that had 33 contestants and raised \$165. This year we had the very first AHYA dance and ice cream social that went along with the "Vintage your way" theme. The dance was a great turnout and a lot of fun for everyone who came. We also held the annual Parade of Regions where each region walked around the arena and showed their pride by dressing up, carrying banners, and creating chants. Youth nationals is always a fantastic experience thanks to everyone who is involved. The kids create such a great atmosphere that makes each year so memorable.

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Throughout the year, we sold 164 raffle tickets for the Trails West Trailer Raffle at U.S Nationals. Also at U.S Nationals, the youth were involved with the annual U.S Nationals judging contest. There was a great turnout of 27 teams from around the country. The highest individual overall was Bridget Stranton, of Riley County 4-H. Bridget had the privilege of standing amongst the western judging panel in center ring during finals night of US nationals.

Everything we do would not be possible without the adults that give us their endless support. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Brenna Whitlock, our Youth Coordinator, for always supporting all our ideas and working hard to bring them to life. We would also like to thank Miss Debbie Himmel, Youth Committee Chair, Cindy Howey, Youth Committee Vice Chair, and Yvette Howey for their constant support. We thank the many people who have helped the youth in any kind of way. Your support is very appreciated.

It means the world to me when I see kids who have never been around horses their entire life fall in love with the Arabian horse. I was in the same position at one time and if I can help offer something close to the experience that I have had with Arabian horses, I will know that I helped change someone's life for the better. The Arabian breed is no doubt something special. The experience I have had over the past 12 years has been one I can never take for granted. This is something I want to be a part of for the rest of my life. We must leave it up to our youth to determine the future of our breed. The Arabian Horse Youth Association ignites a passion for youth and provides them with the tools they need to be great leaders. As we graduate, we must set forth and use what the AHYA has taught us and use it in adulthood to help better the future of the Arabian horse. Better yet-do it together. Together we can share our passion of the Arabian breed to fuel determination. Together we can take everything we have learned to bring ideas to life. Together we can accomplish more.