



The Dressage
Foundation

News



Building U.S. Dressage Through Your Generosity

2026 SPRING EDITION

What are your
dressage dreams?

Achieve my bronze
medal on my young
horse I bought as a 2
month old.



What are your
dressage dreams?

To earn my 8th dressage license
and to help shape our sport through
my judging & training



WHAT ARE YOUR

Dressage Dreams?

What are your
dressage dreams?

To be able to continue
getting a leg over
every day



What are your
dressage dreams?

To watch our Daughter
Have the time of her
life for many years to
come Competing + Training



What are your
dressage dreams?

To ride the Grand Prix
Successfully on
a horse I've brought up
the levels





The Dressage Foundation

News

is published by
The Dressage Foundation
(402) 434-8585
info@DressageFoundation.org
www.DressageFoundation.org

©Copyright 2026

The Dressage Foundation's 2026 Board of Directors

- Beth Baumert, *President*
- Lendon Gray, *Chair*
- Fern Feldman, *Vice Chair*
- Nancy Hutson, *Vice President of Development*
- George Williams, *Vice President of Grants & Programs*
- Diane Skvarla, *Secretary*
- Ryan Shumacher, *Treasurer*
- Maryal Barnett
- Gardy Bloemers
- Barbara Cadwell
- Nicole DelGiorno-Masini
- Sarah Geikie
- Rebecca Hafner-Fogarty
- Ralph Dreitzler, *Director Emeritus*
- Michael Poulin, *Director Emeritus*

Staff

- Jenny Johnson
Executive Director
- Sara Weiss
Director of Grants and Programs
- Katrina Sell
Administrative Coordinator

What Is Your Dressage Dream?

At several recent events, members of The Dressage Foundation team had the chance to ask a simple question: What is your dressage dream?

Dreams were written down and posted to our “dream boards.” The answers were thoughtful, inspiring, and wonderfully diverse.

Many dreams and goals are, of course, training and competition based:

- *Get my USDF gold medal and love my horse every day.*
- *Go to the World Breeding Championships.*
- *To move up to 2nd level with my amazing mare.*
- *Train my Morgan pony up the levels.*

There are those who have dreams for others:

- *For my trainer to get to the Olympics.*
- *To share the deep joy that horses and the sport have brought me with future generations.*

And there are more personal goals:

- *Be the best rider for my horse and continue this journey into my 80s.*
- *Have more confidence in myself.*
- *Own my own horse.*

The “dream boards” gave an incredible visual representation of how no two dreams look exactly the same, but all are important. And that’s what makes our community so special.



“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

– ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Every day at The Dressage Foundation, we get the honor of connecting people who want to help others achieve their goals and dreams with those who need their help.

Every grant awarded represents a moment when possibility becomes reality: a young rider attending a life-changing clinic, an instructor expanding their knowledge and sharing it with their students, an adult amateur building a stronger connection with their horse, or a dedicated judge gaining access to educational opportunities that will improve the sport.

None of this happens without our donors.

Because of the generosity of many wonderful donors—large and small—dreams become achievable. The ripple effect is extraordinary, and it starts with someone choosing to believe in the future of dressage.

We are inspired by how our donors recognize that supporting one person ultimately strengthens the entire sport of dressage. They understand that a strong sport is built by a community of people pursuing meaningful goals at every level.

So whatever your dressage dream may be, please know that it is important. Whether you are new to dressage, on your way to a podium, or want to help others achieve their goals, you belong as part of The Dressage Foundation’s family!

Together, through generosity and shared passion, dressage dreams are coming true every single day. 🐾

Dream
E!
in



get my USDF
gold medal and
Love my horse
every day 🍷

What are your
dressage dreams?
To Ride at a show
like I ride at home.
Have my trainer go to the
Olympics so I can live
vicariously thru her 😊



ore
e in

What are your
dressage dream

To
in re

Spoil my
horse - he has
already made
all my dreams true!

Hampton

are yo
message drea

A Pathway to a Dream Life

By Sydni Cook, 2025 Recipient of the \$25,000 Debbie McDonald Fund Grant for FEI Riders

As a little girl growing up in Utah, the world of dressage felt very far away. And yet, somehow, it now feels like home.

When I think about dressage dreams coming true, that is exactly what The Dressage Foundation (TDF) has meant to me. Because of a grant from TDF and its donors, I was able to attend the USDF/USEF Young Rider Graduate Program in 2014. Attending this program truly changed the course of my life as I learned the importance of education, education, education!

The experience at the Young Rider Graduate Program inspired me to continue pursuing that education, leading me to earn my L Program Certification with Distinction and then to become a USDF Certified Instructor. These opportunities would not have been possible without TDF.

TDF's belief in me didn't just build my credentials—it built confidence. It built momentum. And it shaped my path. Each opportunity built on the last, ultimately culminating in receiving TDF's \$25,000 Debbie McDonald Fund Grant for FEI Riders in 2025.

That investment has allowed me to immerse myself fully in high-performance training with Anne Gribbons and take the next step toward international sport. To learn within Anne's system, and bring that knowledge back into the program at Leslie Edison's Winter Farms in

“I am proof that when you invest in grassroots, you don't just grow riders – you change lives.”

– GRANT RECIPIENT SYDNI COOK

Utah, is something I will never take for granted.

Because I've been so generously helped, giving back to this sport is deeply important to me. I do this through service through United States Dressage Federation and the Utah Dressage Society. Supporting the next generation of riders isn't just something I do—it's personal. I am here because someone invested in me.

To every individual who has chosen to give to TDF, whether it was a large gift or small, please know that you are not just funding programs. You are funding people. You are funding belief. And you are changing lives in ways you may never fully see.

This grant didn't just fund an opportunity—it created a pathway. A pathway to education, mentorship, partnership, and ultimately, a life I once only dreamed about.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you to The Dressage Foundation, to its incredible donors, to Leslie and the entire Winter Farms family, and to Anne for turning belief into opportunity, and opportunity into reality. 🐾



Photo credit: Kat Natwick



Photo credit: Una Schade Photography



GIVE TODAY!

Your donation today will provide opportunities that can change lives.

Together, we can make more dressage dreams possible.

www.dressagefoundation.org



A Week of Learning, Growth, and Inspiration in Wellington

In January 2026, five young riders traveled to Wellington, Florida, with The Dressage Foundation's Dream Program to step into the world of high-performance dressage. For Tayla Damyanovich (MN), Grace Davis (CO), Hailey Jones (TX), Finn Kriess (WA), and Abigail Siever (CA), the trip offered more than access to elite riders, trainers, judges, and veterinarians. Chaperoned by USEF 'R' Judge Roberta "Bobbi" Carleton, it became a reminder that dreams are built through education, horsemanship, grit, and dedication.

Day One immediately placed the participants in the hub of Wellington's dynamic energy. They watched top instructors Scott Hassler and Beth Baumert coach Pan American Games medalist Jennifer Baumert, observed Olympian Charlotte Bredahl teaching, and met with Olympian Jacquie Brooks, U.S. dressage supporter Betsy Juliano, U.S. Dressage Chef d'Équipe Christine Traurig, and Para Dressage Chef Michel Assouline. The day ended with the Dressage Infusion Masterclass featuring

Olympians Catherine Laudrup-Dufour, Kyra Kyrklund, and Jan Brink at Adequan Global Dressage Festival. What a day! For Abigail, watching these top trainers and riders made her dressage dreams feel tangible. She said, "Seeing riders of all ages and levels today reinforced what's possible in dressage and strengthened my goal to ride with intention, feel, and respect for the horse."

On Day Two, the riders learned that big dreams depend on strong basics. At Roseview Farm, Canadian Olympian David Marcus and FEI trainer Molly Maloney worked with young and Grand Prix horses, showing how correct training remains systematic at every level. Tayla especially appreciated when Molly said, "It's important not to lose the Training Level horse in your Grand Prix horse." Later, the group met with U.S. Team rider Jennifer Williams, USDF Region 5 Director Heather Petersen, Olympian Allison Brock, U.S. Team rider Olivia LaGoy-Weltz, U.S. Team rider Sarah Tubman, and FEI 5* judge Lee Tubman. The lesson was clear: the path



Dream Program with David Marcus, Judy Sloan, and Molly Maloney.

upward is not about skipping steps, but about making each step up stronger.

Day Three broadened the riders' perspectives to consider the mindset behind a long career in high-performance dressage. They spoke with Olympian Robert Dover about youth access, the evolution of dressage, judging, confidence, and the highs and lows of the journey. His reminder that "success produces confidence, and confidence produces more success" resonated with the group. They also visited High Meadows to observe Richard White and Olivia LaGoy-Weltz ride and teach, plus they met Para-Equestrian Ellie Brimmer and FEI trainers Lauren Chumley and Ali Potasky. Riders were reminded throughout the day that every horse and rider develops differently; some shine early, while others need time. As Finn said, "This day felt like permission to slow down, trust the process, and ride the horse in front of you."

On Day Four, the week's lessons came back to the foundation of the sport, which is to care for and understand the horse. Dr. Hilary Clayton answered questions about soundness, tack fit, rider fitness, and cross-training. Hailey especially valued her advice on cross-training: "Do exercises that are not part of dressage," including slowly walking down hills to encourage self-carriage. The riders then toured TYL Farms and met Olympian Adrienne Lyle and U.S. Team riders Christian Simonson and Katie Duerrhammer before speaking with judges Bill Warren and Bill McMullin about the judging pathway. Adrienne's advice to the group tied the week together. She said, "You have to love the process. That's what's going to get you through the highs and lows."

Each rider left with the realization that Wellington is not as far away as it appears. Every rider has a different path, team, and story, but hard work, intention, and determination are common threads among those who reach the Florida circuit and high-performance dressage. The Dream Program is one stepping stone on that path. As Grace shared, "Being selected for this program shows me that dreams do come true if you believe in them—and yourself—enough." 🐾



Dream Program with Bill McMullin, Bill Warren, and Laura Ashley Killian.



The lessons learned in Wellington in January have stayed with the riders and already propelled them further toward their goals. After the Dream Program, Tayla Damyanovich participated in the USEF West Coast Dressage Training Series, which was designed to identify and develop the next generation of top U.S. Dressage team athletes. Tayla said, *"Because of the education provided in Wellington, I was able to fully absorb and apply the lessons taught during the Training Series. Concepts such as adjustability, rideability, and the importance of preparation in every movement felt like natural progression with the foundation that was built in Wellington."*

Read the Young Rider Dream Program participants' daily journals.



“Riding schools and lesson programs are the gateway to our sport. If we want dressage to thrive, we must ensure that riders have a place to begin. With backing from the dressage community, TDF hopes its Riding School Grant Fund can grow and do more to support these important programs.”

– LONDON GRAY, TDF’S BOARD CHAIR

Honor Your Treasured Horse, Help Riding Schools

Several years ago, during a discussion about the state of our sport, TDF’s Vice President of Grants and Programs, George Williams, said, “The greatest threat to dressage is the death of the lesson barn.” And today, lesson barns nationwide are closing due to factors including high costs and trainer burnout. Unfortunately, it may soon be that potential equestrians can’t even learn to ride unless they own a horse. Our sport is becoming dangerously inaccessible.

TDF’s President, Beth Baumert, recently said, “It is my dream that everyone in this country have at least one place where they can learn to ride. To that end, Ralph Dreitzler, a past President of TDF has helped by seeding a Riding School Grant Fund.”

TDF is thrilled that, starting this year, the new Riding School Fund will initially provide \$3,000 grants to help lesson programs continue to operate, care for their school horses, and introduce new riders to dressage.

These grants are designed to support the often-unsung heroes of our sport—the instructors, schoolmasters, and small lesson programs that provide safe, welcoming entry points for riders of all ages and backgrounds. By investing directly in lesson barns, TDF hopes to strengthen the foundation of dressage from the ground up. Applications for the inaugural grants are due October 5, 2026. Details and information can be found at www.dressagefoundation.org.

Special Announcement!

In conjunction with the launch of the Fund and to raise money for additional grants, TDF has also introduced “Treasured Horses, Treasured Teachers,” a special fundraiser that celebrates the horses who carried dressage riders throughout their journeys.

With a gift to TDF’s “Treasured Horses, Treasured Teachers” fundraiser, donors can honor a favorite horse while helping ensure future riders have the opportunity to ride. All proceeds directly benefit the Riding School Fund and help keep lesson barns thriving for the next generation.



Meet a Few “Treasured Horses”

The horses recognized through the “Treasured Horses, Treasured Teachers” fundraiser have taught their rider, brought them joy, and hold a special place in their heart. From patient lesson horses introducing beginners to the sport, to partners who carried riders to national and international success, each has played

a meaningful role in the riders’ journeys.

As of mid-May, nearly 50 horses have been honored by their owners and riders as “Treasured Horses” and all donations have been added to the Riding School Grant Fund!



Seldom Seen
honored by Lendon Gray

“Seldom Seen taught me how to train a horse from Training Level to Grand Prix—and also how not to. He was so incredibly patient and adaptable.”



Slo Blazing Brook
honored by Eliza Sydnor-Romm

“Brookie was the best teacher a kid could have. Jumping, herding cows, vaulting, swimming in the pond, hacking through fields, and dressage through Prix St. Georges! Thank you, sweet boy!”

Jewel
honored by Angela Keller

“Jewel was everything a great lesson horse should be...kind, patient, willing, and tolerant. She gave so much to so many.”



Rocher
owned by Joann and Charles Smith and honored by George and Roberta Williams

“With ears to match her personality, both in size and expression, Rocher was truly a once-in-a-lifetime horse. It was an honor and a privilege to have her be a part of my life.” 🐾



Honor a Horse Who Changed Your Life Today!

Choose your giving level:

- ♥ \$25 - \$249: Friend of the Riding School Fund
- ♥ \$250 - \$499: Advocate of the Riding School Fund
- ♥ \$500 - \$999: Leader of the Riding School Fund
- ♥ \$1,000 & above: Champion of the Riding School Fund
- ♥ Founding Donor of the Riding School Fund: Donors who give a total of at least \$1,000

Donate today by scanning the QR code or visiting www.dressagefoundation.org.



If you are interested in making a major gift to support TDF's Riding School Fund, please contact TDF's Executive Director, Jenny Johnson, at jenny@dressagefoundation.org or (402) 434-8585.

The Century Club's 1,000th Member



Photo credit: Jenn Gerbhardt

For Rebecca “Becki” Hafner-Fogarty (MN), completing her Century Club ride with her family’s cherished, semi-retired Grand Prix schoolmaster, Lombardo LHF, was a dream that was years in the making. This past January, that dream became a reality when Becki and Lombardo rode Training Level Test 3 and made history as The Dressage Foundation’s 1,000th Century Club Team.

Becki has been involved with horses since childhood, when her dream of owning a pony was as all-encompassing as only a child’s dream can be. Before long, an unstarted mustang named Lady came into her life. Lady taught Becki how to ride, mainly through trial and error. Later on, while attending college and medical school, Becki continued to ride and stay involved with horses whenever possible. She later purchased her own horse, an Arabian gelding named Raffi, with the money she earned from her internship. Together, they began their dressage journey. 15 years later, Becki’s children began their riding journeys on Raffi as well.

A fulfilling and impactful career, though one that was demanding and time-consuming, limited Becki’s

ability to keep riding consistently. She worked as a country doctor, served on her state’s medical board, and then spent 20 years in the corporate world leading medical startups and helping med-tech companies grow. Now retired, Becki is spending more time in the saddle and reconnecting with the love of riding she has missed over the last 30 years. Becki said, “Since retiring, I’ve been reclaiming that part of my life—and a Century Club ride felt like the first place to begin again.”

Even though Becki is just now finding time for herself in the saddle again, she has remained a longtime supporter of the sport and has lived vicariously through the dressage career of her son, Brian, as he developed from Young Rider to dressage professional. Brian’s primary mount was Lombardo, who became part of the family in 2004. He was only four years old, gangly yet talented, and offered Brian a chance to chase his dreams in dressage.

Together, they did just that. Over the years, Brian developed Lombardo through the FEI Young Riders and U25 Grand Prix to national Grand Prix and international Grand Prix, and eventually to schoolmaster. The journey was fulfilling for both Brian and Becki.

It is safe to say that Lombardo earned his semi-retirement. He now resides at his namesake farm, Lombardo Hill, where his legacy continues and Becki continues to ride and learn from him. Becki said, “Ten years ago I started thinking about a Century Club ride. It was my dream to share that moment with Lombardo. Over the years, I’ve ridden again whenever I could. Increasingly, Lombardo has been my partner—kind, tolerant, and mostly willing—when I give the correct aids. My ‘someday’ finally arrived!”

For Becki, Lombardo, and the family that has loved him for so many years, this Century Club ride was a full-circle moment, as well as proof that dreams can wait patiently, grow deeper with time, and still come true. 🐾

Supporting Dreams of Future Generations

As she was recently updating her Will, donor June Brody made the incredible decision to leave a bequest to The Dressage Foundation. We asked June to share more about that decision, and why she'd encourage others to consider a gift to TDF in their own Wills.

How did you come to be charitable and support the work of various nonprofit organizations?

I actually believe I came upon charitable giving naturally. As soon as I had discretionary funds, it made total sense to share support with various organizations. I am so grateful for the success I achieved in my business career that I wanted to help others.

How did you first become interested in The Dressage Foundation?

I became familiar with The Dressage Foundation years ago through a riding buddy. She would talk about the organization and its founder all the time. Those conversations sparked my curiosity and I became a donor...that was a long, long time ago!

Why did you decide to leave a gift to TDF in your will?

I love dressage! I really feel the sport is a lifeline for me. It's challenging – physically, mentally, intellectually, and emotionally. I have learned so many things from the sport, including patience, defeat, victory, and much more. I want to help deliver those challenges and benefits to others.

“I strongly believe in giving others opportunity.”

– TDF LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBER, JUNE BRODY



June Brody and Nor'ee.

Why might you encourage others to leave bequests to TDF and to other organizations close to their hearts?

Our sport is expensive and not everyone has the ability to get the help they need to move up. I strongly believe in giving others opportunity. I was very lucky in life, and I am happy to share my good fortune with people who love this sport as much as I do.

What are your dreams for the sport of dressage?

I dream that people who want to ride, show, judge, or volunteer should be given some sort of pathway of help. I hope my gift will make it easier for others to achieve their goals. 🐾



The Dressage Foundation
1314 'O' Street, Suite 305
Lincoln, NE 68508

“To every individual who has chosen to give to The Dressage Foundation, please know that you are not just funding programs. You are funding people. You are funding belief. And you are changing lives in ways you may never fully see.”

– Sydni Cook (UT) Recipient of the
2025 \$25,000 Debbie McDonald
FEI Fund Grant

