

## Reining Canada Scholarship Essay

By Julianna Jones

When people say, “The most important things horses teach you aren’t even about horses,” it’s the truth. Ever since I was six years old, I have lived and breathed horses, and over the past eleven years, I have learned countless lessons that have contributed not only to myself as a horsewoman, but as a person.

During my childhood, I was involved in various extracurriculars, including golfing, swimming, dance lessons, piano, soccer, and choir, but when I took my first riding lesson at the age of six years old, I was hooked. Riding was the first thing in my life that I stuck with, and the first thing that truly gave me passion. My equestrian roots lie in the English and Arabian circuits, but in the spring of 2013, I had the opportunity to ride a reiner for the very first time and I was completely hooked.

I began showing on our affiliate circuit that fall, and have been an active member of our provincial club ever since, participating in every show and clinic that time and money allows, and jumping at every opportunity to help in our affiliate, from social media to odd jobs like helping organize prizes for shows. The addition of the NRHA Unrestricted Youth class to our affiliate shows in 2015 was one change in our club that I contributed to and felt very strongly about, as many youths in the Atlantic provinces, including myself, wish to show but do not have the means to own or lease a horse. I felt that everybody deserved the chance to be involved. Being a part of the affiliate has taught me the value of involvement and how important it is to positively represent and promote reining in the Maritimes, especially to fellow youth.

Horses have given me a sense of dedication and perseverance. Switching from riding and showing Arabian horses to reining-bred Quarter Horses was a major learning curve in my riding journey, and I had to completely alter my way of riding – physically and mentally. There were a lot of frustrations and bumps on the road, but that feeling when everything finally began to click made all the hard work worth it. My scores in the show ring went from 66 and 67 to 70 – and let me tell you, there is nothing more exciting to a new reiner than your first 70! The ultimate test of determination was when my teammate since 2014, a 2005 mare by Whiz N Tag Chex, sustained a severe injury in January of this year. Everybody was convinced that her show career would be over, but that didn't keep us from trying. For months, I spent every day after school tending to her wound and hand walking her, slowly building her level of fitness up as she healed. Everything paid off when we returned to the show ring in September, and while it wasn't the best show of our lives, I am simply grateful that she is able to continue to do her job and teach somebody else as she taught me when I go to university next fall.

The knowledge and experience I have gained with performance horses during the time that I have been involved in the sport of reining will be extremely valuable as I move on to post-secondary education. I am pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Bioveterinary Sciences at Dalhousie Agricultural Campus next fall, and then hope to attend the Atlantic Veterinary College to get my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. My end goal is to be a large animal veterinarian specializing in sports medicine and rehabilitation in equines. This way, I can continue to benefit our sport and the athletes that we devote our hearts and souls into.