

Meet the 2019 USDF Youth Convention Scholarship Winners!

The USDF Youth Convention Scholarships provide financial support to young dressage enthusiasts to help defray the expenses associated with attending the annual convention.

Olivia Gray



Olivia Gray, Barrington, IL, is 16 years old and a junior in high school. She has been riding for seven years and has competed through Third Level. This will be Olivia's third year of participating in the USEF Lettering Program and she has received her Second Level Rider Performance Award. Last year, Olivia competed at the Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championships and was a USDF Dressage Seat Medal Semi-Finalist. Olivia was unable to compete this season with her mare, Diva Millenia, who has been off with a suspensory injury. During this time, she has found other ways to bond with her horse but hopes to get back to full training soon. Olivia is a weekly volunteer at her church for an organization called Awana, where she leads a small group of 3rd Grade students. Other activities Olivia enjoys include fashion designing and running, and she completed a half marathon last fall. Olivia is very excited to be attending her first USDF Convention and is looking forward to learning more about her sport of dressage.

Rose Keller, Norwich, VT, has been in love with horses for as long as she can remember. She got her first horse, a gray (but often yellow) quarter horse, at thirteen through the generosity of Make-A-Wish Vermont. It was a long time in the making. (If anyone's curious, she can still recite the theme songs to My Little Pony, Horseland, and The Saddle Club). That same mud-loving gelding took her to her first dressage show in 2016. Since then, her love for dressage has only grown. From Intro division champion at Lendon's Youth Festival, to her transition to boarding school in the hills of Putney Vermont, to her international debut at the North American Youth Championships, horses have had a permanent, influential role in Rose's life. Currently, she is blessed to call eleven-year-old KWPN gelding Dievittorio O, her dance partner. "Diego", as he is affectionately known, is the epitome of schoolmaster. He has brought Rose from First Level to the FEI Junior Level, has earned Rose her USDF Bronze medal, and carried her around her first CDI competition, all within the first seven months of 2019. For the 2020 season, Rose has hopes to adventure into uncharted territory for them both: the FEI Young Riders. During the rare moments when she's not at the barn, she can be found working on college applications, baking, writing, or attempting to figure out astrophotography. Rose is humbled and honored to have been chosen for the Convention Scholarship, and she is endlessly grateful to USDF for making this incredible educational opportunity financially accessible to youth riders across the nation.

Rose Keller



Savana Garvey



Savana Garvey, Dallas, TX started riding lessons when she was six. In July 2015, her parents bought Madoc Golden Graham. Soon after, she started Dressage lessons with Becky Brown. In July of 2017, her family hauled to Lexington, Kentucky for the National Dressage Pony Cup. Graham and she were so excited to win Junior Training level, 16 and under. In September 2017, her parents bought Fierro L'Oasis. The 2018 Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championships was an exciting competition for them both. She placed 6th in the First Level Jr/YR division, 8th in the GAIG Open First Level Freestyle, and 3rd in SWDC Open First Level Freestyle. In December, she traveled with her instructor for a clinic with Debbie Bowman. That Spring she went to a clinic with Lendon Gray, through Dressage 4 Kids. In the beginning of May her and Fierro went to a clinic with George Williams and by the end of May she was able to receive my final Third Level scores to earn her USDF Bronze Medal. Fierro now has a new home and her and Don Larson have a new relationship together as a team. In September Don Larson and she did a clinic with Robert Dover and established a solid base. Soon after they attended a Janet Foy clinic. Most recently she showed Don Larson at Third Level Test 1 and scored a 74.05% (also scoring a 65.56% in the Third Level Test 3). They were also Reserve Champions in the USDF Dressage Seat Medal Semi-Finals in the 13 and Under division.

Sophia Chavonelle, Windham, ME, is a nineteen-year-old rider who has been actively involved in dressage since she was thirteen. Competing in local and regional shows throughout her High School years, Sophia earned her USDF Bronze Medal as well as several Regional Championship and New England Dressage Association Year-End placings aboard DeJure, owned by Sophia's coach Tanya Rennie. Her favorite accomplishment, however, was being awarded the USDF's 2016 Youth Volunteer of the Year, an annual award recognizing the volunteerism of young riders around the country. Sophia worked hard to graduate high school early in order to become a full-time working student and focus on training her new horse, W Spotlight, a 2008 Westphalian gelding (Sir Donnerhall). It was with Spotlight that Sophia secured a spot on the Region 8 Junior team for the 2018 North American Youth Championships. Competing at the NAYC allowed Sophia to experience the camaraderie of working with a team and enhanced her desire to one day be a U.S. team rider. This past summer, thanks to the Dressage Foundation, Sophia opened her eyes to a whole new level of competitive team riding at CHIO Aachen. In addition to her elite sport goals, Sophia enjoys contributing to the actions behind the scenes of the USDF. This will be her fourth year attending the Annual Convention and she hopes to attend many more in the future.

Sophia Chavonelle

