

Teamwork, getting back on and having fun are common denominators for Inland Empire members.

The Inland Empire Hunter Jumper Association is a relatively new organization of dedicated riders and trainers who ride and compete around Southern California. Its next sanctioned competition is the Signature Show Series at Galway Downs June 24-25. For more information, visit www.iehja.com.

We are happy to introduce you to four young IEHJA members who hint at a bright future for the association. For more information on the organization visit www.iehja.com.



Amelia Kent

Amelia says that one of the most important lessons her trainer Jasmine Wheatley has taught her is “to get back up after falling” and the 10-year-old had a chance to act on that for the first time just recently. “I didn’t hurt myself too bad, just jammed my pinky finger so I was able to get back on and do my course one more time,” she explains. “I think that getting back on right after it happened helped me not be afraid. I rode my horse again and knew what to do to fix my mistakes and had one of the best rides I’ve ever had on him.”

At Jasmine’s Mountain View Farms South at the Anaheim Equestrian Center, Amelia’s goals “are to perfect my equitation and skills by riding every chance I get. I would like to advance to the higher fences.” Her first show was last year’s IEHJA Finals at the Industry Hills Equestrian Center and she has clear ambitions for her second season of competition. “My goals are to

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listen to my trainer's corrections, try my hardest, be proud of myself no matter how I place and to have fun."

That's a clear fit with the other lessons her trainer emphasizes. "She's taught me to be willing to work hard as a team and help people around the barn if they need it," Amelia reports. "I try my best to be as helpful as possible to everyone that's here."

This season, she expects to compete on either Paris, aka Circle of Fire, or Rocosco, aka Far Rock Away. Downtime includes bareback adventures with her buddies. "We test each other's skills and push each other to be better. I just jumped for the first time bareback after watching my friend do it."



Makayla Tidball

Fifteen-year-old Makayla began riding as a home-schooled seventh grader in need of a PE class. It has turned out to be much more than that over the last four years and she now has her eye on colleges with an equestrian program.

She rides with Markley Chaffin's Fox Haven Farm, which is based at Lazy Faire Ranch in Phelan. "She has been awesome," Makayla says of her trainer. "Some of the more difficult things she has taught me are riding without stirrups and finding distances to the jumps. She is always pushing me to the next level and giving me ideas about things I have never considered. She also encourages me to exercise more and eat right which is not always an easy thing to do. Riding is a sport, she says, and it definitely requires athletic ability."

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Makayla first showed in 2014 and this year has the goal of winning the Green Rider division at the shows held at Gretchen Clark's Showcase Stables and placing well in the Flat Medal at the IEHJA Year-End Show. On a daily basis, she's focused on maintaining her position as the fences get higher. For fun, she loves to ride and jump bareback, "dropping the reins and sticking my arms out like I am flying. So much fun!"

Her current horse is Parker and she may be looking for a more advanced horse soon to help her reach the next level.

"I love learning about all aspects of the horses and their care, taking occasional trail rides, helping out other kids and taking lessons," says Makayla, who typically spends two days a week at the ranch. "I love this sport. I'm not sure where this will take me in life but I know I will have fun doing it!"



Ashley Park

Riding has already had a big influence on the rest of 15 year old Ashley's life. Her trainer is Gretchen Clark of Showcase Stables in Redlands and the lessons Ashley has learned from her are broadly applicable: "Listen and follow directions right away, and to be assertive," Ashley says. "They have helped me not only in my riding but also in everyday life."

Horses have been a love of hers for several years and she first competed, in the cross-rail division, at 13. Now that she's in high school, other activities have limited her riding to one day a week, sometimes not even that. "Since I don't ride much, I make sure to make the time that I do

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count,” Ashley explains. “During classes and clarinet lessons, I find it easy to start to zone out and stop paying attention. But during a riding lesson, I tell myself that the amount of effort I put in right now will follow me to the end and if I have any hope to improve, I have to always try my hardest. I want to make sure that even as I get busy in high school and with music, I make time to continue horseback riding.”

Ashley has great admiration for Paralympian Sophie Christiansen. “She managed to fight through her disability and pursue her passion. Her determination to succeed is very admirable and inspires me to try my best.”

Grooming, bathing and making bran mash for her horse, Gizmo (aka Like Clockwork) are among her favorite non-riding activities. “Having confidence and not second-guessing myself while riding” are Ashley’s big goals for the season and, with the hot summer circuit ahead, she also has a goal of taking good care of herself by staying well hydrated.



Bailey Cisneros

Bailey began in the walk/trot division at 6 and has learned a lot since then. The greatest lesson she’s learned from her trainer Vicky Rowe and her mom Kristin Blecker is “You have to fight for what you want and work your butt off to get it!” At Vicky’s Lindall Hunters in Riverside, Bailey is focused on “getting to know my horse, Bentley, aka Amuse Me, better and to build my stamina for higher level classes.” The year-end IEHJA is a favorite show “because it’s nice to see your hard work paid off and it’s fun being with your team.”

Early in her riding experience, around the age of 9 or 10, Bailey recalls a setback in that “riding

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did not have my heart at the time.” She overcame it by trying new things and figuring out what she really wanted to do. “Some people just need time to figure out what they want to do,” she observes. “Riding isn’t everyone’s thing.”

That uncertainty is behind her. She admires top A circuit rider Victoria Colvin “because she’s only 19 and has all these amazing things under her belt.” Fun is definitely a part of Bailey’s life with horses. “My favorite thing to do with my horse is to act crazy and ride bareback,” she explains. “I love to stand up on Bentley and be a crazy child for a couple of hours.”

If your association or club has young stars deserving of Youth Spotlight consideration, please contact editor Kim F Miller at kimfmiller1@mac.com.