

NATIONAL WESTERN[®] *Stock Show*

Lasting Impressions

Youth Equestrian Showcase

Fortunately, one horse show program has overcome the challenges of 2020 and transitioned to a virtual format to continue to provide experiences and scholarship monies for youth participants this January. Aligning with the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) pillars of youth, education and agriculture, the Youth Equestrian Showcase (Y.E.S.) was created to recognize and support our local equestrian youth and involve them in the educational opportunities of the Stock Show.

“Getting to interact with kids, and even adults, was the highlight of my time with the Y.E.S. program.” states one of our participants and the 2020 Grand Champion, Brittany ‘Britt’ Vogl of Elizabeth, Colo. “It really made me feel like I could make a difference in the world.”



Growing up with a mom who rode professionally in the Hunter/Jumper division gave Britt the opportunity to spend her childhood in the barn. She started riding around nine years old in the jumper world before setting her sights on becoming a local rodeo queen just a few years later. She learned to ride western and soon became the Elizabeth Stampede attendant then queen in 2019. Her four-legged partner, an 11-year-old grey Quarter Horse named Smoke, has been with her through her rodeo career and is learning how to become cow savvy. The pair is working toward showing in cow horse events next.

Her parents instilled strong morals, ethics and values in Britt and her sisters. Being immersed in the agriculture industry gave Britt the opportunity to learn the value of hard work. “Just putting in that extra effort sets you apart from others in so many unexpected ways. Not only does having a good work ethic and attitude to do hard work provide a very satisfying feeling, it also opens a lot of doors for you. I am a big believer in the fact that anything is possible if you’re willing to work for it.”

NWSS was already a strong family tradition for the Vogl’s and it was Britt’s career in rodeo royalty that introduced her to the NWSS volunteer program where she realized more fully what the Stock Show does for the community. “I fell in love with the positive messages the Stock Show teaches today’s youth about hard work and the western way of life.”

Through the Y.E.S. program, selected finalists compete through an interview with the selection committee, the creation of an educational display to educate the public and a video detailing their journey toward a SMART goal they had chosen. Britt’s topic for her educational display was biosecurity, which was at the height of attention following a tough summer for the equine industry in our region with a Vesicular Stomatitis outbreak. She first learned about it studying with her 4-H Hippology team for the Western National Roundup contest, also held during the NWSS. Being interested in equine sciences, she

found this topic particularly useful for real-life application which sparked her interest and motivated her to share the importance of proper biosecurity practices with other horsemen.

Britt considered her experience competing in the Y.E.S. program as a way to push and better herself as opposed to a competition with other youth. “I wanted to see what I could make of this opportunity, because win, lose, or draw I knew I would get out what I put in.” As a college freshman, she was feeling the pressure to decide “what to do with her life.” She was unsure what major and career to pursue, how to manage educational expenses and face the other stresses as a young adult. She is grateful for her experience, claiming, “The Y.E.S. program gave me an opportunity to put myself in a safe setting to practice some real-life skills that settled these nerves. I was able to practice my interviewing, media, knowledge, and people skills. Not to mention, this program gave me an opportunity to feel good and successful about something that I was passionate about. Overall, my experience really helped solidify some of my insecurities about “adult life” and encouraged me to live my life day by day.”

When asked about her vision for the future, she responded, “I would love to see more ag classes being taught in schools, especially to the kiddos who don’t have the opportunity to grow up in rural communities. Our country is built on agriculture and I fear that without the continued appreciation of our way of life that our country will forget agriculture’s importance. As I have grown up, I have also experienced firsthand how many people don’t know where their food comes from, how animals are raised, and the processes that ensure safe and quality products. Food does not just come from the grocery store and I think it’s time ag is taught in every school just like math or English. Nothing would make me happier than to see a more, well-rounded education being taught in schools across America.”



She claims through her experiences grew her desire to promote agriculture through youth development. Britt is a student at the University of Wyoming studying Animal Sciences focusing on Production, Meat Science, and Food Technology. She hopes to pursue a Master’s Degree in Livestock Breeding and Genetics in the future and use her experiences to continue to encourage people to learn about agriculture, maybe even as an ag teacher.

Previous Y.E.S. winners

2017 Grand Champion: Lauren Weaber Eaton, CO

2017 Reserve Grand Champion: Kirsten Wood Weldona, CO

2018 Grand Champion: Emily Grubb Conifer, CO

2018 Reserve Grand Champion: Amber Elliott Steamboat Springs, CO

2019 Grand Champion: Halley Moak Estes Park, CO

2019 Reserve Grand Champion: Paige Petrocco Loveland, CO

2020 Grand Champion: Brittany Vogl Elizabeth, CO

2020 Reserve Grand Champion: Andrew Bouzarelos Centennial, CO