

## Meet the 2015 USDF Youth Convention Scholarship Winners!

*Supported by funds raised at the annual USDF Youth Programs Advisory Subcommittee Silent Auction, held at the annual convention, these scholarships provide financial support to young dressage enthusiasts to help defray the expenses associated with attending the annual convention.*

### *Madison Deaton*



Madison Deaton is 18 years old and lives in Louisville, KY. She is an active member of Long Run Pony Club and recently received her C3 Dressage Specialty. She is also a member of Kentucky Dressage Associate, youth representative for Louisville Dressage Society and an EDAP member. Madison is an active competitor in USDF shows and received her Bronze Medal in 2015, her 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Rider Award in 2015, and 1<sup>st</sup> Level Rider Award in 2014. Madison was 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Reserve Champion at Region 4 this year. Madison also enjoys ballet in her spare time. One of her favorite activities is flying and she hopes to earn her pilot's license and become a pilot. Madison has attended several USDF Conventions and taken part in the Youth Education and JR/FEI and Youth Committee sessions. She enjoys connecting with other dressage youth and learning about the programs USDF offers.

### *Hilary Griggs*

Hilary Griggs is fifteen years old and from Lawrence, KS. She is an active member of the Kansas City Dressage Society and USDF. Hilary has shown through Second Level and has received both her Training and First Level USDF Rider Performance Awards. Most recently, Hilary competed at the USDF Region 4 championships in St. Louis. She is also a member of Mission Valley Pony Club, and placed third in the nation in 2014 in the quiz division. Hilary is the Vice President of Kanwaka 4-H club and a Douglas County 4-H ambassador and participates in the dog, horse, leadership, and poultry projects. She also plays basketball, is on the debate team, acts in school plays, and is active in student government at her school. This was her first USDF convention, and said it was an incredibly educational and eye-opening experience for her.



## *Eva Larsen*



Eva Larsen is seventeen years old and lives in Pleasanton, CA. She trains with Carolyn Adams at Yarra Yarra Ranch, where she rides Carolyn's Welsh Pony stallion, Laffran Sponti. In 2014, Eva and Laffran Sponti became the first pony/rider combination from the west coast to compete at the USEF Dressage Pony Rider (FEI Pony Level) Championships. Eva has also earned her USDF Bronze Medal, as well as two all-breed awards. Eva is an active member of the East Bay Chapter (EBC) of the California Dressage Society, where she serves as a JR/YR representative on the EBC Board of Representatives. Outside of dressage, Eva is an active volunteer for her local animal shelter, and manages to balance numerous AP courses with her commitments to her friends, family, and horses. Eva is now a member of the YPAS Committee, and is very grateful to have the opportunity to connect with other passionate youth from around the country. She sees this as a key experience in her dressage education.

## *Nila Venkat*

Nila Venkat is fifteen years old and lives in Hayward, CA. She is an active member of California Dressage Society. She is a longtime member of United States Pony Club and is very active at the local and national level. She holds a national certification in USPC and has attended many USPC Championships. She has been a participant and workshop presenter in many USPC Annual Conventions. Though she is new to the sport of Dressage, she has received her USDF Rider Performance Award for Training, First and Second Level. She received her USDF Bronze Medal in 2015. She believes in volunteerism and giving back to the community and advocates for Land Conservation and protection of public space for riding. Nila strives to promote Dressage among younger members of USPC and hopes to build more collaboration between USDF and USPC. Nila is an avid writer and has blogged for USPC's events and has written many articles for magazines. When Nila is not riding, she is active in her school's debate team and diversity club. She also interns at Youth Radio and has produced commentaries and news stories for National Public Radio.

