

All about Horses

Regional high school students get a taste of equine science at UNH through a student-organized event.

Thursday, April 25, 2013

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Equine Program seniors (from left) Emily Hodgman, Adele Breitholtz, Katherine Foley, and Alyssa Milano, prepare Reese, the "Visible Horse," for a presentation at the "Equine Educational Day" on Friday, April 19. The event is for area 4-H clubs and high school seniors interested in the equine industry.

On Friday, April 19, nearly 150 high school students from around the region came to UNH to see how the skeleton of a living horse moves as the animal canters through a course of jumps. Senior equine science students Adele Breitholtz, Katherine Foley, Emily Hodgman, and Alyssa Milano painted the detailed skeletal system on Milano's horse, from the cervical vertebrae all the way down to the rear pastern, before guiding her – unmounted – through the jump chute.

This “visible horse” demonstration was just one event that took place during the premiere Equine Educational Day, the brainchild of senior equine science majors as part of their capstone project. Other demonstrations included information on the digestive system, equine first aid, “bomb-proofing” horses to desensitize them to unfamiliar stimuli, forages and pasture management, conformation, equine physical training and rehabilitation, and careers in the equine industry. Admissions specialists were present to talk with prospective students about the two and four-year equine programs available at the University.



“This day was completely planned and organized by the students,” said Christina Keim ’98, ’09G, a faculty member in the equine program and coach of the Intercollegiate Hunt Seat Association team. “They did everything from arranging parking, rooms, and scheduling to communicating with the clients,” Keim said. Those clients – the high school students – even enjoyed a Facebook fan page the seniors set up to post additional information or videos related to each demonstration.

“Students in the four-year equine science degree delve into a broad-based curriculum, intensively exploring genetics, reproduction, nutrition and more to prepare them for successful careers in the horse industry,” says Jon Wraith, dean of the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture. “Plus, they have a dedicated facility and the well-trained horses necessary to carry out their studies.” With good weather prevailing on the day of the event, the seniors made use of both the indoor ring and outside roundpens.

“This was a chance for our seniors to shine,” said Keim. “They’re emerging equine professionals and we want them to be recognized by the equine community.” One of those seniors, Jackie Marinoff, holds a 4.0 GPA, making her a top student in COLSA and at the University. Having no previous experience with horses, Marinoff found her passion in equine science at UNH and plans to make working – and playing – with horses a part of her career goal as a veterinarian. “Participating in the Equine Educational Day has been a way for me to give back all the knowledge I’ve gained,” says Marinoff.

“The seniors pulled all of the knowledge they’ve gained into these demonstrations,” says Liz Oertel ’06, subject field trainer, who teaches the capstone course with Keim. Equine science major Sarah Bassett and classmate Dahlia Sawtelle stretched out a 100-foot hose to illustrate the

length of a horse's entire digestive tract as part of their presentation on the digestive system. Both Bassett and Sawtelle, who manages a local forty-horse barn facility, share Marinoff's interest in pursuing further equine-related education in the future.

At the end of the day, the seniors gathered around the visible horse for a photo opportunity. "Awesome job, ladies! It was a huge success," called out a jubilant Keim. "You should all be so proud of yourselves; your hard work came through today and the students really enjoyed themselves."

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