



April 2021 Issue 8

CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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VOLUNTEER PROFILE: MAYA DUGAN



Willy and Maya

Maya is a local Gull Lake High School senior who started volunteering with the Cheff Center a couple of years ago. Her mother used to volunteer with Cheff, and when Maya got into the National Honor Society, she chose the Cheff Center for her volunteer requirement hours. Maya had gone to horse camps in her younger years which gave her some experience with horses, and she thought she might enjoy working with the horses and other

people. She liked it so much that she stayed even after she had met her requirement and continues to volunteer to this day (when we are open, of course!). Maya has encouraged her younger sister, Ashley, to volunteer at Cheff as well, and Ashley had just completed orientation when we closed in October due to Covid.

Maya has been learning at home since the outbreak of Covid-19 shut down the school(s). “Since I’m technically graduating from a different school than the one I’ve been going to for 6 years, it has been hard being online for my last year of high school and not having the same experiences I would have had if not for Covid. I am graduating online this year, which is something I thought I would never do, but I’m more happy to simply graduate...”

Maya has been a member of the Gull Lake High School band for years, playing a wide range of percussion instruments—snare drum, bass drum (in marching band!), tympani, xylophone, symbols, triangle, wood sticks, and any other percussion instruments that are needed in a piece. She very much enjoyed marching band but did say that her legs hurt after carrying around that big bass drum during band camp and practices!

She was also in the Performing Arts Company at Gull Lake for 2 years as the Sound Chief. She was in charge of all the transition songs and sound effects in the productions.

Sky was Maya's first answer when we talked about her favorite horse at Cheff—she has worked with him a lot. She also thinks Killian is a very calm, gentle horse and would like to get to know him better. She did get a chance recently to meet Willy and seems to have a sweet spot for him with his curious and goofy personality.

Maya recently had become part of the Orientation Team and was looking forward to being able to teach the new volunteers what we do and how we do it.

KVCC will be Maya's first adventure after high school, and while getting her pre-requisite courses out of the way, will hopefully decide whether she wants to pursue her passion for the Culinary Arts (she really enjoys baking) or in Game Design. She doesn't particularly like the action games, but rather the games that challenge the mind and "make you think". No matter what she chooses, we are sure she will be wonderful at it!

When asked what she likes most about volunteering at Cheff, Maya said she thoroughly enjoys the environment there—she enjoys working with her hands and there is always something to do to keep her busy. She also said that she learned that "it takes a lot more physical strength to stop a horse than you think! They are incredibly strong animals!" She also enjoys all the other volunteers whom she has worked with, as well as the clients.

We are so happy to have Maya on our volunteer team and are looking forward to having her back

when we open. We hope that if you haven't met her at this point that you will someday!

THANK YOU, MAYA!



“Horse” of the Month: ARCHIE



Can you remember the first time you ever heard Archie the Donkey sing out his beautiful bray? I’m sure it was quite memorable!

Archie, Cheff’s Standard Donkey, may be just 12 hands high and about 500 pounds of furry goodness, but his bray is 10 feet tall and can be heard clearly throughout the barn and arena.

Archie is a pretty shy guy – that’s probably the result of being used as a practice roping animal in his early years. From there, fortunately, he went to a nice family where he was a companion animal, until their pony passed away about 8 years ago and they donated him to Cheff.

Although Archie can be pretty shy at times; he definitely has his favorite people. You will have to work for his trust but once you have it, then you are in!

Archie would just love to have treats, but donkeys are insulin resistant, and it isn’t good for them to have treats with a lot of sugar; their body doesn’t metabolize it. Archie can only have the green pellet treats or a rare Nature Valley Granola Bar here and there.

Since there is a lot of sugar in grass (especially spring grass), you can find Archie in the back lot with Star; Archie is more apt to founder if he is kept in the big fields.



Archie and one of his friends, Winston

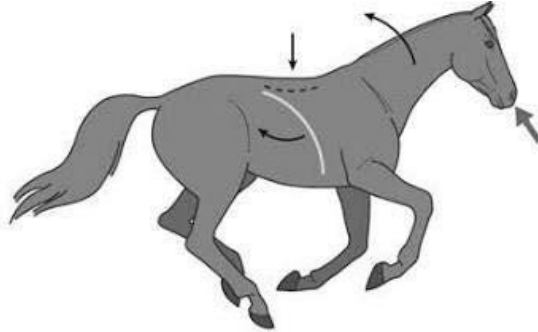
Archie is very popular in the herd, and every horse LOVES him (even Star, who can be a bit particular)! But watch out, Archie is a great escape artist, as many volunteers have found out while turning out horses.

Archie is hoping for some fly spray; donkeys are very sturdy animals with a high pain tolerance, and don’t stomp and brush the flies off their legs like the horses do. Because of this, Archie tends to get sores on his legs from the fly bites, which is why you may sometimes see him wearing fly boots in summer. It’s not just for fashion!

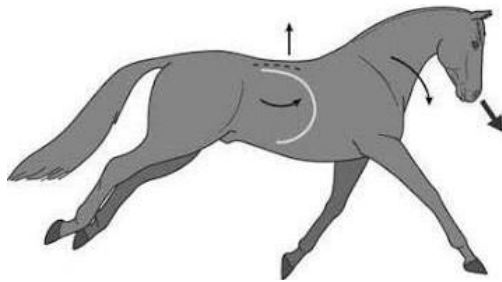
When we’re back in the barn, make sure to give Archie some love and scratch those big, beautiful ears...but remember, no sugary treats!

April Fun Fact

When a horse is running, its breathing and stride are linked in a 1:1 ratio, so for every stride they take, they also take one breath. During a fast canter and gallop, all air movement comes from movement of the legs and diaphragm. As the horse's legs leave the ground their diaphragm expands the lungs and the horse inhales.



When the horse's legs hit the ground, the diaphragm contracts the lungs and the horse exhales.



Horses change lives. They give our young people confidence and self-esteem. They provide peace and tranquility to troubled souls. They give us hope!
~ Toni Robinson

AKEHCMBF: The Letters and Their Story

AKEHCMBF ... Does that list ring a bell?

If not, these phrases may be familiar: “At C, please turn and head straight down the center line for a safety check” or “Next, we’ll trot down the long side from M to F.”

Now it’s probably obvious that AKEHCMBF are the letters posted around the Cheff Center arena that our instructors often use to tell riders where to perform a particular maneuver – things like making a turn, transitioning to a different gait, or changing direction on the diagonal by going from, say, K to M.

Letter A is located at the entry/exit gates, C is at the far end, and the other letters are positioned on the two long sides.



So, how is it that we use this set of non-sequential and seemingly random letters?

The letters come from dressage

AKEHCMBF are sometimes referred to as the “dressage letters” or “dressage markers” because these particular letters – plus some others -- come from the equestrian discipline of dressage. In dressage events, the letters are used very much like we use them at Cheff, as markers around the arena to indicate where to perform particular actions.

Competitive dressage uses two arena sizes (see diagrams at end). The small arena is 40 by 20 meters and is typically used for lower level competition. The standard arena measures 60 by 20 meters. It is sometimes used for lower level competition and is always used for higher levels.

As you can see in the diagrams, the standard size arena incorporates additional letters on the long sides. Both arenas use “invisible” letters along the center line – invisible because they do not have physical markers but are locations riders must know because they are used in dressage competition instructions.

Cheff’s indoor arena is approximately 60 by 30 meters, making it a bit wider than a standard size dressage arena. We use the same letters, in the same configuration, as the small arena.

How exactly are the letters used in dressage?

Dressage competitions in the US and internationally consist of “tests”, which are pre-defined sequences of movements that are to be performed in precise locations in the arena – hence the need for the letters as location markers. There are several competition levels, each with their own progressively more demanding tests.

The tests are developed by governing organizations, such as the US Dressage Federation (USDF), the US Equestrian Federation (USEF) and, internationally, the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI).

Events from local level shows to major competitions like the Olympics, Paralympics, Special Olympics, and the FEI World Cup all use the test format and these same arena letters.



The letters can be functional and decorative.

Lower level tests typically involve walk, trot and canter, plus foundational movements such as circles, directional changes, transitions between gaits, and some lateral moves. The instructions below are a sample from a USEF Training Level test:

- A: Enter working trot
- X: Halt, salute judge; Proceed working trot
- C: Track left
- E: Circle left 20 meters
- A: Circle left 20 meters developing
left lead canter in first quarter of circle
- A-F-B: Working canter
- etc ...

2019 USEF TRAINING LEVEL TEST 1

PURPOSE
To confirm that the horse demonstrates correct basics, is supple and moves freely forward in a clear rhythm with a steady tempo, accepting contact with the bit.
All trot work may be ridden sitting or rising, unless stated.
Halts may be through the walk.
READER PLEASE NOTE: Anything in parentheses should not be read.

INTRODUCE
Working trot; working canter; medium walk; free walk; 20m circles in trot and canter

ENTRY NO.: _____

Conditions:
ARENA SIZE: Standard or Small
AVERAGE RIDE TIME: 5:00 (Std.) or 4:00 (Small)
(from entry at A to final halt)
Suggested to add at least 2 min. for scheduling purposes

MAXIMUM PTS: 260

	TEST	DIRECTIVES	POINTS	COEFFICIENT	TOTAL	REMARKS
1.	A X	Enter working trot Halt, salute Proceed working trot	Regularity and quality of trot; willing, calm transitions; straightness; attentiveness; immobility (min. 3 seconds)			

Sample test instructions and scoring sheet.

FEI Grand Prix level tests use the same format, but with more advanced movements, for example:

- H-X-F: On the diagonal 9 flying changes of leg every 2nd stride
- F-A: Collected canter
- A: Down the centre line
- D: Pirouette to the right
- etc ...

Judges grade horses and riders on each required movement and on some overall characteristics to come up with a total score for each performance. As you can see, the letters are an integral part of the test.

Dressage history and influence

The word *dressage* comes from the French *dresser*, meaning to train. *Dressage* is the noun form meaning training. Specifically, it refers to the training of the horse. The methods of dressage have evolved over 2000 years. Early on, the focus was military and on training horses to be strong, obedient and agile in battle.

After the Middle Ages, there was increased interest in classical riding among nobles and royalty as a competitive skill and artistic talent. This led to new training methods and the development of some of the more complex movements seen in dressage today, such as changing leads with each canter stride, known as “tempi changes”.

A core set of horse training principles emerged that emphasize things like balance and suppleness, a calm and attentive demeanor, and constant communication between horse and rider.

Dressage is considered the oldest equestrian discipline and most modern forms of riding can trace their roots back to it. It is not surprising, then, that you may see similarities or hints of dressage in any type of riding class.

For example, Cheff riders train on activities like 20-meter circles, keeping a straight line down the center, and riding a pattern through the arena, similar to components of a dressage test. Riders also do activities that have an explicit aspect of physical training for the horse, such as practicing skills going in one direction, then reversing and repeating so the horse -- and rider -- are exercised equally on both sides, reminiscent of the importance to dressage of suppleness and balance.

But, again, why these particular letters?

Getting back to the question of why *these particular letters* are used as dressage markers ... sorry to say it seems there is no definitive answer, but there are theories or perhaps they should be called legends!

One says that the Royal Marstall (stables) of the Imperial German Court in Berlin housed many of the Kaiser's horses. An adjacent stable yard was used for riding exercise. Letters were marked on the stable walls surrounding the yard to indicate where grooms and horses were to wait for their particular courtier, K for Kaiser (emperor), F for Fürst (prince), M for Meier (palace steward), etc. These letters evolved into the location markers used in dressage events. A marked the Ausgang (exit or gate).

Another theory says that the German cavalry in the 19th century had a post where the barracks surrounded an arena. Each barrack had been designated a letter to identify it. These letters could apparently be seen from the arena so were adopted as location indicators for riders during practice. From there, the story goes, they came to be accepted as standard arena markers in dressage.

These amusing theories are easily found online and are even referenced in some print publications. But there doesn't seem to be any hard evidence or documentation to support them!

Remembering the letters

Since the letters can be hard to remember, numerous mnemonics have appeared to help. As long as you know where A is located, the other letters can be visualized with one of these phrases.

Some examples for the small arena:

Clockwise --

All King Edward's Horses Carried Many Brave Fighters

All King Edward's Horses Can Manage Big Fences

Counterclockwise --

A Fat Black Mother Cat Had Eleven Kittens

All Fat Brown Mares Can Hardly Ever Kick

Centerline "invisible" letters --

Do Xtra Good

For more info:

USDF -- About Dressage

<https://www.usdf.org/about/about-dressage/>

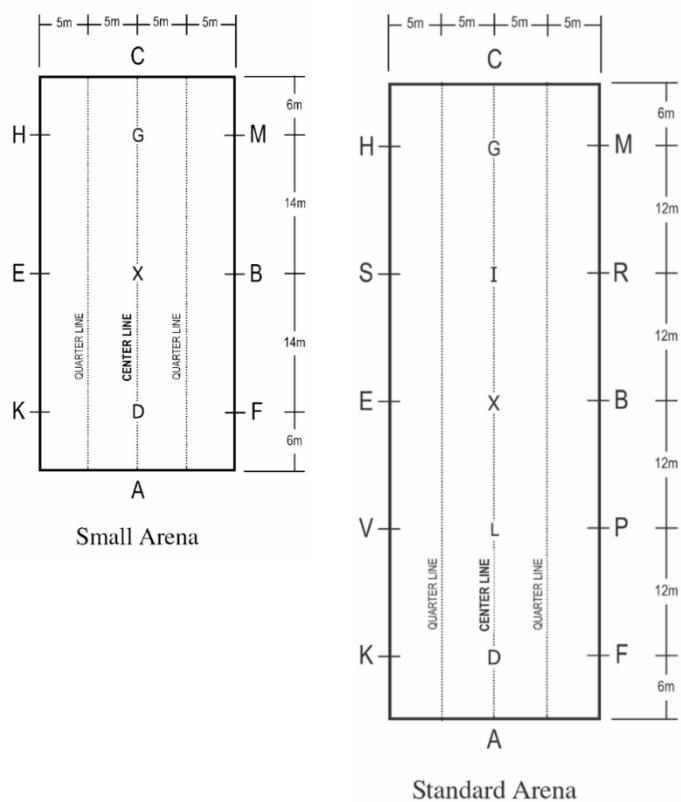
Note that dressage letters are visible in these videos!

USDF Dressage Introduction – 3:00 min video

<https://youtu.be/XdQirzu3Wa4>

Paralympic Dressage Overview – 1:46 min video

<https://bit.ly/2PCwPX9>



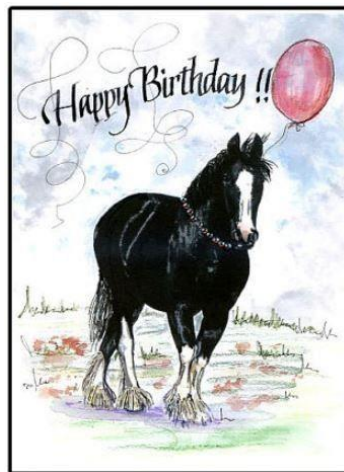


April Birthdays

Justin A
Sydney F
Mark J
Hana L
Sydney P
Alexis R
Kassidy S
Mikayla V

Kathryn B
Nick H
Michael K
Emily MC
Teresa P
Hanna R
Madison S

Deanna F
CeeJay H
Rebecca LF
Joan OC
Logan R
Madison S
Hannah S



Amazon Smile

Please remember that when you order online from **Amazon.com**, the Cheff Center can receive benefits when you do. Go to smile.amazon.com and register—we are one of the 1000s of Charities that you can choose from, and we will get 0.5% of your qualified purchases!

To find out more, visit: <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about>

And if you really want to help, ask your friends and family to do the same. We thank you in advance, as every penny counts for us, especially at this time.

Harding's

For those of you who shop at Harding's, if you join their Community Rewards program and select the Cheff Center as your organization of choice, we will receive a rebate based on your purchase amounts. For more information, click on the link below.

<https://www.hardings.com/savings-and-rewards/community-rewards/>

Again, we thank you in advance, and please let your friends and family know—every little bit helps!!!

Questions/comments?

Please contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator, sara@cheffcenter.org

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If you have suggestions for future newsletters, or are interested in submitting articles, please contact Sara Putney-Smith.

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