

## **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the **NEDA Scholarship Program** is to provide educational opportunities to members who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to and/or excellence in the sport as well as service and ambassadorship within this Association. In particular, the committee seeks to support qualified members to take advantage of specific opportunities for advancement with the understanding that the membership and the sport will benefit as a result of the knowledge and experience gained.

## **Scholarship Program:**

As part of NEDA's mission to "Promote and Support the Art and Sport of Dressage, educational scholarships are made available to NEDA members who wish to pursue their training and personal goals in dressage.

This program exists to further two specific objectives - to provide the widest possible range of dressage education to the greatest number of members and to support the development of dressage in the field of international competition.

Scholarships are awarded twice a year. Deadlines for receipt of applications are ***April 1st and October 1st.***

Scholarships must be used to participate in educational programs that include, but are not limited to: Seminars, workshops, clinics and training programs offered by recognized or certified instructors.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent US residents holding a Green Card and members in good standing with NEDA. To request funding you may apply under one of the following categories: International (for study abroad), Professional Rider/Trainer, Serious Amateur, Young Rider and Breeder.

Programs for which the funding is requested must have a stated objective, must be for the specific purpose of advancing the rider's/official's skills or individual's standing in the dressage community, and must have clear beginning and end dates.

## **Process details:**

- 1) A NEDA member may request a scholarship application and/or an informational brochure at any time of the year by contacting the Scholarship Chairman.
- 2) Scholarships are awarded twice a year in April and October. Completed applications must be received on the first of those respective months to be considered for awards in those time frames. Completed applications must be accompanied by four references (two personal and two from those who can attest to your riding, teaching, and/or training abilities). If the due date comes and an application is not complete or arrives late, it cannot be considered for that allocation date and is returned to the applicant for future consideration. (This is to be fair to other applicants).
- 3) There are five different categories in which members may apply for: International, Professional, Amateur, Young Rider and Breeder. All NEDA members can fall into one of these five categories. If you are unsure which category makes sense for you, you can always check with the Scholarship Chair.
- 4) The Scholarship Committee (consisting of 10-13 members), meets approximately ten days to two weeks following the two deadlines to review all applications and allocate scholarships depending upon availability of funds, qualifications of applicants, etc.
- 5) The Committee screens each application with a uniform set of criteria, eliminating the possibility of subjective selection or favoritism. While the criteria are slightly different for each category, they generally include such benchmarks as Length of NEDA membership, Volunteer History, Other Scholarships Received, Goal of Program, Competition Level, Previous Awards and Recognition, Benefit to NEDA's membership, Timeliness of Goal, Credibility and Reputation, Ambassadorship and Affect on Professional Contribution/Educational Purpose.

In the Young Rider category one of the criteria is Character: Including Scholastic, Leadership, Responsibilities, Teamwork, etc. Within each of the criteria a candidate may accrue up to 5 points. For example: In the criteria for Length of NEDA membership, a candidate would earn 1 point for "Under 2 years", 2 points for "2-4 years", 3 points for "5-9 years", 4 points for "10-15 years", and 5 points for "Over 15 years".

6) To be considered for an award, an applicant must accrue a minimum of 60% of the total possible points. Professionals applying to train internationally must receive a minimum score of 68% to be considered for Scholarship amounts above \$2000. If no candidate accrues the minimum score, no award is given in that category. The money is held to be awarded in the next application period. A qualifying score does not automatically mean monies will be awarded - it is just a baseline. The Committee attempts at all times to keep focused on how the overall membership can benefit from the educational opportunity the scholarships are providing.

\*Note: that approximately 40% of an applicant's total possible score revolves around what they've done for NEDA in the past and what they could potentially contribute in the future.

7) Current maximum suggested allotments for Scholarships per applicant are as follows: Amateurs/\$2000, Young Riders/\$1000, Breeders-International/ \$2000, Breeders-National/ \$1000, Professionals/\$3000 (or for an applicant requesting assistance for an International level education opportunity, the committee may award up to \$4,000). It is hoped that in any given year, a mixture of applications from all categories would be received and awarded, although there are years when this may not be possible due to lack of qualified applicants or the desire to make an extraordinary award to assist a highly qualified candidate in an Olympic or Championship year. It is hoped that in the coming years these award amounts can be increased.

8) Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent US residents holding a Green Card and in good standing with NEDA. Scholarship money must be used to participate in educational programs that include, but are not limited to, seminars, workshops, clinics and training programs offered by recognized and/or certified instructors. Programs for which the money is requested must have a stated objective and must be for the specific purpose of advancing the rider's/official's skills or individual's standing in the dressage community (e.g., the purpose can be to attend an USEA seminar to move from one judging level to the next, but not to attend a clinic required to maintain one's card).

9) The Scholarship Chairman then notifies all applicants of the outcome. Those who have been awarded scholarships are mailed a "Letter of Agreement" that is a simple contract between the member and NEDA that outlines where, when and how the money will be used as well as what the applicant is willing to do for NEDA in return. Some ways that members give back for their scholarship assistance are giving clinics, organizing a clinic or a fundraising event for Scholarships, judging, writing an article, and/or being available for publicity, photos, etc. The Letter of Agreement also instructs the recipient to provide receipts to the Treasurer for all of his/her expenses associated with the scholarship. It also explains that if for some reason the recipient does not complete the program for which the award was made within 1 year, any unused portion of the funds must be returned.

By accepting scholarships, recipients must agree to volunteer their time and/or expertise in some way that will benefit the NEDA membership as a whole. A formal letter of agreement will specifically outline the ways in which the Committee expects the recipient to contribute to NEDA. (The individual's knowledge and experience will be taken into consideration).

A 1997 Scholarship recipient had this to say about her experience: "The Scholarship I received allowed me to give my training top priority. It was fantastic to be in a total learning environment - a very positive experience! Plus, my students are now receiving the benefits of my gained knowledge."