



AHA Communications  
303.696.4500  
enews@ArabianHorses.org

## The Arabian Horse Association Announces the 2020 Youth of the Year Award Winner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** - Aurora, CO – November 30, 2020 – AHA youth members are anything but average! The Youth of the Year award honors annually one outstanding youth member. Criteria for this prestigious award is based on his or her achievements and contributions to the Arabian horse industry, to AHA and lastly to their community. Our past winners have been outstanding ambassadors for the breed and have gone on to represent us exceptionally well – not just in the Arabian horse industry but in the equine industry as a whole.



In 2020, one candidate distinguished herself, with her passion for the Arabian horse breed; with her desire to help others, and to bring people in the industry together. AHA is proud to announce **Miss Caroline Elik**, from Alton, Illinois, as the honored winner of the 2020 Youth of the Year Award. Caroline receives the Youth of the Year perpetual trophy as well as a \$5,000 scholarship from the Arabian Horse Foundation.

Compassion, humility, and motivation are the foundation of this young woman's approach to life. She is currently enrolled at University of Missouri – Columbia pursuing a degree in journalism. She is a member of the Women in Media club and believes that it is important for women to have the resources and networking opportunities to be able to pursue their passion for media-oriented careers. During High School she was actively involved with her school's newspaper, and held numerous leadership roles in her local 4-H club. She served as the Region 11 youth vice director, and was elected as the AHYA Secretary in 2019. She believes that involvement at any level is important as it improves not only our own lives, but the lives of others through the work that we do when we are involved in something worthwhile.

Caroline's efforts within the Arabian horse community has led her to strive to be a positive influence on AHYA and to be a role model for those who aspire to become further involved in the Arabian horse community. She believes that "our youth are not just our future, but also our present – they are already active contributors to the growth and promotion of the Arabian breed".



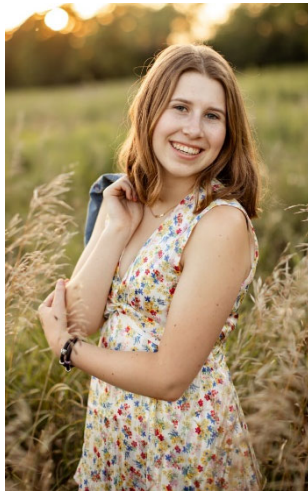
**AHA Communications**  
**303.696.4500**  
enews@ArabianHorses.org



Ms. Grace Smith from Region 5 is the first runner-up for Youth of the Year. She receives a \$1000 scholarship from The Arabian Horse Youth Association.

Grace has been a big part of AHYA in and out of the show ring. She has served as the Region 5 Co-Director, leading her fellow youth in multiple fundraisers and prides herself in making sure all the youth of her region are encouraged and feel included. She now serves as the AHYA Vice-President and cannot wait to do everything she can to make a positive impact. Beyond this Grace is very active in her school clubs, being an officer in the Future Business Leaders of America

club at her school. She has helped lead numerous community service projects and volunteers weekly in a kindergarten classroom to help a student with special needs. Along with all of Grace's service activities and horse activities Grace also plays on a club Softball team and has shown her leadership as a team captain numerous years.



Ms. Brooke Backlund from Region 10 is the second runner-up for Youth of the Year. Brooke is extremely involved in AHYA, serving as the AHYA President. She has competed at multiple levels with multiple horses in the show ring, but finds joy in growing and building her relationship with the horses she shows by trying new disciplines every year. She is a hard worker, passionate and determined in all that she does.

We would like to congratulate our outstanding youth. To apply for the 2021 Youth of the Year please see [www.arabianhorses.org/ahyayoty](http://www.arabianhorses.org/ahyayoty). Applications are due September 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **About Arabian Horse Association**

Arabian Horse Association (AHA) is an equine association serving more than 85,000 Arabian, Half-Arabian and Anglo-Arabian horse owners across North America. AHA registers and maintains a database of more than one million Arabian, Half-Arabian and Anglo-Arabian horses. AHA produces five national horse championship events yearly and recognizes over 344 Arabian local and regional horse shows and distance rides. AHA promotes the Arabian breed and ownership through educational and outreach programs.