



AHYA President's Corner

2023, Carli Marasco – AHYA President

2023 Convention

AHYA President Presentation to General Assembly



Hi everyone, my name is Carli Marasco, and I am your AHYA President for this year! I am currently a freshman in college, and despite this being my last youth year, I'm making the most of it. I began riding on and off at the age of four and started competing on the open circuit at age eleven. At fifteen, I met my first Half Arabian, Sheldon, who is still my partner in crime. After volunteering at my first ever Arabian circuit show, I was hooked, and the rest is history. We've shown in Trail, Dressage, Sport Horse In Hand and Under Saddle at various shows across Region 12, and are now taking a crack at Western Dressage. My

passion for Arabians does not end in the show ring, however, and you'll see me around the show grounds setting up youth events, volunteering, or having a good time with fellow youth. I started serving on the board as the Region 12 Youth Secretary, then in consecutive years climbed up to Region 12 Director, AHYA Secretary, and now I have the honor of being your AHYA President. To be able to serve is an incredible honor, and I am so lucky to have an incredible team of youth and adults behind me offering their full support.

We have had an incredible year so far, starting back to Convention in July. I was unfortunately unable to attend, but again, our incredible team was able to fill in the gaps and run the elections and welcome our new members! Serving on the board this year alongside me is Aminah Strand as our AHYA Vice President, Bug Burcham as our Secretary, and Rachel Vaughn as our Treasurer. All of these girls are absolutely wonderful and I'm so excited to continue our partnership. During Youth Nationals, we kept some old events and introduced new and improved events and techniques to better our previous ones. The Golf Cart Parade returned in full force before our Block Party, featuring live music, games, and lots of fun! We promoted the "R U Okay?" program, -which focuses on making your mental health a priority- by having a specific day for everyone to wear the program's color, yellow. For fundraisers, we did class song sponsorships, where aside from equitation, riders and handlers could choose which songs they wanted in their rings during their rides. We also continued our Chuck A Duck fundraiser. This year, we decided to implement a required volunteering time for each board member of two thirty minute sessions throughout the show. This could be selling ducks, delivering Lucky Duck stuffed animals, helping

with activities in the Chill Box, etc. Our youth nationals this year was excellent, and I can't wait for another exciting year. Our contests were in full swing this year as well, with our number in the hippology contest staying stagnant at 7 and our Judging contest growing 4 to make 21 teams.

Overall, our goals stay the same as they always are- to increase participation and grow the industry. We want to not only engage people looking for the next step into the community of Arabian horses, we want to invite our current members to our activities and include them in things they might not know are out there, like board positions and volunteering opportunities.

I'd like to end off thanking some people: my amazing parents, who have supported me through these roles and transitions and have given me advice and motivated me. To Laurie Salmi, who is the sole reason I didn't quit many years ago, and for introducing me to a world of opportunities. And a huge thank you to Brenna Johnson, our youth coordinator, for putting up with our crazy nights (supervising a room full of teenagers isn't always fun,) and helping us learn and grow as individuals. Lastly, I want to thank each and every member of the youth board this year. We have so many great people serving this year and I truly believe it will be one of the hardest goodbyes I've had to say. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I am so grateful and excited to share this journey with all of you.