



# AHYA President's Corner

## *2020, Brooke Backlund – AHYA President*

2020 Convention

AHYA President Presentation to General Assembly



Hello, everyone. My name is Brooke Backlund, and I'm president of the Arabian Horse Youth Association. I'm extremely honored to be serving in this position, surrounded and supported by such a wonderful group of people. To me, to name a few, I would like to thank my parents and trainers for supporting me as a youth rider.

I would never have my passion for the Arabian Horse without your continued support and guidance. I would also like to thank Brenna Johnson, Cindy Howie, and Debbie

Himmel. They are the glue to the AHYA board. They've been unbelievably patient and kind to me during my time serving on the Youth Board, and I wouldn't be here today without them.

I started this journey as a seven year old horse crazy girl, and I haven't looked back since. Throughout the years, I've been blessed with the opportunity of showing and learning on many talented horses, each one challenging me as an equestrian and teammate. My most recent learning experience has been retiring my show horse, Luke.

He was crucial to my growth and confidence in the show ring and has taught the lesson of confidence to many other people as well. Now I'm able to retire him as my bareback and pony ride horse and introduce so many of my friends and family to what the Arabian horse is all about. Now that brings me to why I'm talking to you today.

This year at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, the Arabian Horse Youth Association held Midsummer Nationals. Due to COVID 19, the previously arranged Arabian and Half Arabian Youth Nationals was changed to Youth and Midsummer Nationals. The original dates were extended and the show was able to accommodate adult amateurs and open riders due to the cancellation of Canadian Nationals.

This show was extremely successful, with nine full days of showing and equestrians ready to compete in the Jim Norick and other arenas. The theme of this show was Rise Up and Be a Hero. The AHYA board has incorporated the theme into the whole year with monthly challenges pushed through social media to create action within the youth community.

Many youth participated in these themes by posting, sharing, and commenting their experiences and actions. Some examples of monthly challenges included introducing yourself to someone new, supporting your barnmates, thanking show staff, and more. Although many of the activities planned for Youth Nationals had to be cancelled, some activities were able to continue.

Craft packages were distributed throughout the stalls and kids were able to create and decorate their pool noodle stick horses. The show also held a graduation ceremony for graduating youth, allowing them to have their time to shine, despite cancelled graduations. There was also ice cream available, thanks to our wonderful sponsors, and first time exhibitor ribbons were handed out.

Instead of hosting an in person convention, the AHYA Board of Directors created an online convention where youth members were able to learn about the Arabian Horse Youth Association as well as vote on the Executive Board. The 2020 and 2021 Executive Board is President Brooke Backlund, Region 10, and Vice President Grace Smith, Region 5.

Despite the crazy year, the Youth Board was able to host a successful national show and connect to the youth through many different platforms. Thank you for your time and trust in me. I'm looking forward to leading you through an eventful year.