



High Spirits Farm has a string of passionate junior exhibitors who have come up through the ranks. Sharing the Madison experience were (l-r) Faye Wuesthofen, Jim Lowry, Olivia Curtis, Grace Markel, Magnolia Jones, Ayla Kinney, Makayla Jones and Fay Lowry.

# HIGH SPIRITS RIDERS MAKE HORSES A WAY OF LIFE

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

"The journeys for all five of these kids are basically the same. They've all become barn rats and it started with lessons and Academy," said High Spirits Farm instructor Allison Cantrell, referring to the five junior exhibitor riders who just participated at the Madison Classic. "Four of these kids first showed with us and they are riding horses that were bred here."

Olivia Curtis, Grace Markel, Magnolia Jones, Ayla Kinney and Makayla Jones are representing the program in a great way both in and out of the show ring. Riding has made them "stronger, confident, young adults," said Cantrell.

Olivia is the daughter of Allen and Bev Curtis. After a year of Academy in 2021, she started showing The Supreme Catalyst last year in walk/trot pleasure and this year is teamed with Heaven's Fortune with whom she swept Madison's junior exhibitor 13 & under show pleasure division.

"Cheryl Maupin worked with Bev and suggested that Olivia ride here," said Cantrell. "She had had a few Western lessons when she came here. Olivia is super passionate and took to it quickly. She's done such a great job."

Grace Markel is a name most will associate with her multi-titled world's champion of champions CH So Co. She is the daughter of Will Markel and Amy Markel. "She was here when we moved here," said Cantrell. "Grace did it all. She showed in Academy, did all the camps, rode three times a week. She first bought and showed Bonus Time with us. He helped her really take off."

At the Madison Classic, Grace won both of her 14-17 show pleasure classes aboard CH So Co, who was bred by Anna Marie Knipp.

Magnolia Jones is the daughter of Craig Jones and Rachel Mutrux. She moved to High Spirits at a young age and showed three years in Academy. Her

second show ever was the National Academy where she learned a lot about navigating a class.

"Magnolia caught on quickly and was showing w/t/c as a 10-year-old, beating the teenagers," said Cantrell. "She first showed Vintage Sachet and now is teamed with Regal's City Of Dreams. She has a great feel for the show ring."

Magnolia and Regal's City Of Dreams won classes at the UPHA/American Royal, St. Louis, Central States and Madison last year in park. This year, they are moving to the pleasure division.

Joe and Rachel Kinney are Ayla Kinney's parents and they've watched her grow as a strong rider. She began four years ago and has won at the Academy Nationals.

"Ayla is passionate and wanted to take the next steps," said Cantrell. "She wanted to get a solid base and then keep moving up. She's 100% horse girl."

Ayla was teamed with Just Gary at Madison, winning the 14-17 country pleasure class and the Junior Exhibitor Country Pleasure Championship. Bred at High Spirits Farm by 3 Sisters Stables, Just Gary was named after the late Gary Jarrard.

Last but not least, Makayla Jones has taken a liking to the Hackney breed. Her grandparents, Don and Marla Merritt support her equine endeavors. She started in Academy Leadline and worked her way up, winning at the Academy Nationals.

"Makayla is a total barn rat and will do anything you need done," remarked Cantrell. "Lately, she's fallen in love with the ponies and she's here three days a week."

CH Regal's Amigo LF is Makayla's partner this year. They were first and second at Madison in the AHHS Youth Medallion Road Pony Under Saddle and AHHS Youth Medallion Road Pony classes respectively. She also partnered with Bret Day to come in reserve in the Bouncy Horse Race.