



Young equestrians shine at El Sueno Equestrian Center.

by Kimberly Rhodes

The Camino Real Region Pony Club Mega Rally was held April 21-22 at the prestigious El Sueno Equestrian Center in Ventura County's Somis. The Pony Club members competed in their choice of dressage or jumper classes as teams of three or four riders and a stable manager.



The first-place dressage team riders Cathy Castorina, Carolyn Rieder, Lucas Santi and Jessica Bahny joined forces from multiple clubs with Jessica Bahny qualifying for the Western Region Championships on her horse Shaman Spirit in Western Dressage. The River View Pony Club Tigers team came out victorious in the show jumping competition. There were seven riders with all clear rounds across the two days. The riders competing at levels from 12" to 3'3" jumpers with all clean rounds are: Lily Armstrong, Peter Cain, Lauren Lowe, Henry Armstrong, Alex Santi, Hannah Little, Kate Sanchez.

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Judges scored all competitors on their riding and on Horse Management. The competitors started with a formal Turn Out where a checklist based on certification level includes the cleanliness of horse, tack and rider to ensure safety and proper care. From there, the riders went to their mounted competition, after which a turnback inspection is completed to ensure proper after-care of horse and equipment. Stables were inspected regularly to ensure horses are well cared for throughout the competition with a mindfulness towards safety.

One of the competitors' favorite parts is that parents and coaches are not allowed in the barn to help. The Pony Club members work together to set up their tack rooms, care for their horses and compete with minimal outside coaching. This helps create great team work as well as independence.

The Mega Rally is just one of the many events the Pony Clubs will offer in 2018. The Camino Real Region Pony Clubs have had a strong start to the year with the Horseless Rally in February, the Quiz Rally in March, allowing for both Pony Club Members and non-members to experience Rally competition without the horse. Upcoming Pony Club events include the Combined Rally and National Examiner level riding certifications in June.

The United States Pony Clubs are designed to teach horsemanship with respect to healthcare, stable management and riding as well as develop character, leadership confidence and a sense of community through service.

For more information on the United States Pony Club, or to find a club or riding center near you, visit www.ponyclub.org.