



Riding in the Rose Parade represents realized childhood dreams from the back of a remarkable Arabian, Just In Kayce.

by Dr. Suzi Lanini, DVM

Horses have always been my inspiration and my motivation through life. I grew up in a disadvantaged household; we barely had enough money to get by. I dreamed as a child of becoming a veterinarian. I also dreamed of having enough money to own a prize-winning Arabian horse. A dream that was big enough to have a horse that was worthy of being in a magazine. I stayed focused on my dreams even when the dreams seemed too big.

Once I graduated vet school and had the opportunity to ride horses again, I realized there is no better experience than being in the presence of a horse. I purchased Just In Kayce, known as "Justin", a purebred Arabian gelding in 2008, about a year after finishing veterinary school. I had no idea the impact one single horse could have on my life and others in the community.

Justin has become that show horse that I always dreamed of as a child. He and I have won hundreds of awards over the past 11 years of showing him. He has won 29 Horse of the Year Awards, over 27 Regional Championship Awards, three United States Dressage Federation All Breed Awards, and achieved over 50 rosettes from the California Dressage Society. He has been showcased in multiple publications over the years for his achievements. We have competed at some of the top competitions in the nation. In 2013, Justin was awarded the

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Arabian Horse Association Ambassador Award. He has touched the hearts of many with his personality and presence in the show ring competing in dressage through the international levels and working with international instructors.

The Rose Parade: From the Scaffolding to the Saddle

Justin made another childhood dream come true when I participated in the 2013 Tournament of Roses Parade. My aunt lived on Alta Dena Drive in Alta Dena when I was a child. We would stay at her house overnight and push a scaffolding down the street to the school yard where my uncle used to teach. We would sit on the scaffolding and watch the Rose Parade. I dreamed of one day owning a horse that was good enough to be in the Rose Parade. Well, Justin made that dream come true when we participated with the Costumed Arabians of Region One. It was a dream to ride him down the parade route waving my hand and making eye contact with the spectators. The entire time, I hoped I was giving just one child the ability to dream as I had done as a child.

Justin and I have volunteered for the San Bernardino Sheriff Department since 2011. We became members of the Equestrian Patrol Unit out of the Rancho Cucamonga Station. We volunteer our time to patrol the trails of the city, participate in community events and attend the Annual Sheriff's Rodeo in Devore. In 2018 we joined the West Valley Mounted Posse out of the Fontana Station and participate in Search and Rescue efforts for the county as well as participating in community events.



When we are out in the community, it has been truly rewarding because Justin loves to get petted. I try to interact with the public as much as possible and give every child or grown person the opportunity to feel the horse hair between their fingers and the softness of Justin's nose. For me, the feel of the horse gave me the biggest hope that life would eventually work out. I would love to find out that I kept one child's dream alive or had an impact on one person's life with the touch of Justin's hair or his soft nose. I would love to find out by giving my time to the community that I had given hope to just one person's life.

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Justin has also now become a Warrior Horse, a designation for horses capable of bringing new focus to kids battling cancer. (www.WarriorHorse.org) Justin is a well decorated horse with all of his winnings and his work in uniform. This, combined with his calm demeanor, makes him the best horse to give hope to someone who may have lost all hope. It is amazing how much a single interaction with a horse can change your outlook on life.

Justin truly represents the theme for this year's parade "The Power of Hope."

Author Dr. Suzi Lanini is a small animal veterinarian in San Bernardino County's Rancho Cucamonga. In addition to her community activities, she is an active dressage competitor. She and Justin ride in the Rose Parade as members of the Arabian Horse Association's entry.

Meet Justin and "Dr. Suzi" and all the riders and horses in the EquestFest presented by Wells Fargo, Dec. 29 at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center.