



Regional Administration

Message from the USPC Vice President of Regional Administration

Dear Pony Club Leaders and Friends,

Last week, I spoke, emailed, texted, or messaged at least one Region-level Leader in every USPC Region regarding the COVID-19 corona virus and its impact on our Region-level events and activities. As we are all acutely aware, the local/State/national circumstances changed so swiftly that some of the conversations we had on Monday or Tuesday of last week were moot by Wednesday or Thursday.

****As of Wednesday, March 18, 2020, all USPC sponsored events will be suspended for the next 30 days. Leaders are encouraged to continue communication and virtual connections with members but should suspend all USPC gatherings for the next 30 days. After 30 days (or before if necessary), we will review current situations in order to provide guidance moving forward.****

Even so, I gathered some recurring themes and ideas from my conversations with you; here goes—

- **“Make decisions when decisions must be made.”** One of you shared this insightful philosophy with me last week. In essence, it means to postpone what can be postponed and wait until a “commitment” date—such as the day your full payment is due—before making a decision to go forward or cancel.
- **Look for innovative ways to educate/train.** They are already out there—online videos, conferencing apps, and so on. We just have to leverage them. (Ideas at the end of this message.)
- **Communication** with each other and our Members **is essential.**
- Email and social media is helpful, but **phone calls** are the fastest and most accurate way to convey information and solicit comments and concerns. I do not suggest we call all our Members or their families for every circumstance change, but we do need to recognize that social media and email can “lag”—many folks don’t check as routinely as others may—so a phone call/message with a stated time of call is often more effective. Therefore, consider making up “phone trees” within your Region leadership and your Clubs and Centers to convey “fast-breaking” news.
(As an aside, encourage your leaders and Members and families to check their email address in their USPC profile. That is the address used for USPC-wide communication.)
- Be willing to **share what you know, and also what you don’t know.** For example, you should let folks know that “yes, this is cancelled” but also “we have not decided on _____ but we will consider it on or about such-and-such date.” Such transparency allows our Members and their families to make informed decisions for themselves—even where the information/decision is uncertain, they at least know that much.
- **What about the money?** Given the global health situation, it may seem crass to consider our finances, but that is part of our (volunteer) leadership job. (And we all operate on very close margins.) Some thoughts:

- Ask for refunds. While your contract with facility/judge/food vendor/lodging/air carrier may state “no refund,” in this situation most entities will refund all or a portion of payments, but you have to ask. Even where “no refund” remains the rule, you may get the entity to “carry over” your payments to another event/activity in the future. (This is especially helpful if you are postponing rather than canceling.)
- Refund your Members when/where you can. You may have “sunk” costs to cover, but try to refund your Members (as necessary) as much as feasible. Naturally, this may be case-by-case as different types of activities may have different levels of “sunk” costs. (A few Regions asked Members if they would “donate” their entry fees for a cancelled event to the Region—and sent donor letters to those that did so.)
- **KEEP A JOURNAL.** It can be a few bullet notes on a piece of paper in your truck, or a note page on your phone. No matter the type, it will be helpful to you in the weeks and months ahead to reflect back on a decision made at a particular point in time. These decisions involving money and programming must be captured for your Fall meetings as well as part of your Regions’ “consent agenda”.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR PONY CLUB.

Lorelei Wilson Coplen
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Virtual PC Participation Ideas:

- *Use this time to check out the [USPC web site](#)
- *Find some [USPC Instruction Resources](#) here, to include [USPC Lesson Plans](#) (Horse Management, Mounted, and “discipline”)
- Check out [contests and grants](#) here and visit [The Pony Club Pizza](#) blog for information about book reviews, International Exchanges, and more
- Look up the [Tutoring Tuesdays](#) webinars for videos (chose "Past" in the Show box)
- Go to the [Pony Club YouTube](#) channel for more instructional videos
- Deep clean your barn, tack, and horse
- Send in your USPC donation! Easy to do, from the home page look on the far right, under [Giving](#).

**Denotes that you must “sign in” to the website for complete access.*