



## THE UNITED STATES PONY CLUBS, INC. PRESS RELEASE

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### National Youth Congress and Alumni Academy of Achievement Inducted at 2018 Equine Symposium and Convention hosted by USPC

**February 2, 2017 (Lexington, KY)** – Every year at the Equine Symposium and Convention hosted by USPC, The National Youth Congress (NYC) convenes for three days. NYC began in 1998 to recognize outstanding Pony Club Members. The NYC delegates are selected by their regions and are provided the opportunity to learn valuable life leadership skills to help them navigate their futures. This year at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration 24 delegates were a part of the three-day Congress.

**Charlotte Arrouye**— Pacific Ridge Pony Club, Middle California Region

**Katherine Bartelt**— Dune Riders Pony Club, Lake Shore Region

**Ryder Black**— Woodbrook Hunt Pony Club, Northwest Region

**Rebekah Bond**— Portuguese Bend Pony Club, Camino Real

**Ryleigh Brown**— Bath Pony Club, Tri-State Region

**Kavita Bushong**— Conestoga Pony Club, Delmarva Region

**Koral Campbell**— Midnite Run Pony Club, Alaska Region

**Olivia Crespo**— Pineland Riders Pony Club, New Jersey Region

**Iva Cummings**— Fox Hollow Pony Club, Sunshine Region

**Madisyn DeCant**— Crescent Bay Pony Club, Old Dominion Region

**Lauren Greenleaf**— Mt. Hood Pony Club, Oregon Region

**Lily Huval**— Plantation's Pride Pony Club, Deep South Region

**Elizabeth Larson**— High Lakes Pony Club, Oregon Region

**Rachel Larson**— Rising Sun Pony Club, Northern Lakes Region

**Kyle Larson**— Rising Sun Pony Club, Northern Lakes Region

**Carmen Leslie**— Sawtooth Pony Club, Intermountain Region

**Brenna MacLeod**— Huron Valley Pony Club, Great Lakes Region

**Colleen Mauro**— Rolling Rock Hunt Pony Club, Tri-State Region

**Natasha Miro**— National Member, Middle California Region

**Rachel Morgan**— Horseketeers Pony Club, Sunshine Region

**Elizabeth Robinette**— Cornhusker Pony Club, Midwest Region

**Olivia Whitehead**— Panache Pony Club, Sierra Pacific Region

**Abigail Winfree**— Deep Run Hunt Pony Club, Virginia Region

**Margo Wattowa**— Silver Springs Pony Club, Midwest Region

A very special part of the NYC is the induction of outstanding USPC Alumni into the Academy of Achievement. The Academy of Achievement was created 20 years ago to honor alumni who have attained outstanding achievements in their chosen fields. Honorees this year were selected from a distinguished group of nominees. The alumni inductees join the delegates of the NYC to help guide and mentor them by bringing a voice of experience into the discussion.

The following four recipients were recognized at the January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 20 year Anniversary Celebration:

**Rob Burk** - In December of 2015, Rob Burk took over as the Chief Executive Officer of the United States Eventing Association (USEA). Prior to his appointment as CEO, he served as the Chief Operating Officer and Senior Director of Programs for the USEA. Rob previously served as an Executive Director and Senior Adviser within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and as the Executive Director of a Governor appointed statewide equine industry advisory board and stable inspection/licensing program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture. He has provided advice and guidance to four Secretaries of Agriculture and two Governors on equine and agricultural matters.

Rob has competed in Hunter/Jumpers, Dressage, Reining, and Evented throughout his life with notable success as a Young Rider in California. Through his childhood Rob's family moved approximately 8 times. As a result, Rob was a member of three different Pony Clubs (Fresno, Diablo, and Morgan Territory where he earned his H-A) in California. He graduated from Otterbein University with a B.S. in Pre-Veterinary Medicine/Pre-Graduate Equine Studies and earned a M.S. from Virginia Tech. He served as an equestrian team coach for Otterbein University and the United States Naval Academy. Rob, a graduate H-A, attributes his successes to his upbringing through Pony Club and his trainers and mentors based in California, Ohio, Maryland, and Ireland, as well as his family. He is married to Dr. Amy Burk of the University of Maryland Equine Studies Program, and he has two daughters.

**Dorothy Crowell** - Dorothy Crowell, and her Horse of A Lifetime, Molokai, were World Equestrian Games (WEG) Silver Medalists, two Time Olympians, the first US 4\* Champions at Rolex Kentucky Three-Day, and top ten finishers at Badminton and Burghley. Radio Flyer, another TB she got directly off the track, took Dorothy back to the 4\* level in her 40's, after she had "retired" to start a family and her own farm. They competed at the Rolex Kentucky Three Day and Pau, in France. Dorothy is a Level IV instructor in the U.S. Eventing Association's Instructor Certification Program, a C-3 Traditional graduate from Keeneland Pony Club and is currently the Coach of the Area VIII's North American Junior Young Rider Championships Team. Though she has definitively retired from competing at the highest levels, she still loves to bring along Off-The-Track Thoroughbreds.

**Kat Drake, PhD** - Kat grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, spending most of her Pony Club years in the Great Lakes Region before moving to San Francisco. She graduated as an H from Portola Valley Pony

Club while completing her Masters in Epidemiology from the University of California Berkeley and Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Science and Pharmacogenomics from the University of California San Francisco.

After grad school, Kat started working in the Biotech/Tech start up world. Initially she worked as a Bioinformatics Scientist at diagnostics companies developing biomarker blood tests for inflammatory bowel disease and early detection of lung cancer. Now she's working as Director of Informatics at Cytobank, Inc., a software startup whose aim is to make machine learning easy for biologists to help them rapidly analyze the large datasets they collect to monitor immune system function.

Kat has continued Eventing and currently has a young TB she's hoping to move up to Preliminary next year, but also takes care to prioritize being active and spending time in the mountains doing things like backcountry ski touring for a week in British Columbia, or hiking 23 miles and 11K vertical feet in one day in Southern California.

**Tim Leithead** - Tim Leithead is a graduate H-A from Eastern PA Region and son of the late USPC President, Margo Leithead. He is a fine example of what Pony Club can produce in using skills "beyond the horse world."

After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, Tim worked as an IT developer and business strategist for "The Purchasing Group", at one point heading up their sole European Office. After working for them for 10 years, he did 2 and 6 years, respectively, with MedRisk and JP Morgan Chase. Tim was then involved in the start-up Moven where he lead the creation of a financial savings app before becoming a lead and principal consultant for Finvention, a world wide tech-innovation network and conference, that also fosters global entrepreneurship among students.

Tim's professional life has certainly been strong, but he has been strong as well as he is a cancer-survivor and also the father of two children, his first being born 16 weeks premature. The experience of his family with Cailin led them to become major advocates for the March of Dimes.

In addition to these things, in life past horses Tim also competes in autocross racing and has served on the Board of the University of Pennsylvania for the past two years. He comes from an amazing Pony Club family with 4 siblings who are also USPC grads. Brother, Tad, was one of the first inductees into the Academy of Achievement and their father was a USPC Vice President and National Examiner.

**About Pony Club** - The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. (Pony Club) was founded in 1954 as a nonprofit national youth organization to teach riding and horsemanship through a formal educational program. There are approximately 9,000 Pony Club members in over 600 clubs and riding centers throughout the country. Many of the nation's top equestrians, including several of our Olympic team members, business professionals, government leaders and career military officers, have roots in Pony Club. Youth members range in age from as young as 4 through age 25. Pony Club also offers educational opportunities to a growing number of adults through Horsemasters membership. [www.ponyclub.org](http://www.ponyclub.org)