

CHAMPION
TRU-14

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* WINNER *

BROCK LAYTON

"How having a horse has taught me responsibility"

BROCK
LAYTON

When I was 2 years old my parents we searching for something for my family to do on a beautiful fall day . My mom found trail rides advertised in the phone book so we went to check them out not thinking they would let us ride because I was so young.

When we got there they allowed me to ride double with my mom on an 2 hour trail ride on a horse named Bo. Little did my parents know that one little trail ride would turn into an obsession! From that day on all I thought, talked and dreamt about was having a horse of my own. On a cold Christmas Eve 5 years ago, they gave me my first pony and this is how he has taught me responsibility:

The first thing I learned was that I was responsible to care for a living breathing animal that depended on me. He depends on me for his safety. Therefore I have to make sure that his pasture and stall is always free of danger. He also depends on me for his health. This means I have to check him over everyday for any kicks, bites, cuts and to notice any strange behaviors. I also have to make sure he is getting fed the right amount of hay and grain everyday. He also depends on me for comfort. This includes making sure he has a clean stall, stays warm in the winter and cool in the summer, that all his tack fits correctly when riding, and to groom him everyday.

Another responsibility I have learned by having a horse is to be disciplined. There are some days when I have a lot to do and I have to figure out how to get it all done. I have learned to become very organized and use my time wisely. Many days I do not go out for recess at school so I can get all my homework done so I can spend more time in the evening riding. There are many times I have to study in the car on the way to and the

way home from riding lessons. I also know if I want to go to friends houses I have to make sure my pony is taken care of first.

I have also learned the responsibility of being loyal to something. My pony is my best friend and I am never mean to him. When I look up at all my ribbons in my room, I know it is because of the hard work he and I did together. I love the feeling I get when I just lay on him while he is out grazing. I have a bond with him that I do not have with anyone else. He is also loyal to me. I can tell when we step into a show arena he knows exactly what I need for him to do and he rarely lets me down.

My horse has also taught me to be responsible with my money. My mom always lets me go through all of my horse stuff before the Tack Swap and what ever I sell there I get to keep the money. Whenever I get money for doing chores, good grades, my birthday or Christmas I save it for the Equine Affaire. This is my favorite place to go to buy new things for my pony. The bad thing is that when I get there I want to buy everything and I do not have enough money. I have learned to make decisions on what are the most important things to buy. There are many times through out the year I want to spend my money, but I am always able to save it until April even though it is hard to do sometime. I also like to collect Breyer horses and they are expensive too.

By having my own horse it has also taught me the responsibility to want to learn more and to do better. This means that when I take lessons I have to give the trainer my complete attention. Along with learning I have to be patient with my horse because we are both learning together. It makes me feel good when I teach him something new and he is able to do it in a show. This also carries over into school. I listen very carefully to my teacher and work very hard to get good grades. At shows I always watch others who are better than me and try to learn from them. I think as long as I have a horse I will always be learning from and about them.

Last year was the first time I was old enough to attend horse camp and show at the fair. It turned out to be the best summer of my life. I met many new friends and had many great experiences that will last forever. I can hardly wait to do it all again!