



My name is Caitlin Jones and as is the tradition at Camp Olympia, the graduating senior of the Team writes a tribute to the Team. So here goes. As I'm heading off to college this fall, I'm leaving behind this family, but I know I won't ever forget the memories I have of Camp Olympia, or any of the great friends I have made there. I have known Steve since I was two years old, just starting pre-school at the Camp. I know I am more than just another student to him. He has watched me grow as a person, and has made me into a real rider, not someone who just looks pretty on a push button horse.

I worked hard to prove myself to him, and make him proud to call me a Camp Olympia rider. I know I'm proud to call him my coach. He taught us the poem below and I have added what each phase means to me.

***The dream begins with a teacher...***

Celeste and Steve are two of the best teachers I have ever had, and I'm proud to say they are the only horse back riding teachers I have ever had.

***Who believes in you...***

From the moment I started riding lessons, 10 years ago, I knew this was a sport I wanted to master and make part of my life. I was scared and wanted to quit many many times, but Steve and Celeste stuck by me, and convinced me that I had what it took to push forward and overcome my fear.

***Who tugs and pushes you...***

Countless lessons, some good and some bad, are what have made my riding so much stronger. Steve and Celeste have spent hours and hours with me in the ring and out, making sure I had a great foundation that would lead my riding career in countless directions.

***And leads you onto the next plateau...***

I have learned so much, and would work very hard in and out of the ring to master all the skills I now possess. I would get upset when I had trouble learning something new that was being taught. Sure there was yelling, and of course there were tears, but not for the reasons many may think.



***Sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth.***

I knew Steve wasn't yelling at me to hurt my feelings. I knew that Celeste wasn't singling me out. They were trying to help me, being my teachers and doing their jobs to the best of their abilities. I'm so glad that they did, because now I've gone on to bigger and better things in my riding, like cross country jumping. Steve taught me that soaring over the jumps, high in the air isn't something you can read about or study in books. It's all about experiencing the moment and living the dream.

I would have never gotten to where I am today with out Steve and Celeste and the rest of my Camp Olympia family. The girls on my NCEL team, the parents who spend the money on lessons and show clothes, (my mom, who works the kitchen for our home shows and makes sure were all well fed.), the people of the camp, who don't have to help, but are always there, and my coaches Steve and Celeste. I say family, because that's what we all are. We support each other, through the sweat, the tears; the good rides and the bad; through the blue ribbons, and those that weren't recognized; when one has a bad day, we all band together to put a smile on that face; through thick and thin. We're all a family.

There is a little saying that has been ingrained into my brain since before I remember.

***There are some riders, who make it happen,  
There are some riders, who watch it happen,  
And there are some riders, who wonder what happened.***

My advice to anyone is to be that rider who makes it happen. Take chances and don't be afraid to make mistakes because your family will always be there. I know my Camp family will always be there for me offering support, love, and pushing me on to the next plateau. Thanks for all the memories. I will miss each and every one of you with all of my heart!

Love always,  
Caitlin Jones xx

