



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

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### **Pony Club Invites All Horse Lovers to Enjoy Education at the Annual USPC Convention, Presented by Via Nova Training**

**November 16, 2023 (Lexington, KY)** — The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. (USPC or Pony Club) invites horse lovers of all ages, experience levels, and disciplines to attend the 2024 USPC Convention, presented by Via Nova Training, which will be hosted by USPC and the Sierra Pacific Region, from January 24-28, 2024, at the Peppermill Reno Resort and Spa in Reno, Nev. The event will offer a blend of in-person and on-demand educational opportunities, including leadership training, equine education, and hands-on learning activities. While education is the main focus, a highlight is always the camaraderie and connections made with equine enthusiasts from around the country.

Each year, the USPC Convention is held in a different location around the United States as Pony Club's 41 regions take turns hosting the event. In 2024, the Sierra Pacific Region, which spans parts of Northern California and Nevada, will play host.

“Pony Club is always thrilled to put on our annual convention,” said USPC Executive Director Teresa Woods. “This multi-faceted event has so much to offer for attendees of all ages, along with top-notch education from experts of all kinds. There is something for every horse lover, and Pony Club members and their families can enjoy the experience together, while Pony Club leaders find the in-person networking and discussions invaluable. This year's location, especially at such a nice resort, makes it ideal for a family-friendly vacation combined with the Convention.”

The Peppermill Reno Resort is a AAA Four Diamond-rated resort, including a 9,900 square-foot fitness center, a three-story spa and salon, two resort pools (with one heated for all-year use), 10 award-winning restaurants on site, and 15 themed bars and lounges. The USPC Convention will be housed in the recently remodeled convention space, and rooms are offered at a discounted USPC group rate of \$125-\$185/night. Conveniently located five minutes from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport and 10 minutes from downtown, Peppermill is a perfect location for easy travel.

#### **Education for all Equestrians**

Both in-person and virtual meeting attendees will have access to extensive education during the event and for six months following through the virtual event platform. More than 40 in-person and on-demand

workshop sessions cover a variety of riding sports and disciplines, as well as rider fitness; equine health, grooming and nutrition; saddle fit; training basics for horse and rider; helmets and safety; plus disaster preparedness, land conservation, intercollegiate riding, and more. Of particular interest to Pony Club members are workshops covering Horse Management within Pony Club, USPC's Standards of Proficiency, rally tips, international exchanges, and other Pony Club opportunities.

Another educational highlight of the Convention is the Research Project Fair, presented by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation and supported by Kentucky Equine Research. Science-minded Pony Club members of all ages and certification levels share their findings on equine topics ranging from whether horses have a favorite color to genetics and cloning.

Other popular event features for hands-on learning include the Anatomy Lab, sponsored by Banixx Horse & Pet Care and the hands-on Horse Management Room, presented by Kentucky Equine Research, while the Pony Paddock, sponsored by the Arabian Horse Youth Association, entertains the youngest attendees.

### **Leading the Way**

Leadership training is also a much-anticipated part of the USPC Convention and offers professional development for Pony Club's instructors, leaders, and the many dedicated volunteers who make Pony Club happen at all levels. In addition to learning and networking, leaders can enjoy connecting over a special dinner and trivia night on Thursday.

The USPC National Youth Congress (NYC), supported by the Western & English Sales Association (WESA), also takes place during Convention. The NYC recognizes outstanding Pony Club members, ages 18–23, who are selected for their achievement, leadership, and volunteerism. Delegates come together with USPC Academy of Achievement alumni to focus on personal development and work together as a group on proposals to present to the USPC Board of Governors. They also enjoy plenty of team building, leadership training, and opportunities to network with USPC graduates, alumni, and leaders.

Another leadership function of the USPC Convention is the important work that happens during the Board of Governors meetings.

The USPC National Youth Board (NYB), a group of young leaders who serve as a bridge between the membership and the Board of Governors, also meets during the Convention to welcome the newest NYB members and to work on a service project.

### **Making Connections**

Everyone looks forward to the Meeting of the Corporation on Saturday morning, held alongside a complimentary continental breakfast to kick off the day. This is when the business of the organization is conducted, and special awards are presented, such as the Flash Teamwork Award and the Brookfield Land Conservation Award. Notable achievements are also recognized, including members who have earned Pony Club's impressive A-level certification, and clubs receiving 25- and 50-Year Milestone Awards.

The Saturday Night Banquet is always highly anticipated, with an evening of celebration, and dancing the night away. The winners of the Research Project Fair, along with the Founders Award recipients, are honored before the Passing of the Whip ceremony to the next hosting region. The keynote speaker at this year's banquet is Max Corcoran.

Corcoran has been grooming at the highest level for over 25 years for some of the best in the world, including the O'Connor Event Team. She traveled for 11 years to many Olympics, World Championships, Pan American Games, and numerous CCIs around the world. Corcoran was part of the organizing team for the 2018 World Equestrian Games and was a Technical Official at the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games. She was the president of the United States Eventing Association (USEA) from 2020 to 2023, where horsemanship and horse care are her legacy. She continues to sit on various USEA and United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) committees. She is currently the USEF Eventing Elite and High-Performance Program team facilitator.

Shopping the trade fair and bidding in the Sierra Pacific Region's silent auction complete the Convention experience in Reno. We hope you will join us there.

Pony Club is pleased to partner with title sponsor Via Nova Training for the 2024 USPC Convention. In addition to title sponsor Via Nova Training, support for the event is being provided by: the American Association of Equine Practitioners, the Arabian Horse Youth Association, Banixx Horse & Pet Care, Coach Daniel Stewart and his Pressure Proof Coaching Academy, Dressage 4 Kids, Gold Country Pony Club, the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation, Kerrits (the official apparel sponsor of USPC), Kentucky Equine Research, Lone Tree Farm & Friends, Mustang Champions, Otterbein University, Ely and Marcy Payoyo, Ram Tap Horse Park, Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club, Santa Ynez Valley Hounds, Shapley's (the official grooming products sponsor of USPC), Sheila Larsen, Triple Crown Nutrition (the official feed sponsor of USPC), Wintec (the official saddle sponsor of USPC), The Horse, the USPC Special Opportunities Committee, the Western & English Sales Association, and Zoetis (the official health and wellness partner of USPC).

### **Be Part of the 2024 USPC Convention**

Registration for the 2024 USPC Convention, sponsored by Via Nova Training, is open online at [bit.ly/2024-convention-registration-info](https://bit.ly/2024-convention-registration-info). USPC group rates on lodging are available at the Reno Peppermill Resort and Spa and [online here](#). For more information about the convention, visit [www.ponyclub.org/Events/Convention](https://www.ponyclub.org/Events/Convention) and click on the "Convention Website" button.

### **Sponsorship and trade fair opportunities are still available, with a deadline of December 6.**

Through Pony Club, you can connect with an equine-savvy audience of all ages and support the next generation of leaders and equestrians. Those interested should email [development@ponyclub.org](mailto:development@ponyclub.org).

**About The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.** — *The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. (USPC or Pony Club) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization that builds the foundation of teamwork and sportsmanship through riding, mounted sports, and care of horses and ponies, while developing and enhancing leadership, confidence, responsibility, and a sense of community in its youth and adult members. USPC is proud to offer instruction and competitive opportunities in 11 competitive disciplines*

*through hundreds of clubs and centers across the United States. USPC's educational standards continue to be instrumental in curriculum development for schools, universities, equestrian professionals, and organizations across the United States. Many of the nation's top equestrians, including Olympic team members, as well as successful business professionals and leaders in a variety of fields, have roots in Pony Club. For more information, please visit [www.ponyclub.org](http://www.ponyclub.org).*