

Mataya Parsons

My riding journey

My riding journey has had its ups and downs, but owning my own horse has been an incredible help in building my skills and confidence. I've worked with many coaches over the years, each teaching me something different and helping shape the rider I am today.

In the summer of 2023, I began showing a horse named Tuxedo. He was a huge confidence booster and helped me realize that showing isn't about winning, it's about having fun and meeting new people.

The 2024 show season started off rough. I began showing a new horse, Finn, and at our first show, I fell off in the warm up ring and broke the weight-bearing bone in my ankle. This unexpected injury changed all my summer plans. After months of recovery, I returned to riding and entered another show, but Finn threw me off again, setting back both our confidences.

With consistent work at home and off-property lessons, we made progress. At our final show, we stuck to walk-trot classes and ended on a positive note. This year, I plan to take Finn to more local shows to help him gain confidence off property. I'm excited to keep learning and growing together as a team.

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What I would use the money for

If I were awarded the \$500 youth bursary, I would use the funds to gain more experience with my horse, Finn, by taking off-property lessons with my coach, Nichole. These lessons are incredibly valuable for both of us, as they allow Finn to get used to new environments and help me improve my riding skills outside of our usual routine. Gaining confidence in different settings will be a huge advantage as we prepare for the upcoming show season.

Showing is something I'm very passionate about, and I want to make this summer's season both fun and rewarding. The more time I can spend learning and practicing with Finn, the better prepared we'll be. I believe that consistent training and experience are key to improving not just results, but also the connection between horse and rider.

In addition to competing, I'm also planning to continue working toward completing more of my rider levels this summer. This bursary would help cover the costs of lessons and testing fees, giving me the opportunity to continue growing and learning in the sport I love. I'm committed to improving as a rider and making the most of every opportunity that comes my way.