

ADA President's Report for 2021 AGM

I would like to sincerely like to thank my executive and the entire ADA board for all their work in 2020. COVID may have kept us all close to home this past year, but thanks to conference calls and ZOOM meetings, the future is definitely shaping up nicely with a number of new initiatives underway!

I became president of the ADA in April 2020 and with the uncertainties of COVID-19, this year has definitely been about change. With many shows and clinics cancelled we quickly began to ask some questions about how the ADA can best serve its members. Thank you to those who completed our membership survey in July. Of the 260 ADA members contacted, ninety-six (96) submitted surveys, that was a 37% response rate and we gleaned some very good information from our members across the province. While almost a third of respondents indicate being relatively new members (less than 5 years), over half have been members of ADA for more than ten years. Additionally, the survey results indicated (unsurprisingly) that a significant majority of dressage participants are adults over the age of 35. The findings related to education, training and barriers to participation helped us focus on areas of opportunity and the full report on the survey data can be found on our website <http://www.albertadressage.com>.

Two new areas of opportunity came to our awards program this year. The first was the launching of the ADA Medal Awards Program. The template is similar to the USDF Medal Award program in the US. The program replaces the previous Horse and Rider program with the main difference being a rider can take a year or more to achieve success in each of the Medal categories, there are no time or horse restrictions. The program officially launched January 2021 and the hope is that many of our members will take part. The medals are beautifully framed and reflect the different levels. Now we just need shows to resume so we can get going!

The second change was the introduction of a recognition program. We launched two new recognition awards, Lifetime Recognition and Lifetime Achievement, in the Fall of 2020. The Lifetime Recognition Award is designed to honour and recognize those individuals who have supported, promoted, and/or volunteered in the sport dressage in Alberta. Nominees do not need to be riders, but someone who loves the sport by supporting and promoting it whenever possible. The Lifetime Achievement Award is to honour and recognize those individuals who have supported, promoted, and participated in the sport dressage in Alberta. In both cases "Lifetime" implies at least a 25-year contribution to dressage in our province whether it be past and/or present. Please stay tuned for the announcement of our inaugural recipients later this year. More information on both of these programs is on our website, and I encourage all to think about deserving members who should be honoured with Lifetime recognition in years to come. A huge thank you to the committee that work on getting these programs off the ground, Sheri Dumonceaux, Lorraine Hill and Audrey Kokesch.

A few other areas of change came due to the cancellation of the majority of shows in the province and the cancellation of provincials in 2020. Since members indicated the importance of education we allocated some of these funds to a number of clinics in the province (you can read about them in our area group annual reports) and we worked with the Alberta Junior Young Riders (AJYR) group to re-vamp their programming and have restructured funding for the

program moving forward. A focus on youth has become one of our provincial priorities and we hope this new structure will encourage more youth participation in our sport across the province. A special thank you to our AJYR volunteers for their work in getting this new program off the ground. We also funded a few non-area group shows last year and we are continuing this commitment in 2021.

COVID-19 restrictions may continue to make it difficult to get the show season going this year, but let me reassure you as your provincial association we are doing everything we can to stay abreast of what is possible, and your area groups are doing the same. Please visit the ADA website as we have an up-to-date list of what shows are planned for the year. We are also excited to announce that the Calgary and Area Dressage Association has agreed to host Provincials 2021 if we can go ahead with them this year.

Thank you again to all ADA members for your continued support of dressage in Alberta!
Take care and stay safe.

Tanya Jacobson-Gundlock
President, Alberta Dressage Association