

## Education remains Central to Pony Club Vision

Since its inception in Britain in 1929 and becoming established in Canada in 1934, Pony Club continues in its purpose of attracting young people to riding and horse sport while offering educational opportunities that youth might not obtain individually. Branches of Pony Club are located in communities across Ontario, and provide a place for youth aged six to 25 to express their interest in horses through learning, competing, and proceeding through testing levels.



Branch volunteers organize regularly scheduled education meetings on topics ranging from horse care to conformation and saddlery to stable management, often following the standardized curriculum set out by Pony Club both in Canada and worldwide. Members learn together through hands-on engagement, are inspired by guest clinicians, and have access to recognized reference materials. Activities are geared to youth and of course include an element of fun! Canadian Pony Club also offers a badge program to complement the curriculum and encourage members to explore their own interests.



*Members enjoy one of the many sessions provided by industry professionals at COR's 2014 Youth Education Conference.*

In each of 2014 and 2015, Central Ontario Region Pony Club hosted a region-wide youth education conference. The event attracted over 100 delegates, and welcomed guest speakers from various fields in the equine industry including horse health, sport disciplines, and the arts. Members were inspired by Pony Club alumni who have had gone on to further success in the horse world, and also had an opportunity to hear from past Olympians. COR organizers are busily preparing for the 2017 conference, to be held in Mississauga over the weekend of April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

While a foundation in education promotes safe practices for horse and rider, the experience and skills gained in horsemanship theory often translate to success in the saddle. This can be in competition within Pony Club or "on the circuit," or for those who pursue a recreational equestrian lifestyle. And, members can be proud of their accomplishments as they advance through the various levels of testing. Canadian Pony Club is proud of its many alumni who have gone on to do great things, whether in the horse industry or beyond. The Wall of Fame at the CPC website is certainly worth a visit!

For more information on becoming involved with Pony Club as a youth member, Horsemaster (adult member), or supporter, please visit [www.canadianponyclub.org](http://www.canadianponyclub.org), or email [centralontarioregion@ponyclub.ca](mailto:centralontarioregion@ponyclub.ca).