

Boot Camps Matter

If you're like me and most reiners I know, you map out what shows you plan to attend for the year. I hope your 2019 calendar has room to plug in a Reining Boot Camp. These are significant fundraisers for the Reining Horse Foundation's Dale Wilkinson Memorial Crisis Fund, but they're important for more than this reason alone.

Reining Boot Camps are great entry points for riders considering reining. We've heard many stories over the years about people who come wanting to see what this discipline is about. More than one barrel racer has unloaded their horses for one of these clinics. Sometimes it's a team roper or pleasure horse exhibitor. In 2017, we expanded the clinic format beyond rookie reiners to include NRHA non pro riders who are striving to improve their skills. We want all who attend to feel welcome!

While Reining Boot Camps help grow our sport, they also expand our reining community's philanthropy. NRHA Professionals donate their time and talents to serve as clinicians, and NRHA Affiliate volunteers conduct the clinics. Attendees know their fees go to a good cause, and sometimes they make additional donations.

Each clinic includes time to share information about the Dale Wilkinson Memorial Crisis Fund and the Foundation's mission of caring for the reining community while honoring the sport's legacy. It's a great way to introduce people to what we're about and help them become better riders in the process.

I'm immensely proud that the reining community supports reiners enduring hardships. The need is as great now as ever. In 2018, the Crisis Fund Review Committee approved \$35,500 in grants impacting the lives of

10 reiners and their families. This is a higher number than usual, but through the generosity and caring of our supporters, the fund remains healthy.

It's even more exciting to learn that contributions come from both brand-new and longtime donors and everyone in between. Donations range from a few dollars to thousands, and every single dollar is important.

'At the same time that Reining Boot Camps expand our sport, they also expand our reining community's philanthropy.'

Special thanks to the Yankee Reining Horse Association for kicking off the 2019 clinics. The West Coast and Southwest Reining Horse Associations have already scheduled dates, and we have room to add more.

Take another look at your calendar and see where you can fit in a Reining Boot Camp in 2019. Whether you participate as a host coordinator, volunteer, clinician, or attendee, you'll be helping someone. ❖



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RHF board president

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