

All Grown Up

Wow! Twenty years old! The Reining Horse Foundation (RHF) is no longer a teenager. Despite its relatively young age, this nonprofit organization has made a huge difference in the reining world.

Part of our story started even before the RHF was born. Scholarships have been part of NRHA for a long time. The first Youth Team Tournament was initiated at the 1994 NRHA Derby, and Kathy Hinton was its original coordinator. The first-, second- and third-place teams all received scholarships, along with other prizes.

My daughter Catherine was fortunate enough to win one of those scholarships in 1996. After moving around some, the Youth Team Tournament was divided across the Affiliate Regional Championships, laying the groundwork for scholarships that continue under the RHF umbrella.

In 2001, we formed the Reining Horse Sports Foundation, which became the RHF in 2017. One of the main objectives was to further develop reining's youth programs.

A group of individuals who valued our youth and wanted to help with their education held an impromptu meeting at the NRHA Futurity. Buck Hazledine, in particular, was interested in creating a need- and academic-based scholarship program for young reiners. We developed the criteria and selection process, and we have awarded NRHyA scholarships ever since.

Later, we added Varsity Reining Club scholarships to recognize NRHyA members who are active outside the arena. The program

encourages youth to develop life skills, such as communication and community service.

As NCAA Equestrian sports became more prevalent, the Youth Team Tournament faced challenges awarding competition-based scholarships, so the program was adapted to direct funds toward NRHA's Affiliate Regional Championships, and now these scholarships are based on applications.

Today, the RHF annually awards more than \$40,000 in scholarships and is looking to increase that amount. Our recipients become horse trainers, doctors, veterinarians and business leaders. Several also come back as NRHA non pros and owners.

Through the generosity of many throughout the reining community, the RHF continues to provide opportunities for our youth! If you have a particular interest in supporting our NRHyA leadership development and scholarship programs, let us know.



Mike Hancock,
RHF Board member

To donate, visit reiningfoundation.com, email rhf@nrha.com or contact RHF Director Leslie Baker at 405-946-7400, ext. 106. You can also donate by texting "RHF" to 405-300-5919.



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