

On August 19th and 20th, the Creston and District Society for Community Living's Therapeutic Riding Program held a clinic with instructors Joan and Anya Sopow from the South Okanagan. Joan and Anya are both Equine Canada Coach One's and Joan is also a Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association Instructor. Joan runs South Okanagan Therapeutic Riding Association near Summerland. www.sotra.ca.

Eleven riders participated in flat and jumping lessons on a gorgeous, blue sky summer day.

Three riders were from the Therapeutic Riding Program and it was a great opportunity for them to take their riding skills to the next level. Izabell Hollis aspires to canter one day and Joan was very helpful in giving Izabell's regular instructors coaching advice to move her in that direction. Izabell is now well on her way to achieving her goal, developing independent hands at the sitting and posting trot.

Luanne Armstrong has a goal to ride a dressage test in the Sea-to-Sea Para-Dressage video competition class this fall. Joan was very helpful in providing instruction on how to ride a perfect twenty meter circle. Luanne's regular instructor, Christine Ross, is looking forward to recording on video and submitting a dressage test performed by Luanne this fall.

Three riders from the local 4H club also took lessons, as they had very much enjoyed Joan's instruction when they took lessons from her in Armstrong. It was a thrill to watch Ethan Huscroft ride Ezra over 3 foot high jumps in a lesson with Joan. That is something not often seen at the therapeutic riding center!

It was also a great opportunity for the program's assistant instructors to get updating hours from Anya. She was terrific at helping riders gain confidence as they progressed throughout the weekend and provided helpful instructions for schooling some of the therapy horses.

Thanks very much to Horse Council BC Zone Funding for helping fund the clinic. It was an event that is definitely worth repeating.

For more information about the Creston and District Society for Community Living's Therapeutic Riding Program, please contact Michelle Whiteaway at 250-402-6793 or mwhiteaway@hotmail.com or visit <http://cdscl.com/trp.htm>.

Photo caption: Luanne Armstrong riding Emma in a lesson with Joan Sopow, working on dressage movements.