

# Riding Camps for Horse Enthusiasts

By Shauna Sibila

After 10 minutes from the busiest part of Ballantyne is Leg Up Equestrian, an English riding academy for students age 5 to adult. Once you arrive on Leg Up's property it is hard to believe you are mere miles from the bustling highway 521. With 11 school horses and over 120 students, it is obvious that S. Scott Kodell and his wife Cathy take their training program very seriously.

The lessons begin with the "pony pals" at 5-7-years-old and learning in half-hour private sessions. Once students are able to independently manage a horse they move up to four person group lessons. Classes are Tuesday through Thursday after school hours and all day Saturday and Sunday. The year is divided into quarters and there are 10 weekly lessons in a quarter.

Twice per year, in the spring and fall, Leg Up has a riding show to demonstrate what the children have learned. There are different events held at each training level and the competition rivals the delight. As Kodell points out, the kids seem to love it: "These kids live and breathe horses. It's so nice to be in a business where your clients appreciate it so much and they



Fallon, Emily, Erin, Laura

enjoy being out here and working with the animals."

Kodell reveals that this fun-level is what he strives for as he is teaching: "What's really important is the atmosphere we try to portray. We're really down to earth. There's nothing pretentious here. Check your attitude at the door. We're not a big fancy show barn. It's a family-run business and we try to maintain that atmosphere."

In addition to quarterly camps, Leg Up offers a variety of summer camps at different experience levels. Session one kicks off June 12-16 with the drill team camp, the only time 10 riders will be in a Leg Up ring at once. They are also doing a Girl Scout camp this year for the first time. The week-long sessions are usually from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday with a scaled-down version of their horse shows at the

end of the week to show off to mom and dad.

With all the shows and activities, Leg Up is determined to make sure that the students are actually learning. At the beginning of each class is a horse-based curriculum about proper technique, parts of the horse and pieces of the riding equipment. Kodell says, "The idea here is that they progress through all the levels. Each level they learn skills which progress on earlier skills."

Through this program, Leg Up has gathered quite the following since their first client in 1997. Kodell does not shy away from accepting new riders though, regardless of age or skill level. He says, "Everyone has their own interest level. Some people want to come out just for a recreational ride. Others are more serious and they want to become an equestrian. It seems everyone here wants their own horses!"

So how did they go from offering free pony rides at a Fourth of July event to 120 students? Kodell attributes it to his wife's work ethic. "When Cathy was growing up she grew up in a very modest family and household on a small family farm. They never had any money to buy these big \$20,000 horses but she just worked and worked and trained

and grew to love it. I guess she keeps a lot of that philosophy and work ethic." He continues, "She wants you to work with that horse and to learn how to train that horse and to dedicate. It's not just handed to you on a silver platter."

And then he says something that almost seems blasphemous in today's society: "You have to work for it, to earn it...It's more rewarding in the long term and people tend to appreciate it more." ☐

*For more information about summer camps or lessons visit [www.legupequestrian.com](http://www.legupequestrian.com) or call 803.230.8121. The facility is located at 6238 Johannes Lane in Fort Mill.*



L-R: Fallon, Erin, Emily, Laura



Laura on Tattletale Tilly.