



September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Open Letter to all interested in Para-Equestrian Dressage

Dear Supporter of Para-Equestrian Dressage,

**USEF AND USPEA PARA-EQUESTRIAN DRESSAGE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE**

I am writing this Open Letter as it appears, from some of the feedback we have received, that we have not been completely successful in communicating the aim of the Centers of Excellence (COEs) or what we are asking facility owners to commit to.

The primary aim of COEs is that they are the focus for the development of Para-Equestrian Dressage in the U.S. As a Federation, we cannot reach out to all potential para-equestrian athletes, we need Centers around the U.S. that are recognized and promoted as the primary “referral” point for athletes and for support staff, especially coaches.

We are certainly not asking COEs to fund USEF High Performance courses; quite the opposite – we want to, where possible, channel resources in to COEs, we want to run High Performance courses at COEs (of course we hope for preferential rates!), we want to use the COEs as our High Performance development centers across the U.S. We want to work with COEs in order to help them attract investment, whether that is through sponsorship or through philanthropic donations. We also want to use the full range of the Federation’s media and marketing resources to promote COEs. We have asked for a small admin fee from COEs (\$3,000) to be paid over three years and in order to seal a two way commitment but we plan that our investment back in to COEs will be far in excess of \$3,000.

We also hope that through the COE scheme we will encourage Centers that may, currently, only specialize in dressage to reach in to the para-equestrian dressage world and promote the development of para-equestrian dressage athletes.

In summary, we have to grow the athlete numbers in Para-Equestrian Dressage, we have to up the professionalism of the support we provide as a Federation and the support athletes receive. We have to show those that enjoy therapeutic riding that there is also a competition pathway that could lead to them representing their Country at the Paralympic Games. In order to do this we need enthusiastic and driven training center owners and managers who we can promote and support and who will be at the epicenter of growing the sport in the U.S.

If you have any questions about the COE program or suggestions as to how it can grow or be better communicated, please contact Austyn Erickson ([aerickson@usef.org](mailto:aerickson@usef.org)) or myself.

Kind regards

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