

KRISTEN EKLIN



Jeff Kirkbride

Alfred University

I started riding at the age of 12. Advancement from local Open shows to national Quarter Horse shows prompted my interest in competing at a collegiate level. My passion for horses led me to select a college that offered strong academic programs coupled with a competitive collegiate equestrian

team – Alfred University. In college, I studied communications studies and minored in marketing and equine studies, became the captain of Alfred University’s Western team and served as a mentor to beginner Walk-Trot riders.

IHSA is a team experience. Each

teammate contributes his/her talent to help lead the team to success. Teammates connect and learn from one another during early morning training rides, workout sessions, analyzing horse show warm-up rides and bond in moments of pre-horse show jitters.

IHSA competition tests an individual's ability to learn on the fly and adapt, all while remaining confident.

My experiences throughout my show career helped me to reach my peak performance both in and out of the horse show arena. I often frame



my work and personal life based on the lessons learned in the show pen. The exceptional coaches, mentors and equine partners I have met have offered guidance and perspective essential to the foundation of my professional career. Horse showing has taught me so much. Sometimes a show weekend yields satin ribbons and gold trophies, but not always. Despite the preparation, horse showing and life are highly unpredictable. My satisfaction doesn't come from rankings or



ribbons but from the preparation and hard work that accompanies great accomplishments. IHSA allowed me to make lifelong friends who share a love of horses and showing.

I am now the Assistant Director at Rochester Regional Health Foundations. I work to develop funding to support the health system's programs and initiatives. I have successfully launched the Cornerstone Society, Rochester Regional Health's leadership annual giving society. In less than one year, the Cornerstone Society has provided over \$1.5 million in pledged support for Rochester Regional Health.

Although I no longer own a horse, horses are still an important part of my life and I enjoy spending time at the barn. In 2016, I competed in the IHSA Alumni division in Horsemanship and Reining, advancing to Semi-Finals in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. 🐾