



Young people and horses – great mix!



125 years of academic excellence and great horsemanship



A “Pep-Talk” from Mr. Mulligan – Head of School.

A New Generation of Horsemanship

With Richard Winters

I’m aware that this article may come across as just a little self-serving. I’ve just begun a brand-new chapter in my professional career and I invite you to join me, vicariously, through this article!

First, let’s begin with an issue that has everyone in the horse industry concerned: How do we get the next generation interested in and desiring to cultivate the love of horses that we nurture daily?

A clinician friend of mine recently stated, “My whole clientele base is dying off!” The average clinic participants are women from 40 to 60 years of age. They started out as horse-crazy young girls and are now in a position in their lives to once again pursue that childhood dream. What will happen when those women turn 70 and 80? Where is the next generation of horse-crazy kids who will step up and carry on the traditions that we all love?

Let me share with you my small contribution to this challenge.

The Thacher School in Ojai, California, is a private boarding school for high school students that has been in operation for over 125 years. This school brings together the best and the brightest young people from around the country and the world to prepare them for college, universities and life. Many of these students will become tomorrow’s leaders. Along with academic excellence, The Thacher School has had a horsemanship program that is truly the centerpiece of the school’s philosophy. Over 100 years ago, Sherman Day Thacher said that the best thing for the inside of a boy (and now girl) is the outside of a horse.

At The Thacher School every new freshman is assigned a horse, stall and tack. These students are required to be out at the barn and have their stall cleaned and horse fed before 8 o’clock each morning, seven days a week. They will also ride for two hours, five days a week. By late spring of their freshman year, these students will have acquired horsemanship skills comparable to, and sometimes exceeding, those of some of my clinic participants. After their freshman year, students have the option of riding one, two or three terms throughout the academic year and also participate in other sports.

This unique program goes far beyond simply horseback riding. Learning the skills of backcountry packing, cattle handling, gymkhana, extreme cowboy races, roping, colt starting and stadium jumping are just a few of the many horsemanship experiences to which these young people are exposed.

A few months ago I received a telephone call from the Head Master of The Thacher School. He asked me the following question: “What would it take for you to come to our school to be the Horse Program Director?” This was not on my radar. After thirty-plus years in the horse industry, training, showing and teaching horsemanship, I assumed that I would maintain this course for the next ten to twenty years as well. However, after many conversations, thoughtful consideration and prayer, my wife Cheryl and I decided to accept this position and are very excited about investing our time,

energies and expertise into these amazing young lives.

Honestly, if it was just going to a school and teaching young people how to ride horses, I would not have been interested in this position. However, there’s something unique about horses that have the ability to teach life-lessons in a very meaningful way. From personal responsibility and character building to self-control, horses are great teachers.

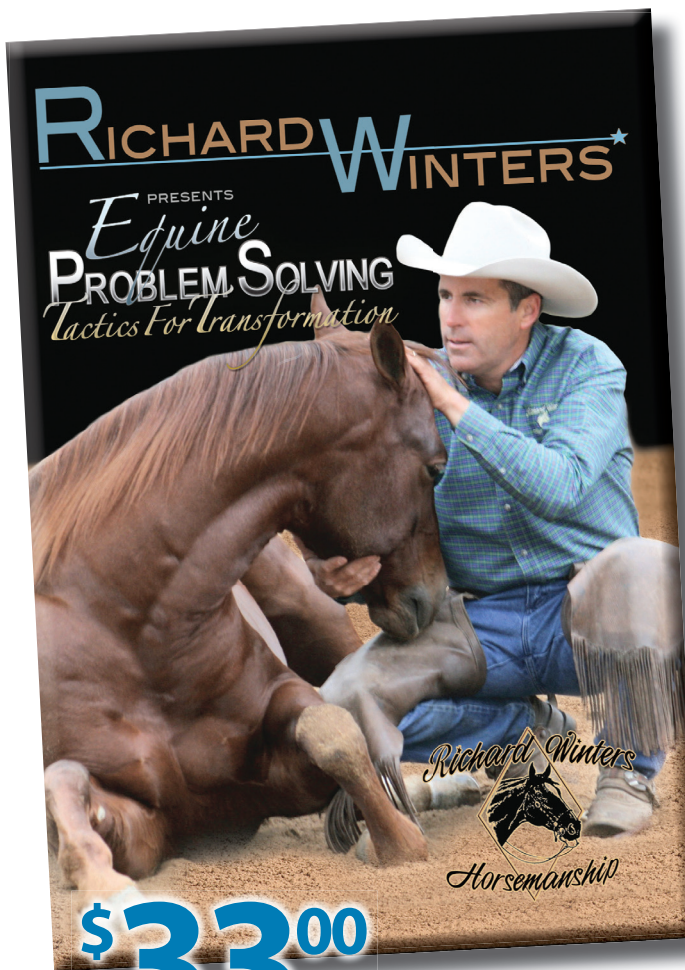
These bright young people come to The Thacher School during the most formative years of their lives. In some small way, I hope to make an impact and investment in this next generation.

On a practical level you will not see me out on the road at clinics or expo’s as you have in the past. Not to worry though. There are many talented young horsemen and horsewomen eager and ready to step up and take my place!

We hope that you will continue to follow us through our website, Facebook, YouTube, articles and monthly e-mail newsletter. We want to stay in touch with our thousands of friends in the horse industry and continue to share horsemanship through these venues.

In some ways I’ve spent the last 30-plus years preparing for this new position and chapter in my life. Thousands of you have brought me a horse to train, attended one of my clinics, or listened to one of my presentations. To you, let me just say “Thank You!” Wishing you the very best on your journey!

Photo Credit: The Thacher School



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Photo credits Cheryl L. Winters

Richard and Cheryl Winters own and operate Richard Winters Horsemanship out of The Thacher School in Ojai, California.

For information or to schedule a clinic in your area, please call or write to:
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Richard Winters



For over 30 years Richard Winters has been helping horses and people progress on their Horsemanship Journey. Richard has started and trained horses of almost every breed and discipline. Winters' Horsemanship Clinic's have taken him throughout the Country and around the World.

Accomplishments include World Championships in the National

Reined Cow Horse Association, European International Colt Starting Champion and Road To The Horse Colt Starting Winner. Richard is also a published author with his newest release from Western Horseman entitled; "From Rider to Horseman".

Richard and his wife Cheryl reside in Ojai, California, where Richard is the Director of The Horse Program at the prestigious and historic Thacher School. You can learn more about Richard Winters Horsemanship and The Thacher School at www.wintersranch.com and www.thacher.org.

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