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## **Julia Hershey Named 2018 CHA Clinic Staff of the Year and Katie Purdy Named 2018 CHA Instructor of the Year**

*(November 2018)* – The Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) wouldn't be where it is today without its Certified Clinic Staff and its individual Certified Instructors. They are the lifeblood of this membership-based organization. At the 2018 CHA International Conference on September 30, 2018, in Fort Collins, Colorado, two instructors were honored in front of an audience of their peers. Julia Hershey was named CHA Clinic Staff of the Year while Katie Purdy was named CHA Instructor of the Year.

Each year, CHA honors one particular Clinic Staff certifier for his or her outstanding service of conducting meaningful clinics and for influencing the careers of various instructors over the years. Known for her kindness and approachability to clinic participants, Julia Hershey of Hershey's Heavenly Horses in Colorado Springs, Colorado, has been a CHA clinician for 28 certification clinics.

"I always want to impact people in a positive way, so to hear from the participants that their lives have been improved by my input is quite humbling," said Hershey. "I am so thankful that they felt like I was approachable and had their best interest in mind."

Hershey earned her bachelor's degree in Equestrian Science with minors in Business Administration, Mathematics, and Computer Science from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. She then earned a Masters in Education from Ohio State University and a Masters in Accounting from Colorado Technical University.

Hershey has experience with hunter/jumpers, dressage, jumping, trail, and eventing, as well as saddle seat and several other disciplines. Hershey has given back to the horse industry by putting on many successful CHA regional conferences through her past role as Region 9 Director, which she held for nearly 10 years.

Hershey attended a CHA Pack and Trail clinic in 1992 and became a CHA Master Instructor in 1998. Shortly after that, she became an Assistant Clinic Staff and then a Standard English/Western Clinic evaluator. She is also clinic staff for the CHA Trail and Combined Clinics. She has conducted Standard English/Western, Day Ride Trail Guide, Combined Arena and Trail, and also CHA Trail Clinics, which involve packing into the wilderness. She

has done these clinics in the driving rain and snow with temperatures below freezing and even with bats and bears, and through any adversity she always says, “Let the process happen!”

“In the almost 25 years in CHA, I have seen the importance of bringing standardization to the industry and the need for certification of instructors in all the disciplines and at every level of riding,” said Hershey. “After attending clinics as a participant and being inspired by my clinic instructors, I wanted to continue in my learning process and try to become the type of instructor that inspires others.”

And Hershey has done just that. “Just thinking about her brings a smile to my face,” said one of her CHA certification participants. “She brings a delightful sense of humor into her daily walk through life. Clinic participants find her fun and easy to interact with. She is able to connect at many levels with her clinic participants—being fun and upbeat when needed, being serious and caring when needed.”

Many riders love their horseback riding instructors for their helpful and inspiring ways of teaching horseback riding. And those students also love nominating their instructors for the CHA Instructor of the Year Award. This year’s award went to Katie Purdy of Beaverton, Oregon. Purdy operates Memory Lane in Beaverton and is a CHA Master Instructor and a Standard English/Western Assistant Clinic Instructor.

“This award has helped me achieve my goal in feeling like I am making a positive difference with every student I get the chance to work with,” said Purdy. “CHA is something that has helped improve my horsemanship in many ways. It is a constant reminder that safety comes first and how important it is to educate the rider how to properly handle, ride, and manage these amazing, intelligent, and athletic animals.”

Purdy has competed at the regional, state, and national levels in 4-H, on the Oregon High School Equestrian Team (OHSET), and on the Oregon State University Intercollegiate Horse Show Association team in English and Western disciplines. Purdy graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Animal Science and Equine Science from Oregon State. She said her professors would use the CHA manuals for the instructor class.

“Once I had my own program, I knew I wanted to get certified through CHA, as I believe it is the best instructor organization to get certified through,” she said.

She has also started more than 90 horses—from Quarter Horses to Trakehners to Thoroughbreds. Purdy teaches riders of all ages, and she has students competing at various

levels. Her program has everything from reining horses to hunters and from that first lesson horse to competitive show horses. She has even been known to make use of technology by taking a video during a lesson while adding her comments on what to improve or change so that her student can review after the lesson.

“She is a highly competent teacher who instills confidence in her students by empowering them from the first lesson,” said one of her students. “She is down to earth, friendly, a strong leader and obviously loves instructing horsemanship. Her passion for all things horses is infectious.”

Purdy said that being a CHA Certified Instructor has helped her tremendously as an instructor. “Having these high-level certifications with a great national organization like CHA allows me to showcase and set a standard for which my clients and potential clients can understand,” she said.

Always dedicated to her students, Purdy often hauls student’s horses to local shows and attends local tack sales, horse expos, trail rides on the beach, and clinics with her riders. “She is passionate about horses and teaching; a standard-bearer of integrity, honesty, and civility; and is as highly respected as anyone in the area. The horse world is lucky to have her,” said another student.

For a complete list of past award winners, visit [www.cha.horse/store/pages/50/Award\\_Winners.html](http://www.cha.horse/store/pages/50/Award_Winners.html). For more information about the next CHA International Conference, please visit [www.CHAINstructors.com/conference](http://www.CHAINstructors.com/conference).

*CHA Instructors Change Lives Through Safe Experiences with Horses. The purpose of CHA is to promote excellence in safety and education for the benefit of the horse industry. CHA certifies instructors and trail guides, accredits equestrian facilities, publishes educational manuals, produces educational horsemanship DVDs and YouTube Safety shorts, and hosts regional and international conferences. For more information on the largest certifying body of riding instructors and barn managers in North America, Certified Horsemanship Association, please visit [www.CHA.horse](http://www.CHA.horse) or call 859-259-3399. To find a certified horseback riding instructor or accredited equine facility near you, visit [www.CHAINstructors.com](http://www.CHAINstructors.com)*

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