



The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. E-News from National

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Information from our members, parents and alumni is needed:

Why Change? It's Worked for 55 Years

Several years ago, USPC embarked on a five-year strategic research plan to identify our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs), which were identified as our competitive environment, whom we serve, what our youth members actually want and need, what obstacles they face, why they do or do not stay involved. Some of the outcomes learned from this process we had expected, but many were quite surprising. In the following five categories, the research identified specific issues and challenges that are threatening the way USPC currently operates.

We would very much like your input on these issues. To assist the groups now working on Strategic Planning for the future of USPC, please help us by responding to the highlighted questions below.

PEER TO PEER CONTACT

Peer-to-peer education is the most important form of horse learning at all levels, mounted and unmounted. However, our youth members need help with getting adults to understand that peer-to-peer is the most effective and valued way that they learn; it works better for them than the use of star athletes, high-priced clinics and skilled adults.

- **What suggestions do you have about how to engage members of small clubs with the larger Pony Club community?**
- **What will help parents and other adults understand the impact and vital nature of Peer-to-Peer learning?**

VOLUNTEERS

For various reasons, volunteers at every level of the organization (including DCs and parents at the local level to committee members at the national level) are not doing the jobs the organization assigns to them. Today's volunteers are now drawn primarily from members of 'Generation X & Y' and these adults have very different motivations, expectations, loyalties, commitments and lifestyles than do the 'Baby Boomer Generation' around which the volunteer culture of USPC was built.

- **What do volunteers want from Pony Club? How many hours a month are volunteers willing to spend on Pony Club?**
- **What do they want to be doing during that time?**

Please help us by sharing your opinion regarding the following questions. Send your responses to communications@ponyclub.org with the subject: **WHY CHANGE?**

MEMBER CONTACT WITH HORSES

Most of our members do not have daily access to their horses or daily responsibility for their care. This means reduced time in the saddle for fitness, skill development, and ultimately for the ability to proceed through the ratings. It also means that our youth members too often lack hands on (as opposed to purely book) knowledge and experience with routine care of a horse, even for the short duration of an overnight rally.

- **How much time (hours per week) does a member spend on each of the following: Riding, at the barn, taking care of their horse, online communicating about horse stuff?**

COMMUNICATION

Electronic communications are integral to the fabric of youth culture. Our youth members typically spend more time per week using electronics than being in the presence of their horses. They believe information about horses they find on line is equal to the information they get from their “go to” horse person.

- **What do members want to do online, relative to horses, on days when they are not at the barn?**

HORSE MANAGEMENT

Horse Management, as it is taught in Pony Club, is considered by our members and their parents to be among the most valued things the organization provides. However, Horse Management, as it is judged at rallies and evaluated at ratings, is considered by our members and their parents to be among the most unfair, picky and bad experiences that the organization provides.

- **What parts of Horse Management at Rallies should be kept? What should go away? How would you change it for the better?**
- **Would you like to help with Horse Management at a Rally? If so, what would you like to do? (If you are a participating member, what is your age and rating?)**

Please respond via email to:

communications@ponyclub.org

*using the subject line WHY CHANGE or in writing to
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Works Parkway, Lexington, KY 40511.*