

Woman loans horses to 4-H program

'TIS BETTER TO give than receive, because when people give they are happier people who get back much more than they give.

Looking at the smile on **Carol Johnson's** face, I'd say it's true.

I met up with her at last Sunday's show at Baker Stables. While the show was open to all ages, it was a primarily a schooling show attended by 4-H youths.

I asked Carol if she was there as a 4-H leader.

"I'm not a leader, but I've got five of my horses and kids here showing," she said. Her "kids" are 4-H youths riding her horses.

Carol, a Port Angeles resident since 1953, is an avid lover of the Arabian horse and a staunch supporter of 4-H horse programs — touting it as the best youth program ever.

Not only does she give her time, she's also loaned six of her horses and all the equipment necessary to ride and show year-round.

The horses are all kept at her barn, where she also has a small indoor area.

She gives the kids lessons, and even hauls the horses to the shows.

All she asks back is that they take care of the horse and its stall as if it were their own — and they have to keep their grades up at school.

On Sunday, she'd brought the horses for 4-H Neon Riders club members **Bailee Palmer, Nathan Gentry** and his younger sister, **Ciarra**, and twin sisters **Rachel** and **Allison Brietbach**.

"All these kids are horse lovers," said Carol. "When they get assigned one of my horses, and the equipment which goes with it, they have a sense of real ownership."

"Not only do they help care for the horse, but they have to get good grades

PENINSULA HORSEPLAY

Karen Griffiths



and obey the rules or they can't ride," said Carol. "It works because the parents and I are on the same page."

She said it's the 4-H

horse program that really gives the kids the stepping-stones it takes to learn good horsemanship, to learn responsibility and to feel the satisfaction of a job well done.

One reason Nathan and Ciarra's mom, **Shauna**, likes 4-H is because it teaches the kids they are a team and need to work together.

"They get on the horse as an individual, but all work together as a team to help each other succeed," said Shauna.

Ciarra, 11, chimed in, "It also keeps us out of trouble."

Four-H groups are required to do community service.

Another 4-H mom, **LaDonna Wilson**, said for two years Clallam County 4-H horse clubs have been donating \$30 a month through World Vision to support Kemso, a child living in Africa.

Kemso raises chickens and goats and shares pictures with the Clallam groups of how much the money has helped him and his family.

Kathy Brietbach has always been afraid of horses and hates the mud so she's mystified where Rachel and Allison got their love of horses.

"I got dragged into this horse thing kicking and screaming," said Kathy.

She fully supports her girls' interest, and is now an official "Mucking Mother" — that's an adult who pitches in to help by



KAREN GRIFFITHS/PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

4-H members, from left, Bailee Palmer, Stephanie Lindquist, Riley Reed, Nathan Gentry and twins Rachel and Allison Brietbach ventured out on a rainy day to attend a 4-H schooling show Sunday at Baker Stables in Port Angeles.

mucking, or cleaning, the horse stalls while their kids are out riding and taking lessons.

"It's a way to keep warm and helps us get home faster."

After all, there's homework, dinner, dishes and getting to bed on time to wake up rested and ready for school next day.

Shauna, another Mucking Mother, said all the kids have to keep a journal for the year. They are to keep track of what they feed their horses, how much and the cost.

"For those of us who have Carol, we don't really know how much it costs and what everyone gets fed, so my kid just write down Sugar Mama — the 4-H leaders all know we're referring to Carol."

At the end of the show, young Ciarra ran up to Carol excitedly exclaiming she placed second in over-

all high points for the day, and shared her prize — horse treats.

Carol gave her a hug and then Ciarra ran off to tell her mom.

Looks like it's a win-win situation for all — Carol, kids, families and horses.

The world needs more people like Carol.

Thank you

Special thanks to **Nancy M.** for her generous gift to my pony, Goldie Boy.

He was recently diagnosed with Cushing's disease. I'm happy to report with his change in diet and the medication Pergolide, Gold's acting 10 years younger.

Events

■ Saturday: Freedom Farms special session highlighting natural horsemanship methods for jumping.

Contact Mary Gallagher at 360-457-4897 or freedomf@olypen.com. Ask about cow working sessions and upcoming clinics.

■ Saturday, 10 a.m.: BCH Buckhorn Range Chapter Ride: Larry Scott Trail, Port Townsend. For information about the ride and other upcoming events, see the Web site www.olympus.net/community/buckhorn-bchw.

■ Feb. 27, 1 p.m.: Junior Rodeo Royalty try-outs will be at Baker Stables. For more information, phone Teresa Ballou at 360-928-9691.

■ Feb. 27, 10 a.m.: BCH Peninsula Chapter Ride at Robin Hill Park. Contact Kat Samples at 360-457-0225. Meetings are on the fourth Monday of the month at Clallam County Fairgrounds kitchen.

■ March 6: Freedom Farm Horse Show & Play Day.

■ March 16, 7 p.m.: PSHA meeting at Waynora's Hair Care, 863D Carlsborg Road.

■ April 23-25: BCH Leave No Trace training in the Port Townsend area. For more information, e-mail baysinger@centurytel.net.

■ May 1, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.: Tack sale and educational talks hosted by Backcountry Horseman and 4-H horse groups at Clallam County Fairgrounds. Sellers reserve space in advance; phone 360-683-3306 or 360-582-7526.

Karen Griffiths' column, Peninsula Horseplay, appears every other Wednesday.

If you have a horse event, clinic or seminar you would like listed, please e-mail Griffiths at horseplay.kbg@olympus.net at least two weeks in advance. You can also write Griffiths at PDN, P.O. Box 1330, Port Angeles, WA 98362.