

My 2006 MBNA Racing Challenge

AQHVA Championship Experience

By
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How many times in your life do you have the opportunity to spend a week at a racetrack? Not only spending time at the track, but on the backside with a well-known trainer at the “Triple Crown” of Quarter Horse racing? I bet not very often, but with the AQHYA Championship Experience you will get the opportunity to do just that...and meet many friends that you grow close with and have a great time.

My name is Hannah Koch and I was a participant in the 2006 experience and was able to go to Texas along with 14 other youth from across the country. We were flown in and assigned to trainers for 5 days, and every morning would go with that trainer from 5:30 to 11 a.m. It was really awesome to see the preparation that goes into the horses the final days leading up to the race, and not only that but it was beautiful to be able to watch a sunrise over the Lone Star racetrack.

Along with the time spent on the backside we were able to go inside to the “racing world” which included a large “jockey room” as well as seeing where the silks were assigned. We were even able to speak to a few jockeys that had horses and ended up winning their races! Have you ever wondered how much it takes to set up the betting portion of the races? You will be able to discover the answer to that question as well. We spend a whole day talking to people in every aspect of the racing industry, from the announcer down to the secretaries in the racing office.

The nights of racing were very exciting...we were able to see the testing barns after a race as well as seeing the barn where horses are tacked up and checked before the large races. One night we were able to be a part of the announcements during the race as well as before. And have you ever wondered how those “photo finishes” work? There are three judges who view the finish in question and agree upon the placing of the horses as well as any other discrepancies that may arise in a given race.

It was so neat to be a part of this big week in Quarter Horse racing. The group was also allowed to go to the owner/trainer banquets and other “private” events that the public has never gotten to see. The weekend wasn’t all about horses though, we were able to go to many other places and visit the surrounding area. Though it did always come down to horses...you’d be surprised how many tack shops you can find if you are really motivated!

Not a barrel/pole person? Worrying about the costs? Not a problem, there were riders of all sorts in Texas, some of the kids there had been to Quarter Horse congress as well as World competitions for Hunter Pleasure as well as Western Pleasure. Also the cost was limited to a few meals as well as any purchases you chose to make. If you are looking for a good time and a once in a lifetime experience, look up the AQHYA Championship Experience, where you will find new knowledge, friendships and memories.

