

Certified Horsemanship Association Instructor of the Year

Karen Pikovsky, owner of Darby Downs Equestrian Center located in Irwin, PA, has been named 2006 Instructor of the Year by the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA). Based in Tyler, Texas, the mission of CHA is to promote excellence in safety and education for the benefit of the entire horse industry. This is accomplished by certifying instructors, accrediting equine facilities and publishing educational resources.

Karen, a Certified Instructor through the CHA organization for 11 years, was nominated for the award by her students. Riding students from facilities across the United States were asked to submit remarks why their instructor should receive the Instructor of the Year award. One essay, by Darby Downs' student, Jennifer Junecko, caught the eye of the panel of judges. In the essay, Jennifer spoke of how "Karen's concern for the safety and care of horses is touching and admirable." Other remarks in the letter commented that "Karen's organization and commitment to her students is exceptional. In a world where disorganization is often the norm, she is the exception to the rule." According to Jennifer, an important characteristic that makes Karen stand out as an exceptional instructor is "Karen's own desire to improve and learn – her commitment to excellence shines through in everything she does."

The award was presented in September at the 2006 CHA International Conference at the Colorado State University Equine Center. Darby Downs Equestrian Center is located in Irwin, PA. Its Instructional Program focuses on the individual goals of its students and promotes a wide range of educational opportunities, not limited to only horseback. Its rider base is comprised of students who have dedicated themselves to



(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

equestrian sports with a focus on the disciplines of dressage and jumping. Darby Downs riders travel to shows, clinics and many other equestrian events throughout the year.

Karen is a member of the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA); United States Equestrian Federation (USEF); the United States Dressage Federation (USDF); the Western Pennsylvania Dressage Association (WPDA) and the Pennsylvania Equine Council (PEC). An accomplished rider of 24 years and Certified Riding Instructor of 11 years, Karen rides and trains with top instructors in the world, as well as participating in educational programs hosted by several United States National Riding Organizations.

