

what they're feeling from the horse, what they should be feeling, and how to get that feeling consistently."

Jennifer works on making these lessons fun, building confidence and fostering a supportive, team-like atmosphere at Dancing Horse Farm.

"Our clients support each other and cheer for each other's successes, instead of an environment of competition or trying to outdo each other," she said. "I have probably fifty different ways to explain each aspect of riding, so I feel I can get through to nearly any rider."

Jayne Petruska, one of Jennifer's clinic organizers/riders in Wisconsin, has only great things to say about Jennifer's Dare 2 Dream clinics.

"I have many horse friends who have grown in their confidence and trust with their horse and who have ultimately gone on to earn higher scores and moved up the levels thanks to Jen's teaching," Jayne said. "It truly is amazing. It is very clear that Jennifer's main goal is happy horses and happy riders. We are always extremely excited when Jennifer comes to town. Her knowledge, enthusiasm and passion stays with us long after she is gone."

Jennifer's training method also is advanced by the stable's three additional on-site trainers.

Trainer Christina Sharkey, a December 2012 graduate of the University of Cincinnati, runs her Eventing, Hunter/Jumper, and Young Horse Starting and Training program - Sharkey Equestrian - out of Dancing Horse Farm.

"I love having Christina here with me," Jennifer said. "Having a young horse trainer on site these many years has been very valuable. She started with me when she was 17 years old." Christina is a graduate of Jennifer's apprentice program.

Christina is also skilled at retraining horses with behavioral issues, including groundwork manners, and trailer loading.

Trainer Sophie Bayer, a University of Dayton graduate who has ridden for over 25 years, is a USDF Bronze and Silver medalist, and an USEF "I" judge.

Sophie owns a 12-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding named Rohan. They are currently competing at Intermediare 1 and are working toward Grand Prix.

Trainer Sue Mandas, who has been involved in Dressage as a competitor, trainer, breeder and instructor for over 40 years, is a Bronze, Silver and Gold Medalist, and has her Silver and Gold Freestyle Bars.

Sue is a USEF "S" Dressage judge, a "R" Sport Horse Breed judge, and an FEI 3\* Para-Equestrian Judge. She currently serves as an At Large Director on the USDF Executive Board. This spring, Sue bought a 4-year-old Oldenburg mare, Synchronicity, that she plans to train up the levels.

A large staff keeps the huge facility running, especially when Jennifer is out of town teaching clinics or at horse shows/events.

Jennifer said her Barn Manager, Lori Aman, "stays on top of our horses' nutritional needs, schedules their vaccinations, teeth floating, and worming. She also is our bookkeeper. She started as a student and worked her way into being indispensable."

Also helping at the stables are working students. They do the cleaning of aisles, driveway, parking area, dry lots and powder rooms. They live in apartments above the barns, so the horses have 24/7 supervision. An on-site assistant/groom and several stall cleaners also work at the barns.

Farm Manager Todd Snyder is in charge of the buildings and grounds of the 40-acre farm.

"He builds what needs to be built, repairs what needs to be repaired, mows the grass with the help of a couple of young men, installs/repairs electrical things, and is generally in charge of keeping the property in good working order," Jennifer said.

The facility has a half-mile oval track as well as three barns, an indoor arena, and amenities like powder rooms in the two main barns and lounge. The facility also boasts a 100' x 250' outdoor arena, a 70' x 90' outdoor arena, and a 70' round pen, each with all-weather footing.

The indoor area has Future-Trak footing, which is a sand-fiber mixture, and has over 125 linear feet of 6' tall mirrors so it feels like a dance studio. This summer, the lights got upgraded to high efficiency LEDs.

A project Jennifer and her mother have worked on for several years is a horse care book.

"We had a period of time when quite a few middle-aged women were buying their first horses," Lynda explained, "and I saw the need for at least some bare bones information. I saw one of them brushing her horse's tail top to bottom without picking out tangles first. She had also cut the horse's mane with scissors - badly. I told Jen they needed to be taught how to take care of their horses, and she asked me to start a class for them. In teaching the class, I wound up writing what would be the basis of a chapter of a book from the notes I reviewed with each class."

Lynda and Jennifer's book - entitled "Best Horse Care Practices" - will be published by Xenophon Press.

Their book is geared to anyone who would like to have a single reference for living with horses, Lynda said.

The book goes in depth, Lynda pointed out, "on safety practices, grooming, what we vaccinate for and why, and other horse health issues including colic, founder, and laminitis. It also includes detailed information about trailers, tow vehicles, tires, roadside assistance and safety practices to use with your horses in trailers. This isn't a child's 'basics' book."

Lynda, who serves as the Marketing Director for her daughter's stables, began riding at age nine and taught her husband John to ride when they became engaged in 1970.

"John loved to jump," Lynda said of her husband. "He had a lovely and extremely talented Appendix Quarter Horse that jumped 5 feet like it was nothing and he was only 15.2. When that horse died at age 28, John stopped riding."

Each year, "we attended shows to watch Jennifer show her horses and support our daughter until recently. Now, given our ages, me at 68 and John at nearly 70, we decided to not go everywhere with her anymore."

This also allows Jennifer's parents more time for their own pursuits.

John acts as a part-time consultant for various companies since his retirement as Vice President and engineer from Science Applications International Corporation. Lynda, whose business is Whimsy Hill Studio ([www.TheSculptedHorse.com](http://www.TheSculptedHorse.com)), is a self-taught artist of bronze horse sculptures. The Palm Beach Dressage Derby has two of her trophies. The U. S. Dressage Federation has one of her trophies as a year-end award, and another on display in their Hall of Fame at the Kentucky Horse Park.

Their son, David Sappington, who lives in Muncie, Indiana, with his wife Jan and is step-dad to her 24-year-old son Steven, is not involved with horses, Lynda said.

Daughter Jennifer began training other people's horses when she was 10 years old. In her late teens, she started showing horses for their owners. She also began buying young stock, starting them under saddle and showing them when ready. Jennifer always kept her goal of working with horses in sight throughout her schooling, even while attending school in New Lebanon, Ohio.



*This clinic in the Leatherdale Equine Center on the St. Paul Campus at the University of Minnesota shows Jennifer Truett seated on the floor working with Margaret Bass who is on the chair. The name of the girl holding the chair is unknown. Kelly Vallindingham is the Minnesota clinic organizer. Photo by Kelly Vallindingham.*



*Absolute Dream and Jennifer Truett winning the 2018 Materiale Championship for four- and five-year-old geldings and stallions at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. Photo by Laura Palazzolo.*

In her late teens, Jennifer was a working student for her Dressage/Jumping trainer, Pam Heinz in Trotwood, Ohio. In her senior year of high school, she attended Sinclair Community College located just 15 miles away in Dayton. She transferred to Wright State University and graduated magna cum laude with a B. S. in Research Psychology. Even with a heavy class load, she continued riding and working with Pam while in college.

The summer she was 17 years old, Jennifer was a working student for Eventers, Jim and Dezanie Moore at Hartmeyer's in Muncie, Indiana.

After a job injury while a working student with Trish Helmer in Amenia, New York, she returned to Wright State in 1995 to become a teaching assistant and get her Master's degree in Criminal Justice.

While still in her 20s, Jennifer developed software for first responders that was bought by the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base security office, and a few police departments and prosecutor offices.

Jennifer met her future husband at Far Hills Baptist Church in Kettering, Ohio, where they married Oct. 14, 2000. With his support, she continued to pursue her goal of training horses to high levels in the Dressage world.