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Photo Credit: Olivia Smith on Double or Nothing, left Kristen Abbatiello-Neff, Executive Director OF NCMT and Jillian Brown. Photo Courtesy of New Canaan Mounted Troop.

New Canaan Mounted Troop Riders Shine at Fairfield Westchester Fall Classic Horse Show

New Canaan, CT September 18, 2006 - Six riders representing New Canaan Mounted Troop (NCMT) qualified for the F-W PHA year end finals that were held at the Fairfield Westchester Fall Classic held at Ox Ridge Hunt Club on Saturday, September 9.

It was a great way to end the season and a wonderful experience for all our horses and riders. I was thrilled with the results, said Kristen Abbatiello-Neff, Executive Director for NCMT. For some of the riders, it was their first time competing in a final. Our students do not show regularly so, for them, getting top ribbons at this level is especially rewarding. They have accomplished so much considering they ride only once or twice each week and compete on horses that are donated or lent to the NCMT horsemanship program, she added.

The riders representing NCMT were Natasha Cooper, Erin Polatsek, Olivia Smith, Alexa Parsons, Julia Ozzano, and Victoria Grieves. Highlights of the show included Smith and Parsons capturing second and third in the Children's Medal Final. Smith went on to win the Advanced Children's Equitation Classic, while Ozzano filled the second place spot. In the Adult Classic, Polatsek rode away with the win, and Natasha Cooper grabbed the third place ribbon.

It is wonderful to see all the hard work and effort of these students pay off, said Michelle Schmerzler, President of NCMT. They all work so hard, and I think it is a great way to observe the levels of development that students go through-not only as riders, but also as individuals. The Troop has been instrumental at building both skills and character in so many lives, she explained. NCMT is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit educational and charitable youth organization devoted to building leadership, responsibility, and confidence in youth through sound horsemanship. It is home to 30 horses that have either been donated or lent to the NCMT horsemanship program.

Involvement in NCMT's programs has increased so dramatically, and the need to update and rebuild the current facility has increased with this growth.

NCMT has launched The [Building on Tradition Capital Campaign](https://www.newcanaanmountedtroop.org), which is a \$3 million initiative to build a new facility for the historic NCMT, which touches the lives of hundreds of children each year. The facility has reached an impasse in our ability to serve the community because of the limitations imposed by our facility. We take great pride in the facility and devote many volunteer hours to maintaining it. However, the 66-year old structure has aged and must be replaced. For more information or to help with this initiative, please visit www.newcanaanmountedtroop.org.



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