

# **Pony Rider Extraordinaire**

**Ashley Foster has what it takes.**

Like many of EE's customers, Ashley Foster, 12, was born into the equestrian sports. She has been riding since she was very young and was fortunate enough to be born into an equestrian family. For years, her mother, Pattie Foster, 47, has been her trainer. As she develops and grows, she receives additional coaching from trainers, Mary Lisa Leffler, Ashley's aunt and a renowned show jumper, and Laura Pickett, a close friend.



Ashley Foster aboard Goosebumps  
*Photo courtesy of Lili 2006*

Foster is a busy seventh grader who is continuously learning to juggle school and her passion for horses and showing. She trains during the week, showing just about every weekend, but her mom insists she take Mondays off. "She is 100% better at it this year," Patty says of Ashley's ability to balance homework and lessons. She never misses school for a show, frequently flying to meet her horses and trainers at shows after school lets out on Fridays. Her dad, Kevin Foster, 47, joins Ashley on her flights, and he frequently shows in the amateur owner hunters. Riding as a Foster is truly a family affair.

Up until this year, Ashley has been a pony rider specialist, but is now moving up to horses. Patty says Ashley "has a little more knack for riding the horses," which will prove helpful as she grows and her riding career advances. Most recently, she triumphed over the Maryland Equitation Pony Finals in September and then claimed the Pony Hunter Sportsmanship Award at Harrisburg in October. Ashley describes the win as "awesome," and her mom lauds, "It's amazing. She's a good sport. If she wins, she never shoves it in anyone's face. She never changes if she wins or loses." In this day and age, it is incredible to find such a fair sportsman, and to Ashley, it comes as naturally as sitting in a saddle.

Although Ashley is a fine sportsman, her mom encouraged her to draft a list of goals for the coming year, to push herself just a little more. For this year, Ashley decided she wants to qualify her medium pony for the junior hunters at the indoors and Devon and strive for the highest honors in the National Adult League at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show and the children's jumpers at Washington.

Ashley also enjoys her non showing experiences. She tells EE that she enjoys going on trail rides on the farm with groups of other riders and encountering natural obstacles and logs. She likes applying the skills she learns in her lessons outside of the ring. lacrosse is another favorite pastime, which she plays for pleasure at home between school work and riding.

Even though she is still young, Ashley Foster is a cheerful yet formidable opponent, and is making a huge impact at her competitions. With the dedication and exceptional sportsmanship she portrays, Ashley is guaranteed to continue to dominate the hunter jumper world and make a name for herself in the years to come.