

Happy New Year MQHA and welcome to our 63<sup>rd</sup> year as an organization! As we get ready to welcome 2018 with our Convention I would like to encourage you to take this as an opportunity to *experience* MQHA. The meetings, sales, and social hours will give you insight to how MQHA functions but also gives you a chance to ask questions and have an impact on conversation. As the 2017 MQHA Queen, a past youth director, and now an MQHA board member, I can speak to the positive force that MQHA continues to be because of active members.

Having been a youth myself just a few years ago, I would like to stress the impact that the Michigan Quarter Horse Youth Association had on my life. I am still using skills that I gained from participating in youth activities. When you attend a meeting, you're doing more than sitting there- you're engaging with other youth that share a passion, you're making friends, you're helping a group produce and expand. You're a part of something bigger than yourself. If you're hesitant at all, take this as my promise that you will get something out of this experience. Among the many wonderful team opportunities, there is always one thing that stands out in my mind as an incentive to go to that first board meeting and that's the comradery. Working together outside of the show pen gives you a new respect for what everyone is capable of. When its time to enter the show pen together you will look around and really *know* who is around you. You will appreciate each other and the work they have put in to get there. I want that for the youth of MQHA.

Adult members, it is a continuing responsibility to help shape the future of this association. The input you offer now can affect us later. Your interests and ideas matter to us all- board members and non-board members. At the end of the day what matters is our membership and commitment to making MQHA a great entity to represent our fabulous breed and what they have to offer. Please consider this as a personal invitation to our annual membership meeting; we would love to see you there.

I am excited to gather at Convention and celebrate another great year with great people. I hope you look around and recognize the talent and heart that is surrounding you. I am proud to be the 2017 Queen, but have always been proud to be a member of the Michigan Quarter Horse Association.