

[close window](#)

Ledyard Senior Leads By Example

Ledyard Senior Leads By Example

By **Kira Goldenberg**

Published on 6/15/2009 in [Home](#) » [Education](#) » [Education Local](#)

Ledyard - When Kellie Younger's second sister started college in 2007 and it grew clear that the family's finances were tight, the teen opted to scale back her horse riding to help ease expenses.

"I knew that we really just couldn't afford it, so it was my decision," said Younger, a senior at Ledyard High School, explaining that each show she did cost more than \$200. "It wasn't something that was that critical for me to do."

Younger continued to take riding lessons but mostly turned her focus to school and sports - she is a three-sport athlete graduating in the top fifth of her class. She was also an inaugural participant in More Than Words, the leadership program aimed at increasing dialogue between Mashantucket and non-tribal students that began in the spring of 2007.

In all her activities - as an advanced equestrienne, a two-season track team captain and in her studies - mentors describe her as someone who leads by example.

"She's very mature, she's a great leader," said Dave Tetlow, who has been coaching track in Ledyard for 37 years. Younger, 18, was a co-captain of both indoor and outdoor track this year, a role which, Tetlow notes, is chosen by the team and attests to her leadership.

"She's motivated, she's dedicated. She comes to all the practices," he said.

He said she observed past captains as a younger student, including one of her older sisters, and then stepped gracefully into the role.

"She's a very hard person to replace in more ways than one," Tetlow said.

Mary Fischer, the owner of Bit By Bit Stables in Uncasville, who has been Younger's riding teacher for six years, echoed Tetlow's assessment.

"You could brag about her and you wouldn't be exaggerating," Fischer said.

"She's always had an intuition when it comes to the horses. She's very natural at it, very caring; she can handle a difficult horse well," she said.

Younger had been a horse lover since before her family moved here from Las Vegas when she was in second grade.

To smooth the transition, her parents bribed their three daughters with the promise of riding lessons.

It was "the only way my parents could get us to agree peacefully," Younger said.

She has matured into a rider who relishes the challenge of working with less seasoned horses.

"It makes me feel more accomplished when I get something done," said Younger, who loves her busy life but can no longer fall asleep before midnight.

Younger is bound as a soccer recruit for Salem College in Winston-Salem, N.C. in the fall.

Craving a warmer climate, she only considered southern schools. She plans to study psychology, inspired by the sport psychology class she took at Ledyard.

She is also considering a major in business administration to aid her goal of opening a therapeutic riding facility, combining her interests in horses and service.

"She knows what she wants and what she's going to do," Tetlow said.

"Ledyard-CT"

Total 1 images.



[Buy Photo](#) 

By [Tim Martin](#)

Kellie Younger, 18, a senior at Ledyard High School, rides Nemo at Bit By bit Stable in Uncasville.