

#### FROM THE BEGINNING

The formation of the University of Arizona Race Track Industry Program (RTIP) began in the early 1970's when a group spearheaded by the late Frank Vessels, Jr. of Los Alamitos Race Course embarked upon the concept of a collegiate program to train young men and women to become future leaders in the racing industry.

Many ask why the Program is based in Tucson. It was the desire of the founders that the Program be located in a state with year-round racing, with both horse and greyhound interests, and at a land grant institution. Several universities around the country were contacted with none expressing genuine interest until the University of Arizona's College of Agriculture consented to try it on a trial period of five years.

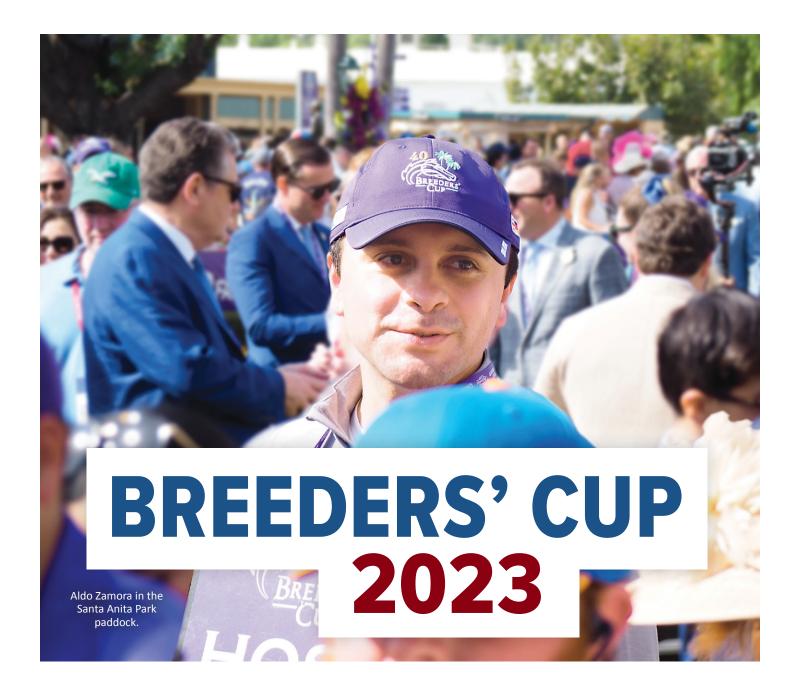
Resources provided by the American Quarter Horse Association racing department helped the University get the Program started. Financial commitments from a number of organizations in the industry provided the seed money and the Race Track Industry Program's first class was offered in January of 1974.

A significant program implemented during the first year was that of a seminar designed to bring industry leaders to campus for exchange of information and to benefit the students' understanding of racing. The first Symposium was held in December of 1974 and attracted approximately 45 people. Held annually since then, the event has gained worldwide recognition and attracts attendees representing racing interests from across the United States and the world.

Just as the founders of the Program envisioned, RTIP students still play an important role at the Symposium and are afforded a unique opportunity to meet and interact with many of the industry's best known and respected leaders. Few other educational programs provide this kind of access and networking with the industry that employs its students.

# UNITED BY PASSION. FOR THE HORSE, FOR RACING, FOR MAKING THEIR OWN MARK.





**SEVEN RTIP STUDENTS** were given the opportunity to volunteer at the 2023 Breeders' Cup World Championships. Held on November 3rd and 4th at Santa Anita Park, students took part in integral guest experience functions for the event.

One role had students acting as "Owner Hosts", where they would escort owners to and from the paddock prior to their horse running in a Breeders' Cup race. RTIP student, Mohanad Almokhadm, had the privilege of escorting the owners of a Breeders' Cup race to the winner's circle! The other role required students to hold numbered signs in the paddock where connections would gather pre-race. This was a great way for students to interact with industry figures at the event, and get an up-close look at the competitors.

The weekend ended on a high note when Real Fire, a filly bred by the RTIP, ran in the final race on the Saturday card. This was the first time some of the students were able to see the filly run in person. Although Real Fire did not win the race, it was still an amazing experience for students to feel the thrill of watching a horse they "bred" participate on such a big day of racing. — Eric DeCoster



















Bloodstock Agent Gayle Van Leer speaks with students.



# "THE TRIP TO LEXINGTON OPENED OUR EYES TO THE SALES, BLOODSTOCK AND BREEDING INDUSTRY." - Ben Atkinson

We started our first day by arriving at Keeneland at 7:45 AM. We immediately went to Barn 6 to see Hip 1118, our weanling who was consigned by Lane's End. The bay Game Winner colt was scheduled in the sales ring in 48 hours.

We then had the opportunity to meet renowned Bloodstock Agent Gayle Van Leer and watch her successfully bid on a California-bred weanling. This was an amazing process, as she took us through each step and the behind-the-scenes action that goes along with buying a horse.

After our first morning at Keeneland, we visited Hallway Feed and met with General Manager Jeff Pendleton. Jeff took us through their whole manufacturing process, and we saw how the team and machines worked together to bag the feed. We then concluded our visit by tasting the final product. Yes, we literally ate the horse feed!

Farm visits were next on the schedule. We first visited Spendthrift Farm, home to Into Mischief, Bolt D'Oro, Forte, Taiba, Zandon and many more. We saw all these stallions in person as well as how their whole operation works. We got to see

newly arrived Zandon who was still up in the quarantine barn.

We then set off for Spy Coast Farm and visited their rehab center which housed their state-of-the-art equipment. We toured their facility and listened to in-depth presentations of all the work they put in to keeping horses healthy.

Saturday was sales day! Our weanling was set to enter the sales ring early that morning. We arrived at Keeneland and met with Lane's End Sales Director Allaire Ryan. A few students broke off to shadow bloodstock agent Gayle Van Leer as she went to look at horses on her short list. This was a rewarding experience as she taught us what to look for (and not to look for) in a horse. Finally, we watched our weanling as he was brought out into the ring. He successfully sold for \$30,000 and it was exhilarating to watch the price climb. The bidding stalled at \$27,000 and then ultimately bumped up to \$30,000 at the last minute.

After the sale, we departed for Lane's End Farm. Several students took selfies (and gave a quick kiss) with the one and only Flightline! We met Quality Road and Candy Ride. WinStar Farm was next up.

We met Life is Good, Country Grammar, Speightstown, and one of my personal favorites, Two Phils. We then headed to Coolmore which was my personal favorite farm as it had a nice rustic feel. It felt like a Thoroughbred castle. When we arrived, American Pharoah greeted us. It was mesmerizing to see him. We toured the barns and saw Epicenter, Golden Pal, Maximum Security, Mendelssohn, and Uncle Mo. Next up was Three Chimneys, to see Gun Runner and Volatile in person. We finished the day off by taking a trip to the Kentucky Horse Park.

We started our final day by visiting our mare Hinder at Columbiana Farm. We watched her run around the farm and play with her friends. After Columbiana, we went to Claiborne Farm to meet RTIP alumnus Michael Sandulli where we fed peppermints to some of their stallions including Blame, War Front, and Runhappy. We visited their cemetery where their former stallions are buried. We ended our trip with a visit to see the Darley stallions. It was awesome to see the recently-retired Cody's Wish acclimating to his home. We also saw Essential Quality, Hard Spun, Medaglia D'Oro, Nyquist, and their other new addition, Proxy.

### **LONE STAR PARK**

### **QUARTER HORSE CHALLENGE**

#### **2023 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The AQHA invited students from the Race Track Industry Program to attend the Challenge Championships at Lone Star Park. After a 5am wakeup call on Friday morning, we headed to the track where we were partnered with an AQHAYA high school student and were assigned a trainer. I worked with Kie Mushinski, a trainer with over 40 years of experience and quite a sense of humor. Kie quickly explained that he was the trainer and his wife Donna was the breeder and the owner. The name of every horse they breed and train starts with Dm after his wife. Kie introduced us to two horses he was running in the Challenge Championships, a maiden named Dm Bella Star and a gelding named Dm Moonpie.

We then participated in the AQHA Racing management meetings, where I heard an interesting StrideSAFE presentation on how this technology can help prevent breakdowns. This presentation expanded my practical knowledge about StrideSAFE as Rillito Park used the system this year.

We went to the races on Friday night, which kicked off with an optional claimer for Arabians, the only race to not feature Quarter Horses over the two days. We are quite familiar with the Arabian breed given they make up the majority of the horses at the University of Arizona's Al Marah farm. In the paddock, we met Rhonda Tuley and the two horses she had running - Honey Proof and Fleet De Sand. She invited us to the winner's circle if either horse won. Lucky for us, Honey Proof galloped away to a clear victory. We proudly stood in the winner's circle photo and instantly fell in love with Rhonda's horse. She was more than happy to talk to us for a good hour after the race as well. After we parted, I decided to look up Rhonda's Equibase profile and saw one of the best Thoroughbreds she trained was named Samurai Cause. We quickly realized that Samurai Cause was out of Hinder, one of the four broodmares owned by the RTIP. What a small world! Friday ended on a spectacular note when Dm Bella Star

broke her maiden and I was able to join in the winner's circle photo.

The following day Donna Mushinski took us to the Arabian barn so we could see Honey Proof again. He was happy with the attention, with lots of petting and kisses from his new fan club. We then headed to brunch where Janet VanBebber and legendary track announcer Ed Burgart introduced the connections for each of the Challenge Championship runners. Following an afternoon break we headed back to Lone Star for the marquee event. We met with Janet VanBebber and learned about her career path from horse trainer to AQHA Chief Racing Officer. We then toured the facility, watching how the stewards communicated and used replay equipment to make proper judgments. From there it was on to the photo finish and the announcer booth.

We spent the night cheering on all the horses that we met the previous two mornings. It was an amazing two days of Quarter Horse racing full of memories we will all cherish, along with a new Arabian horse that we all fell in love with. — Nathan Klein



RTIP's Gianna Rinaldo checking out the entries.



AQHA Chief Racing Officer Janet VanBebber meets with students at the Challenge Championships.



#### REAL WORLD MEETS THE CLASSROOM

EACH SEMESTER, THE RTIP BRINGS GUEST LECTURERS INTO THE CLASSROOM TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS. THESE PROFESSIONALS BRING TOGETHER THEIR EXPERTISE AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES AND PROVIDE STUDENTS A DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE THAT ENHANCES THE PROGRAM EXPERIENCE.

#### THANK YOU TO THE 2023 GUEST SPEAKERS

#### WILL ALEMPIJEVIC

Executive Director, New York Thoroughbred Horseman's Association

#### JENA ANTONUCCI

Racehorse Trainer

#### **DON AHRENS**

Director of Security, Penn Entertainment

#### H. JAMES BOND

Racehorse Trainer

#### **SCOTT CHANEY**

Executive Director, California Horse Racing Board

#### **MEGAN EISENHARD**

Chief Growth Officer, University Credit Union

#### JUAN ESTRADA

Assistant Director, Arizona Department of Gaming

#### DAN FICK

Association Steward, Rillito Park

#### **ERIC HAMELBACK**

Chief Executive Officer, National HBPA

#### **DAVID INGORDO**

**Bloodstock Agent** 

#### DR. DAVID LAMBERT

Chief Executive Officer, StrideSAFE

#### LISA LAZARUS

Chief Executive Officer, Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority

#### **CURTIS LINNELL**

Executive Vice President, Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau

#### CHRIS MCERLEAN

Vice President of Racing, Penn Entertainment

#### DR. MARY SCOLLAY

Chief of Science, Horseracing Integrity & Welfare Unit

#### **MARK THURMAN**

Former President & CEO, CHRIMS

#### **HAL WAFER**

Event Wagering & Fantasy Sports Administrator, Arizona Department of Gaming

#### **MIKE WEISS**

General Manager, Rillito Park

#### MIKE ZIEGLER

General Manager, Churchill Downs



Dr. Mary Scollay visits the University of Arizona campus to discuss HIWU.

#### PUTTING SCHOLASTIC KNOWLEDGE INTO CONTEXT



Mentors Jordyn and Jason Egan with Aldo Zamora



Mentor Dora Delgado with Olivia Tashlein



Michael Sandulli with mentor Keith Doleshel

#### **THANK YOU TO THE 2022 MENTORS**

#### **PETE AIELLO**

Track Announcer, Gulfstream Park

#### **DR. DIONNE BENSON**

Chief Veterinary Officer, 1/ST RACING

#### JANET VANBEBBER

Chief Racing Officer, American Quarter Horse Association

#### **DORA DELGADO**

Executive Vice President & Chief Racing Officer, Breeders' Cup

#### **KEITH DOLESHEL**

Racing Secretary, New York Racing Association

#### **JASON EGAN**

Racing Coordinator, Santa Anita Park

#### **JORDYN EGAN**

Executive Director, Thoroughbred Owners of California

#### **JAMES GAGLIANO**

President & CEO, The Jockey Club

#### **AARON GRYDER**

Vice President of Industry Relations, 1/ST RACING

#### **CHRIS MERZ**

Director of Racing & Racing Secretary, Santa Anita Park

#### **DR. MARY SCOLLAY**

Chief of Science, Horseracing Integrity & Welfare Unit



Nathan Klein and mentor Pete Aiello



EACH YEAR DURING THE GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON RACING, STUDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MENTOR LUNCHEON. THIS EVENT BRINGS STUDENTS TOGETHER WITH INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS WHO PUT SCHOLASTIC KNOWLEDGE INTO CONTEXT. THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE IN A ONE-ON-ONE SETTING WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS ALLOW THE STUDENTS TO GAIN INSIGHTS AND FOCUS ON THEIR PERSONAL GOALS.



#### MOHANAD ALMOKHADM

Mohanad originally left Saudi Arabia to study mechanical engineering in the US, selling his horses to finance his education. After obtaining his B.S. and working as an engineer at an oil company, he "heard the call of the track" after watching Arrogate's unforgettable race in the Dubai Cup. He found the RTIP and was inspired by the slogan to "Follow Your Passion." Mohanad is looking forward to getting more exposure to the racing industry and learning its best practices in a proficient way. He plans on taking his knowledge and experience back to his home country one day – especially after the launch of the Saudi Cup.



#### **BEN ATKINSON**

Ben is a senior in the RTIP and is from Scottsdale, Arizona. While he has no family ties to racing, he became very interested in the sport through summer trips to Del Mar. Ben's first internship as an RTIP student brought him full circle, as he had the opportunity to work in the Del Mar racing office. Most of Ben's time was spent at the backside racing office in the mornings and helping where needed in the afternoons. He worked as a patrol judge and learned by watching races with the stewards. Ben is pursuing the business side of the industry and is interested in track management.



STUDENTS IN THE RACE TRACK INDUSTRY PROGRAM ENGAGE IN A VARIETY OF HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES, ENSURING THEY ARE WELL-PREPARED AND "DAY ONE" READY UPON GRADUATION.



#### **ERIC DECOSTER**

Eric is in his final semester with the RTIP. He spent the summers of 2021 and 2022 working in New York. In 2021 he interned with Wanamaker's, an online Thoroughbred auction company, helping to develop their monthly catalogs. In the mornings, he also worked as a hot walker for trainer Ray Handal. Eric then spent 12 weeks interning with the NYRA Racing Department. He gained a greater understanding of how the racing office functions and shadowed many different roles on the racetrack. He has also worked at Rillito Park during the last two springs, playing a large role in the racing office during entry days. Eric hopes to become a Racing Secretary or work in Executive Management at a major racetrack.



#### **ALICIA EVANS**

Ali, from "up the road" in Phoenix, is a junior who joined the RTIP in the Fall of 2022. She has been working with horses for the past eight years in various disciplines, although she prefers western pleasure. Ali learned to ride while working for two local trainers. She also learned to play horseback polo while working for an equine vet clinic! She has a strong love of animals and a desire to care for them. Ali also worked at Rillito Park as a vet assistant this past spring getting to know how the track vets work and meeting trainers trackside. Ali's current career goal is to be a trainer but admits that may change as she learns about the different areas of the industry.



#### **NATHAN KLEIN**

Nathan is a sophomore who calls Chapel Hill, North Carolina home. The 2010 Breeders' Cup Marathon, called by Trevor Denman, was the first race he ever watched. Denman soon became one of Nathan's heroes. Some of Nathan's fondest racing memories were watching racing on TV, sound muted, as he practiced race calling himself. In his freshman year Nathan called races at Turf Paradise and Rillito Park as well as calling international races remotely for 1/ST BET. He spent summer 2023 at Colonial Downs working as a marketing intern. Nathan's ultimate goal is to be a racetrack announcer.

THE RTIP STUDENT BODY IS COMPRISED OF A DIVERSE GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS. MUCH LIKE THE MAKE-UP OF THE EQUINE INDUSTRY, OUR STUDENTS REPRESENT MANY DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



#### **RYLIN MEDCOFF**

Rylin is a senior from Tucson. She always had a love of horses and has been riding horses since the age of 2. She has spent the last two years working at Rillito Park and different summer internships at both Quarter Horse and Thoroughbred breeding farms. She did a work study at the Godolphin Darley, Kildangan Stud. There she learned more about the horse breeding industry. In addition, she shadowed experienced personnel, and she was able to assist hands-on, with breeding operations. After graduation, she plans to work in the breeding industry, and eventually manage a breeding operation of her own.



#### **JONG HYUN (ERIC) PARK**

Eric joins the RTIP for the 2023-2024 academic year as part of the Executive-In-Residence Program with the Korean Racing Authority (KRA). He is currently a staff member with the KRA, in charge of racing development strategy. He came to Tucson to broaden his knowledge in racing, breeding, and wagering. He has greatly enjoyed his time spent with experienced faculty and outstanding fellow students in the Program. Eric is confident that the knowledge and experience he garners, as well as the connections he makes to the future leaders of the racing industry, will be a great asset to both his career and the horse racing industry in South Korea.



#### **ALONSO PEÑA**

Alonso, a junior at the university, grew up in the small border town of Douglas, Arizona. From ranching to the racetrack, he has been around horses for the majority of his life. From Thoroughbreds to Quarter Horses, he has been a part of several teams, working under different trainers in both breeds. Over the years he has been around different aspects of the industry, from breaking yearlings, grooming, exercise riding, to working as a valet and assistant starter at Rillito Park Racetrack. After attending Ruidoso's yearling sale, his interest in breeding peaked. Upon graduation, Alonso hopes to work within the industry as a breeder and trainer.





#### **GIANNA RINALDO**

Gianna is a second year student at the University of Arizona and this is her first year participating in the Race Track Industry Program. Her career goal is to become a track vet or a vet specializing with race horses. Gianna got interested in the Program when she bought her Off the Track Thoroughbred (OTTB), Ink Can Do. She fell in love with the personality and heart that all race horses seem to carry. She and 'Inky' compete in dressage and have qualified for the 2023 Arizona State Championships. She hopes to begin working at Rillito Park this upcoming spring and find an internship this summer.



#### **OLIVIA TASHLEIN**

Olivia has loved horses for as long as she can remember and started riding at age nine in her home state of Connecticut.

She has trained newer Off the Track
Thoroughbreds in hand and under saddle to prepare them to succeed in other areas of the sport, including dressage, jumpers, hunters, and cross country. She also owns and trains a former racehorse.

Olivia recently found the RTIP and is excited to increase her knowledge and connect with those within the racing world. Her current plan is to own and operate a sales and breeding operation.

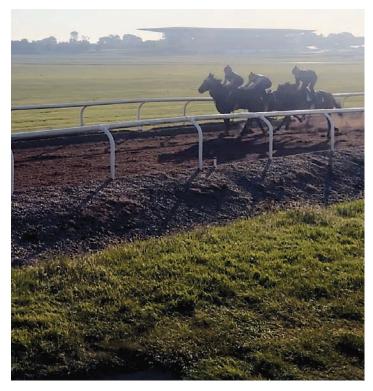


#### **ALDO ZAMORA**

Aldo was born in Mexico City and is the proud son of a jockey. Aldo always loved handicapping and reading the Racing Form, so he jumped at the chance to become a jockey agent for his dad. After hustling for eight years at Emerald Downs, Aldo decided to pursue a managerial position at the track. This is his second year in the RTIP, studying the management side of the business. He believes in the importance of having a strong connection between the frontside and backside. He interned with the Washington Horse Racing Commission where he worked in many roles including clocker, receiving barn assistant, and paddock judge.











A mare and foal take center stage.

#### **RYLIN MEDCOFF**

This past summer, I had the amazing opportunity to intern at Godolphin Darley, Kildangan Stud, in Kildangan Ireland. This farm is one of the largest breeding operations in Ireland. On average, this farm breeds 1,000 mares and has the capacity to

hold over 400 horses. I gained hands-on experience within the breeding operation, including the veterinary and the business aspects. I had an amazing time assisting at both the mare & foal yards, and the stallion yards. I was able to get up close with the stunning horses and work with their diligent handlers. I was also able to shadow the different managers of the farm and the stallion managers to see all the facets that make up their work. I witnessed how they conduct horse inspections to set their horses up for success from birth. These inspections allow the dedicated staff to give each horse continual care. I shadowed both the reproduction veterinarian and the general equine veterinarian. Both were

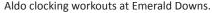


kind enough to answer all my questions and allow me to see their different day-to-day tasks. Additionally, I had the opportunity to shadow different office positions including nominations, stallion management, accountants, and

> managing director. I loved having the opportunity to be exposed to new jobs that piqued my interest in potential career paths. While I was there, I spoke with the Flying Start directors and learned about this amazing program. During my internship, I was given the chance to visit the Curragh Racetrack to watch some thrilling races with the managing director, Joe Osborne. I was welcomed with open arms to the farm, and everyone I spoke to was kind and helpful. Their kindness and knowledge allowed me to learn so much during my short time at the farm. I'm grateful for the chance to learn and shadow these amazing people who are dedicated to the racing industry.

# A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO INTERN AT A FARM OF THIS CALIBER.







Nathan meeting Kate Tweedy at Colonial Downs.

#### **ALDO ZAMORA**

For my 2023 internship, I worked for the Washington State Horse Racing Commission at Emerald Downs. My first task was to learn the licensing process including data entry, photos, and license issuance. I then spent time with the clockers in the mornings. I would time the horses working out each morning and upload the information into Equibase. I also shadowed the stewards on race day, and observed the procedures they followed before, during, and after the races. Watching how they handled objections and inquiries was especially interesting. I worked in the test barn, and helped identify each horse and make sure it was the correct horse running in an upcoming race. I learned the claims box procedures including making sure that all the information was accurate and reporting claims to the stewards. If there were multiple claims, I was in charge of the "shake" to determine which barn the horse would move to. Finally, I worked with the investigators. I joined them as they went from barn to barn and assisted in translation if needed. Overall, I learned many different areas of how the race track operates and I am thankful for all the people who took the time to mentor me.

#### **NATHAN KLEIN**

This summer I completed my first internship at Colonial Downs. The track was in a unique position inheriting the Secretariat Stakes, Beverly D, and Arlington Million, making it the most lucrative racing season in the commonwealth's history. My focus was to make race days fun and more family oriented. I helped in any way possible, including scanning and selling tickets in the grandstand. The fifth floor of the track is where a lot of the magic happens including where the stewards watch the races, photo finishes are determined, and where the announcer calls the races. As an aspiring racing announcer, I might be biased by saying it was my favorite spot at the track. Getting to meet announcers Travis Stone and Jason Beem and hear their different and equally effective styles of preparation and race calling was an excellent reminder that there is not one way to call a horse race. I had the opportunity to go to the paddock during some of the big races of the meet, getting a close look at the beautiful athletes. I will cherish meeting Penny Chenery's daughter Kate Tweedy. It was surreal to be a part of history and it's something for which I will always be grateful.

## RTIP INTERNS MAKE THEIR MARK AT RACE TRACKS AROUND THE COUNTRY.





#### **ERIC DECOSTER**

Eric DeCoster spent three days at Horseshoe Indianapolis shadowing RTIP alum, Eric Halstrom, Vice President and General Manager of Racing at Horseshoe Indianapolis. The two originally connected through the Joe Hirsch Speaker Series and later at the Global Symposium on Racing. Halstrom showed DeCoster the day-to-day operations of the track over the course of the three days, as well as had him shadow other key members of his team.



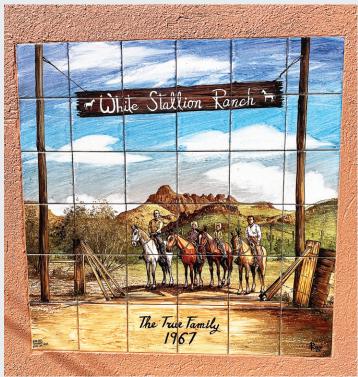


# TRAIL RIDE WHITE STALLION RANCH

STUDENTS FROM THE RACE TRACK INDUSTRY PROGRAM JOINED EQUINE SCIENCE STUDENTS FOR A LEISURELY HORSEBACK RIDE AT WHITE STALLION RANCH DURING THE FALL 2023 SEMESTER. RANCH OWNER RUSSELL TRUE MET WITH STUDENTS TO DISCUSS THE HISTORY OF HIS FAMILY'S RANCH BEFORE THEY EMBARKED ON AN HOUR-LONG RIDE THROUGH THE TUCSON MOUNTAINS. STUDENTS ENJOYED BONDING TOGETHER OVER THEIR SHARED PASSION FOR HORSES.



















Aldo Zamora posting the results, the old-fashioned way.

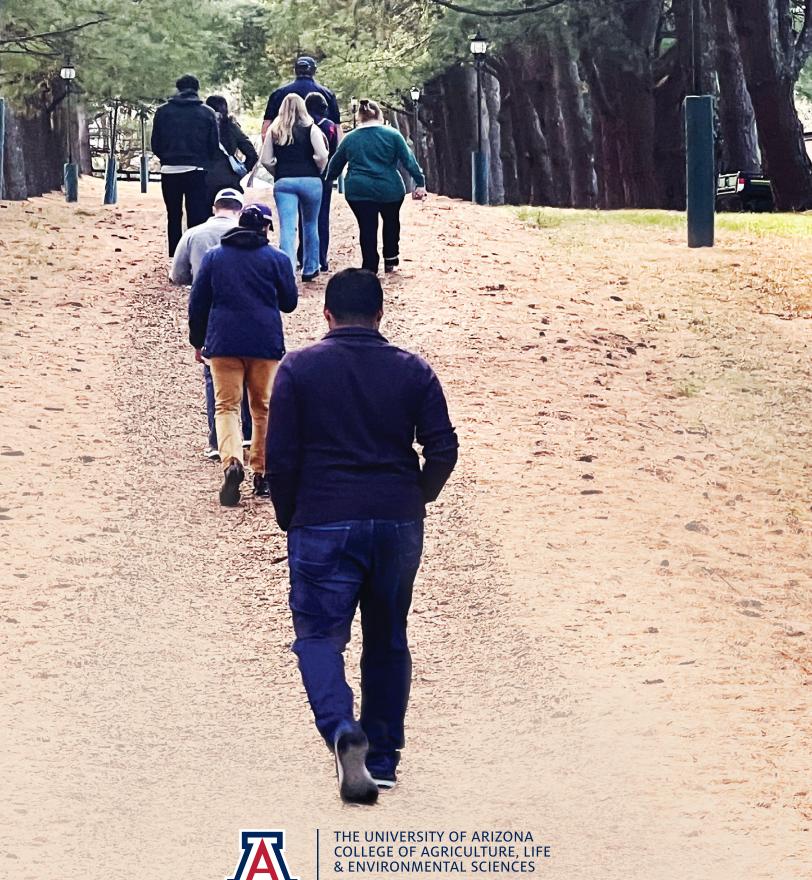






Assistant General Manager Hailey Shiffer helping with photographer duties.

Aldo Zamora and Michael Sandulli hosting the pre-race padlock show





Race Track **Industry Program**