

## Bio for Melissa Thibodeau

I am originally from Fort Worth, Texas, so I grew up riding horses at summer camp. As an adult, however, I haven't ridden much. My interest in riding, specifically in dressage, began when my daughter Miranda started taking lessons in 2006. When I first saw my daughter ride, I couldn't believe it. She's a natural in the saddle, and when I recognized that her time on a horse was some of the only focused time she had, I knew her dad and I had to let her continue.

We moved to Oklahoma in March of 2007 and began lessons with Richal Flannery in April. Miranda entered her first show that summer, and the rest is history. Four years later, we are still with Richal, and we own two horses. My youngest child, Zachary, has started riding this year. Dressage has given my daughter the opportunity to compete at something she loves. She's made wonderful friends with the girls at our barn, and learned how much work is involved in this sport.

I hope to learn more about dressage and ODS by serving on the GCC board. I have been a high school and college teacher for 22 years, and I hold a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. My focus is on young riders and what the organization can do to offer learning opportunities for them, as a means of improving their riding and as a way to build the program.

I live in Owasso with my husband Maury and our kids, Miranda (12), Reece (10), and Zachary (7). Our four legged children, Jinx and Cinderella, live at Wendy Smith's. I teach English and Psychology at Summit Christian Academy in Broken Arrow. I look forward to getting to know more members and learning the GCC "ropes."