Hello everyone, my name is Paula Stevens, and I am here to tell you a little bit about myself and about a few of my favorite jobs in the horse industry!

I am an equine photographer, meaning, I specialize in taking pictures of horses and pictures of owners or people with horses. I take pictures of other subjects too, like wildlife and families, but horses are what I am most passionate about. I have been an equine photographer for 4 years now and I love every minute of it! I get to meet all new horses and people with each of my photoshoots that I do, go to horse shows, and see new and cool barns too. I got into photography because art is something I have always loved, and while I like to draw and paint, taking pictures was just something that felt right and brough a sort of peace to me. It just made sense, with my love for horses, that I would choose to be an equine photographer as opposed to say a wedding photographer or a landscape photographer. In addition to photography, I am also an aspiring journalist. I write for Saddle Up! Magazine and had a photo featured on the cover of the August 2020 edition. I also manage and write on my blogging site, Citified Cowgirl. When I am not writing and taking pictures, I am working at my barn out in Fowlerville, Michigan, Chase Lake Equine Center, where I ride a multitude of horses and help around the farm.

When I first got involved with horses, I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian, but as I spent more time around horses, that started to change. I decided that I wanted to be a horse trainer, with my own barn and breeding program, and I wanted to be able to photograph everything I did and those around me, and write about for a big equine publication. I have not looked back since deciding that and I am so glad I discovered that there is more to the industry than a veterinarian or farrier or equine dentist.

Something that's always been cool to me, when I think of some of the things I've done sine deciding I wanted a career in the horse industry, is the fact that I did not have access to horses until I was sixteen. The first horse I rode was a buckskin Quarter Horse gelding named Cody. He was reining bred and the horse I took lessons on and leased for a year and a half. That was when and how I first became involved with horses, I also shadowed equine veterinarians from Kern Road Veterinary Clinic and a bovine veterinarian from Fowlerville Veterinary Clinic.
My favorite discipline is Western, it has always felt more comfortable to me, and I'm a big fan of some of the things that you can do with western riding, like reining and cow work. My favorite thing about horses is their forgiving nature, no matter how many mistakes you make when working with them, they are always willing to give you a second chance. I have a photo I took on the cover of Saddle Up! Magazine and another photo I took in featured in a large article in Arabian Horse Life magazine as well, and to me, as an aspiring photographer, that's a huge accomplishment.

In the next five years, I see myself having graduated from college with my degree in business and journalism, working as on a large reining barn in Oklahoma, riding horses, photographing them, and writing for Reiner Magazine. I would like to own at least one horse as well by then. If I could change anything about the horse industry, it would be to make it more accessible to youth that do not come from a horse background or have access to horses regularly. I would work at coming up with affordable campy and lesson programs for children of all ages and backgrounds to be able to see what all goes into horses, the good and the bad.

"Never give up, despite what the naysayers around you will say, just keep going, and get out of your comfort zone every chance you get; and always get back on the horse." –is one piece of advice I'd give to my "younger self".

Thank you guys so much for coming on this ride with me, I really appreciate it and I hope you've gotten a glimpse into a different area of the horse industry that will encourage you to branch out and explore a little.