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Paying It Forward

A model for success raises funds for Victory Junction.

BY MYRA ROWELL

THIS YEAR, THE SOUTHEASTERN Reining Horse Association (SERHA) has a new annual partnership with Victory Junction. This partnership raised funds during their July 4 show at the Senator Bob Martin Agricultural Center in Williamson, North Carolina, for specific aspects of the organization and also served as a vehicle for small to medium businesses to benefit from Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) like the larger corporations. Community involvement is proven to provide a positive reputation, help companies retain key talent, improve employee morale, respect from the community and employees, and to increase the bottom line. Many small to medium businesses do not have the funding, staff, or capacity to take part in many CSR events. That's where SERHA comes in. The SERHA can be that vehicle for those companies with the recipient organization being Victory Junction. As a result, the benefit increased the initial donation for the V logo to just under 200 percent. This consisted of 97 percent from the individual contributor pledges and 92 percent from the business pledges. What a great result for our first year!

The SERHA has partnered with Victory Junction to do fund raising events for their camp and outreach program. Victory Junction (Victoryjunction.org) is a camp in Randleman, North Carolina, which was started in memory of Adam Petty by the Petty family of NASCAR. It is a nine-week camp for children with serious illnesses, with each week being disease specific and includes a horse program among many other activities. Our focus for 2014 has been to raise some money for the outreach program, an in-hospital minicamp for those children unable to attend camp in Randleman by providing an opportunity for them to team up with an NRHA Professional and horse (after all the horses are the celebrities in this case). The riders created a video introducing the horses to the kids at the James and Connie Maynard Children's Hospital at Vidant Medical Center. This video was played during the drags so the kids would know which horse was their teammate. The show webcast was played at the hospital so all of the children could watch.

At our July SERHA Main Event we had three phases: Part 1: Raffle tickets were sold for the Victory Junction Benefit

Slide for a chance to win two \$250 Shell Gas cards.

Part 2: Victory Junction Benefit Open Slide paired the open riders of all levels, including our Open 7&Up with Victory Junction Outreach in-patient children at James and Connie Maynard Children's Hospital at Vidant Medical Center. These children are undergoing treatment for serious illnesses and are a part of Victory Junction's Outreach. This year, eight children were partnered with an open, intermediate open, limited open, rookie professional, and 7&Up Maturity Levels 2 and 4 Open division horses. The winners of the open class and 7&Up Maturity (all levels) on Sunday of our July Show won belt buckles for the children.

On Monday, Myra Rowell (a non pro member of SERHA) who was instrumental in getting this event together, NRHA Professional Josiane Gauthier (along with Josiane's daughters Allison and Heidi), and Nick Valentine went to the hospital to present the belt buckles to the children whose riders won and ribbons to all of the children. After they spent Sunday morning filming the class, Carolina Hoofbeats TV went along to record the presentations to the children.



Left: Cameron Sanford collected \$590 pledged to her V as an individual contributor. Her efforts earned her a custom belt made by Chris Wiley Saddlery and donated by Michael and Stephanie Sieradeski.

NRHA Professional Josiane Gauthier with daughters Allison and Heidi, SERHA Non Pro Myra Rowell, Jonathan Lemmon (Victory Junction Outreach Director), and NRHA Professional Nick Valentine went to the hospital to present belt buckles and ribbons to the children.



Part 3: The Slide for Victory where members sold logos of Vs to be placed on the saddle pads of all riders for a minimum donation of \$10. As individual contributors, riders could raise pledges for their V to compete for the customer belt made by Chris Wiley of C.W. Custom Saddles. This belt was donated by Stephanie and Michael Sieradzki. Cameron Sandford won the belt with \$590 pledged to her V as an individual contributor.

Pledges Come In

Several companies stepped up to help with pledges. Star H. Insurance was the first to say yes and pledged \$10 to the first 50 people who bought Vs. Continental Saddlery donated \$5 to each person who rode in a Continental Saddle who bought a V as did C.W. Custom Saddles for all riders riding in a CW Wiley Saddle. Double Run Farm pledged \$5 to each of the second 50 riders to buy Vs and \$25 dollars to anyone buying a V for a horse with a Double Run brand. Animal Chiropractor Services—Dr. Susan Chandler pledged \$1

to the first 50 to buy Vs. Sunny Pines and NRHA Professional Francois Gauthier pledged \$5 to each horse by Don Quintana whose rider bought a V.

This pledge model proved to create excitement from everyone at the show. When one rider saw how his \$10 donation for the V turned into \$35 he was very proud. This year was our proof of concept year and we are very excited about maturing this concept for next year. This is one example how small companies can contribute a minimal amount and through this model we can grow the money with tangible results.

Karin Hinzmann made dog jewelry and accessories—bracelets, necklaces, and handkerchiefs with the Victory Junction logo. All of Karin's items went like wildfire!

Eateries Join the Fun

On another exciting note, the local restaurants; New Dixie Mart Subway, Mama's Pizza, Deadwood, Ribeye's, and The Hitching Post, joined the fun and offered

discounts and free drinks to those who purchased the V logo.

“When Parker [Minchin] first called me and asked if I would help with sponsorships, I told her I would think about it and get back to her. On my way to Sunny Pines Farm to ride my horse I came up with the framework for this model. My thinking is that this model supports both sides by providing opportunities to medium and small businesses and has specific goals to help the work Victory Junction is doing. Parker and I used each other as sounding boards until we felt like we had a good proof of concept. I have to say the excitement from the participants at the show was overwhelming! It was great to have all of the questions, feedback, input we received. This is truly a benefit created by all members of the association and the Williamston community. I am so excited about next year! We have already started the planning and it is showing to be more fun, excitement, and surprises!” ♦



Even the youngest of patients enjoyed their awards.



Josiane Gauthier with daughters Allison and Heidi present a buckle to a teammate.



Nick Valentine met his teammate (right holding buckle) at the hospital.