



Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association

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Successful Charity Night at the Races Held

By Regina Mayhugh

It was an exciting Saturday evening on June 22nd when twenty charities participated in the 7th annual Charity Night at the Races, held at Eldorado Gaming at Scioto Downs hosted by the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA).

The participants of each charity were invited to join OHHA trackside for a meal and enjoy an evening of racing. Ohio horsemen and many OHHA Board members hosted each charity, explaining harness racing, sharing about the industry and guiding the participants through their evening events.

Following the meal, participants took turns touring the paddock where they had their photo taken with the horse they were paired with. USTA's Wendy Ross interviewed each charity in the winner's circle. One participant from each group also had the opportunity to ride in the starting gate. Drivers Brett Miller, Josh Sutton and Chris Page also visited the charities.

The charities that attended include: ALS- The ALS Association Central & Southern Ohio Chapter, Alzheimers Association Central Ohio Chapter, Canine Companions For Independence, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of Central Ohio, Girls on the Run of Central Ohio, Haven House of Pickaway County Inc., JDRF Central Ohio, Mid-Ohio Foodbank, Ohio 4-H Youth Development, Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation, Ohio FFA Foundation, Inc., Pacing For the Cure, PBJ Connections, Inc., Pickaway County Special Olympics, St. Vincent dePaul Society- St. Denis/Holy Family/Immaculate, St. Patrick School, American Red Cross, Tread Lightly and USO of Central and Southern Ohio.

This year the event was held under a tent which allowed the groups to be all together as well as giving them a full view of the track. A teller was also stationed in the tent, which was convenient for the participants to place wagers.

The charities were coupled with horses in either the 6th or 8th race. Depending on the placing the horse came in determined the amount each charity would take home. Two charities, Haven House of Pickaway County with Coal Hanover and Ohio 4-H with Wondrous Sport each took home a donation of \$10,000 as their horses crossed the finish line first. The next big winners were St. Vincent DePaul Society with Indiana Cam and Ohio FFA with Bottom Deals, who each took home a donation of \$5,000 from placing 2nd. Alzheimer's Association with Arch Hanover and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium with Shakerattlenrock each took the 3rd place donation of \$2,500. The charities that placed below 3rd will each receive a \$2,000 donation. A total of \$63,000 was donated by Ohio horsemen.

For many who attended this was their first experience at a racetrack, while others have watched harness racing before or were veterans to this event, such as Tim McCarthy. He has attended with Big Brothers Big Sisters for many years. This year he is attended with Tread Lightly, a new charity to the event.

Debbie Adamdzak, the principal of St. Patrick School attended Charity Night in 2018. She commented, "The St. Patrick staff and parents who attend this charitable event absolutely love every aspect: Visiting the paddock and seeing our horse, riding in the pace car, the wonderful table hosts and food and of course the exciting horse races. The proceeds we are given help our students give back to others with our service-learning projects".

Allan Helber, Haven House of Pickaway County Board President shared about his evening experience. "Thank you so much for allowing Haven House to participate in Charity Night at the Races. My wife and I really enjoyed the evening. The dinner, host, backstage tour and the race itself was all very well done. Of course, we didn't mind winning the \$10,000. I can assure you it will make a huge impact on our shelter this year," commented Helber.

The Columbus Zoo has been a part of the event for a few years now. Colby Falconer, the zoo's Annual Giving Manager shared "We were delighted to be a part of such an informative and educational evening with other organizations in Ohio. Not only did we learn about the great work other organizations do for our state, we were able to learn about OHHA and what they do in serving all things associated with harness racing. We hope to participate again next year – it has become a highlight of our philanthropic events!"

OHHA would like to thank the many horsemen and OHHA Board members who volunteered their time to help make the evening a success. Thank you to Eldorado Scioto Downs for their hospitality and service.

Due to the generosity of Ohio horsemen, this has become an annual event that the OHHA looks forward to offering. Any charity interested in participating next year, send an email to rmayhugh@ohha.com with your contact information or call the OHHA office at 614-221-3650.