

EVENTS

ELITE EQUESTRIANS FLOCK TO THE NORTH BAY To benefit Giant Steps' Riders with Disabilities

Ten year-old Bridget was born with a brain lesion that has resulted in severe cognitive, developmental and physical delays. Her mom marvels that "riding horses at Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center has given Bridget a newfound confidence she never before dreamed possible." August 4 through 8, Bridget and her fellow students at Giant Steps will get a "leg up" from some elite equestrians who will come together to raise money for Giant Steps programs.

This inaugural Giant Steps Charity Classic is a five-day horse show highlighting California's finest professional and amateur equestrians who will compete in fantastic events to benefit Giant Steps' Therapeutic Equestrian Program. Sonoma Horse Park, a newly completed world-class facility located off Lakeville Hwy in Petaluma, will be the host. Ashley Griffin, owner of Sonoma Horse Park, says,

"Giant Steps greatly improves the lives of so many children and adults with disabilities who live here in our community. It is an honor to host these outstanding equestrians who come from all over California to compete in this thrilling charity event." Giant Steps provides unique body/mind/heart-opening experiences to special needs children and adults. They are provided with a catalyst for life-changing opportunities

that combines sensorimotor integration with a deeply satisfying experience of accomplishment and social interaction.

Olympic Show jumper, Guy Thomas says, "I am both excited and proud to compete at the 2010 Giant Steps Charity Classic! I am looking forward to a very challenging course and great competition. It is an absolute honor to be able to compete at the highest level against some of California's best riders and to benefit such an incredible charity. I'm so excited about meeting Bridget and talking with her about the possibilities that lie ahead for her."

"Pleasures of Petaluma," produced by the Petaluma Downtown Association on Thursday during the Equitation Classic Competition, will highlight local artists and their work exhibited alongside local restaurants and wineries.

Friday afternoon will feature the Ultra Motor A2B Ride & Drive, combining show jumping with a rowdy vehicle obstacle course.

On Sunday afternoon professionals, amateurs, and juniors will all compete for a large cash prize in a Hunter Derby.

Saturday, August 7, will bring the premier event of the week -- the Grand Prix Gala (formerly Giant Steps Annual Steppin' Out Charity Auction) -- featuring California's finest horse and rider teams, who will attempt 12-14 ex-

travagant 5-foot jumps. "Saturday's Carousel Investments Grand Prix will be an evening of nail-biting, electrifying competition, followed by an amazing live auction, hosted by famed wine auctioneer, FRITZ HATTON. A silent auction, a Calcutta (horse betting) and a gourmet dinner catered by Park Avenue Catering paired with Wilson Fleming Estate Wines will round out the evening. This will be a celebration of the incredible sport of show jumping, and in tandem will allow Giant Steps to continue changing the lives of children and adults with disabilities," says Ms. Griffin. In addition to the competition, this event will showcase all the culinary delights that Sonoma and Marin Counties have to offer -- including wine tasting and pairing and dishes prepared by celebrated chefs. Local restaurants, vendors, artists and farmers as well as the community are invited to participate.

Sponsorship opportunities are available and will provide an ideal venue for a captive audience to see your company name and logo. There are also volunteer opportunities for getting in on the ground floor of this historical event that will surely become an annual highlight on the Petaluma calendar.

To sponsor, donate, volunteer or purchase tickets, please call Giant Steps at 707.769.8900 or go to www.giantstepsriding.org.



Bridget at Giant Steps