

Local equestrians hosting summer of spectacular show jumping

By Jordan Nunziato

Hayes Co., the group of horse enthusiasts based in Mono known for hosting some of the top horse show jumping tournaments in North America, will be hosting yet another exciting event at the Orangeville Fairgrounds (OAS Centre) from Aug. 14 to 18. It will be the CSI2* Orangeville International.

Ainsley Hayes, executive director of Hayes Co., is excited to be able to showcase local talent at this most prestigious event. "The CSI2* designation is from the International Equestrian Federation, which is the top governing body of our sport. It's a big deal," she said.

The tournament runs for five days, Wednesday through Sunday. Hayes said that the biggest day is the CSI2* \$50,000 Zucarlos Grand Prix Sunday, which is presented by Kubota Canada and Stewarts Equipment.

"It's called the Zucarlos Grand Prix because it's being held in memory of my father's 1992 Barcelona Olympics horse, Zucarlos," she said. "He passed away this year, a couple of months ago. He was 32. He lived a long and good life, but that's our way to help remember him and celebrate his life."

The \$25,000 Hayes Co. Open Welcome will kick off the event Aug. 16 at 4 p.m. with a splash.

The \$10,000 Highland Meadows Modified Grand Prix will entertain spectators Saturday, starting at 2 p.m.

Following the Grand Prix will be the \$5,000 Canadian Hunter Derby.

"That's the Hunters, which is judged on grace and performance," Hayes said. "This is a little bit more of a challenging class because the jumps are more natural obstacles. It's a cool class to watch. It's longer than a normal Hunter class."

Also Sunday, before the Grand Prix, the Nationwide Auto Warranty 'Win a Car' series will be taking place.

"A Kia will be presented to a junior rider, someone under the age of 18, who wins the series," Hayes said, adding that it's not a lease, and they get to actually keep the vehicle. "It's a series that's been going on since May, and they get a car."

"It's a pretty unprecedented move in North America," she added. "Last year we gave away two cars."

Saturday and Sunday, among the variety of events, a kids' zone will be available, which will include miniature ponies, bouncy castles and face painting.

"As well, we have boutiques that are not just for horse people," Hayes commented. "There's jewelry, there's clothing and there's different boutiques that come."

"It's for the horse lover and non-lover alike," she added.

There will be a VIP tent which anyone may purchase tickets for to view the various events.

"The VIP tent is preferred seating," Hayes observed. "It's a catered luncheon and bar. It's a nice relaxed atmosphere for people to come in, sit down and enjoy (the tournament). The VIP tent is premium seating."

There will also be a beer tent with cider and beer tasting events.

Admission is free Wednesday and Thursday. Friday and Saturday is \$5 per person and Sunday is \$10.

Admission is free for children six and younger.

For more information, visit hayesco.ca