OEF Award Recipients Honoured for their Contributions to the Equine Community

The Ontario Equestrian Federation would like to congratulate the 2013 OEF Award recipients who were recognized for their outstanding contribution to equestrian sport at a ceremony in their honour during the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Meagan Maloney of Stouffville, ON. was the recipient of the OEF Coach of the Year award, which is presented to the Equine Canada certified active coach whose dedication and skill has touched both human and equine athletes. Maloney is hailed by her clients as being a knowledgeable coach who is known for her positive attitude, unwavering focus on safety and her commitment to instilling in others the knowledge and compassion needed to properly care for their equine partners. Always putting the mental and physical health and well being of horse and rider first, Maloney challenges her students to be their best, but never pushes them beyond their limits. The result is confident students who are inspired and motivated to succeed.

Holly Cathers of King, ON. was the recipient of the Cassie Bonnar Award, which is presented to a junior member of the OEF who has made an outstanding contribution of time and effort to Ontario equestrian sport, recreation, industry and/or equine welfare. The award is in memory of Cassie Bonnar who, despite a courageous battle with cancer to which she succumbed at a young age, exemplified the qualities of a great young humanitarian by always being willing to lend a helping hand to anyone in need.

According to her nominator, Cathers has worked hard over the years to improve her riding skills. To pursue her passion, Cathers has worked every summer doing a myriad of jobs ranging from weeding gardens, mucking stalls, bringing in hay, babysitting, cutting grass, picking vegetables and working as a cashier. Known as a social butterfly who loves spending time with her horse show friends, Cathers is also a fierce competitor. She qualified for the CET Mini Medal finals this year and also qualified for the Junior Medal and Jump Canada Medal finals for the past two years. But win or lose, she enjoys her sport, loves her horse and supports her competitors.

Tonya Cummins of Roslin, ON. was the recipient of the Yvonne Collard Award, which is presented to an adult member of the OEF who has made an outstanding contribution of time and effort to Ontario equestrian sport, recreation, industry and/or equine welfare. Cummins has devoted her life to sharing her passion for horses with others. Her nominator praises Cummins for always being ready to lend a hand – whether it’s teaching children about the finer points of horsemanship, helping a rider at a horse show, or troubleshooting a training problem.

Beverly Rice of Barrie, ON. was the recipient of the OEF Sponsor of the Year Award, which is presented to an individual or corporation making a very special sponsorship gift to support equestrian activity. To be considered, the gift must make possible some form of equestrian activity which otherwise might not take place. Always putting others before herself, Rice offers therapeutic riding lessons to children and adults with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. She gives her time, money and services so that others can experience the healing power of horses.

Stefan Morel of Toronto and Horse Sport Magazine of Aurora, ON. were co-recipients of the OEF Media of the Year Award. This award is presented to the media outlet that provides the best piece (print or electronic) about an equestrian activity in the period from Sept. 1 of the previous year to Aug. 31 of the current year.
In the fall of 2012, Morel made a short documentary on the topic of euthanasia. Not only did this documentary show a humane and touching side of euthanasia, it also inspired an outpouring of stories from people sharing their own personal experiences. Many expressed a deep gratitude for their subsequent ability to find closure with the loss of their animals. He is currently working on a documentary that explores the unseen relationship between horse and rider.

Horse Sport’s “Royal Review” secured the award for the magazine. Providing complete coverage of the iconic Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, it showcased the best horses and riders that converged at Canada’s traditional show season finale.

Brenda Gallie and Michael Jewett of Hop Hill Stables in Uxbridge, ON. were the recipients of the OEF/Just Add Horses Environmental Award, which is presented to an OEF Horse Facilities member who demonstrates and promotes environmentally friendly practices towards conserving the environment at their facility. The walls of this unique barn are constructed using straw bales and all of the material used to build the barn, tack room, apartment, arena and detached hay barn have been reclaimed. The wood in the barn came from the Joseph Seagram distillery in Waterloo, the steel beams in the arena are from the GM buildings in Oshawa that were taken down and the large windows in the arena are from a terminal that was renovated at Toronto Pearson International Airport. In addition to the skylight in the middle of the hexagonal barn, which minimizes the need for lights, Hop Hill also reduces its environmental “hoof print” in other ways, including turning manure into fertilizer and using only environmentally friendly detergents and cleaners around the farm.

“We are inspired by our 2013 OEF Award recipients and want to thank them for their contributions to Ontario’s equine community,” says Dianne Graham, executive director of the Ontario Equestrian Federation. “Each one of these individuals has devoted countless hours to the sport and their hard work has not gone unnoticed. We hope they will inspire others to be the best that they can be.”