

Polo for Heart offers world class polo and entertainment for everyone

Polo for Heart, one of Canada's most unique equestrian sporting events, offers a spectacular venue from which to watch thoroughbred polo ponies and players from Argentina, United States, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Canada as they thunder down an area equivalent to nine football fields engaging in the "sport of kings."

This year, Polo for Heart will be held at the Toronto Polo Club in Richmond Hill at 13401 Leslie Street on June 14, 15 and 16. Now entering its 34th year, Polo for Heart has been a special event on many social calendars as a fascinating and successful fund raiser for heart and stroke related charities. Proceeds from this year's Polo For Heart will go to the Heart and Stroke Foundation Centre for Stroke Recovery, as well as towards purchasing a new MRI machine at Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket. "Every year, thousands of people in northern York Region travel to Toronto because Southlake's current MRI has more than a 100 day wait for non-urgent cases. Polo for Heart is helping to change this situation by raising funds for the purchase of a new MRI," said Beverley Brooks, media relations for Polo for Heart. "We are proud to support Southlake in its efforts to become the gold standard in the complex imaging required by many cancer and cardiac patients."

Since Polo for Heart's inception, more than \$5 million has been raised for heart and stroke related charities.

Each day of the three-day event from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., guests will be treated to two international polo matches, a silent auction, charming boutiques and daily half time entertainment. Guests can also visit The BMO Kids Zone and the exclusive Mallet Lounge and can participate in the traditional champagne divot stomp and polo picnic and the best hat contests.

This year Polo for Heart is delighted to welcome on board its title sponsor, the Bank of Montreal. Another new sponsor is five-star luxury hotel Ritz Carlton which is hosting the Polo For Heart corporate pavilion, where guests will be treated to gourmet food and wine, a fashion show sponsored by the Upper Canada Mall and entertained by King jazz musician George St. Kitts and his band. For a second year, Polo for Heart has named Lloyd Robertson as honorary chair of the Polo for Heart executive committee. The former legendary TV news anchor will be donating copies of his most recent book "That's the Kind of Life it's Been" to Polo for Heart.

"The Toronto Polo Club is proud to have successfully hosted Polo for Heart for over three decades. In its 34th year this year, Polo for Heart still thrills audiences " offering glamour, uniqueness and excitement for everyone. We are particularly pleased to support the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Southlake Regional Health Centre," said Derek Watchorn, Polo for Heart event chair.

"There are 315,000 Canadians today living with the after-effects of stroke and an increase is expected in the next 10 to 20 years," said David Sculthorpe, CEO, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. "This means there is a great need to focus attention on stroke recovery and we're grateful that Polo for Heart has dedicated funds to the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Centre for Stroke Recovery."

Neila Poscente, president and CEO of the Southlake Foundation, said the support from Polo for Heart will go a long way in helping the hospital purchase a second MRI machine.

"Over the next five years, more than 1.5 million patients will come through the doors of Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket, and chances are, many will be facing the toughest battles of their lives," she said.

"This is our sixth year as a beneficiary of Polo for Heart and we are so appreciative of their incredible support. Funds from this event will support the purchase of a second MRI through our Images for Life campaign, which will provide the essential new Diagnostic Imaging equipment needed to guide treatment of our patients. On behalf of our community, we thank Polo for Heart for their leadership and commitment in helping us ensure Southlake is able to offer best in class cardiac care, right here, close to home."

General admission to Polo for Heart is \$15; children under 12 are free. Anyone interested in taking part can visit www.poloforheart.org for more information. This year for the first time participants can buy their tickets on line.