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by Rose Pezzo & Jackie McFarland

Blenheim EquiSports Emerging Professionals Grant

Helping recipients on their path to success: applications due Feb. 19.

For some time, equestrians have had to vie for the respect to be distinguished as athletes. We all remember the heated debates we had growing up when told it was not a sport if the horse did all the work. But we all know far too well about countless long days at the barn. We have strong legs, muscular shoulders and a balanced core, and we know how to care for and manage our four-legged partners. Knowing this level of devotion and athleticism involved in our sport, Blenheim EquiSports chose to recognize up and coming professionals with the Emerging Professional Grant for the first time three years ago.

The 2018 winner, Jessica Allan, explains what made the grant so attractive. "Within the last several years, I've tried to be on the lookout for opportunities that could enhance my education and in turn make me a better rider, coach, and overall professional. We're eager to learn and gain experience but many of us lack the finances to provide for our own continuing education in the form of showing our own horses. I don't yet have a substantial enough income-producing business behind me to help finance sales horses or personal horses for me to ride and show. My feeling was that if I was to win the Grant, it would provide me an opportunity to affordably show my horse and gain experience at some of the best shows on the West Coast."

A West Coast equestrian event management company, Blenheim EquiSports recognizes a professional rider is an athlete and a passionate, hard-working individual. Seeking to provide opportunities for young riders as well as young horses, one of Blenheim's many pathway-paving programs includes the Emerging Professional Grant.

Now in its third year, the program kicks off the show season by granting ardent, emerging professionals with horse show credits to further their careers.

The grant is open to any hunter or jumper professional who has not had their pro status for more than 10 years and has not yet achieved specific national or international accolades as explained in the application information. The top applicant, as chosen by committee, will receive \$5,000 in horse show credit and the runner-up will receive \$3,000 worth of horse show credit.

Ambition, perseverance and horsemanship personify the exemplary candidate; someone who is dedicated and actively working towards achieving goals for the sport, their clients and their horses.

In 2017, the Grant's inaugural year, Shannon Beck of Petaluma was awarded \$5,000 in show credits. Runner-up the first year was Alexandra Biederman. Two additional winners were granted \$1,000 in horse show credit and all remaining applicants \$250.

In 2018, Jessica Allan of Tally Hawk Stables in Pleasanton, CA was the recipient of the



2018 Blenheim EquiSports Emerging Professional Grant winner Jessica Allan aboard Zieta Z. PHOTO © ALDEN CORRIGAN MEDIA

\$5,000 show credit. Her "barn-rat" mentality and dedication as a working student followed her through her professional career. She is passionate, enthusiastic and resolute on seeing human-equine partnerships succeed through building a strong educational foundation. Kacie Doyle was the runner-up recipient. Her efforts are reflected through the unbelievable opportunities she created for herself through countless hours grooming and training her horses before turning her passion to teaching. "I want to teach riders to love and cherish their horses...I want to make a difference." Three additional applicants received \$1,000 and another group received \$500.

"I'm so appreciative of this program and for being chosen to participate," says Jessica. "With the help of the grant, I was able to attend three Blenheim shows last year with my hunter, Zieta Z, where we gained invaluable mileage. The grant also facilitated other opportunities. While attending these shows, I was able to seek out coaching from several reputable Southern California trainers who generously shared their time and expertise with me. Additionally, I participated in some milestone events like the USHJA WCHR West Coast Hunter Spectacular and multiple USHJA International Hunter Derbies on the beautiful grass fields. The icing on the cake was that we had several of our Tally Hawk clients in attendance at these shows to share the experience and enjoy all the amenities offered by Blenheim.



"Winning the grant also gave me a little boost of confidence and that extra motivation to keep following the path we set out on for Tally Hawk. Danielle and I are trying very hard to get our names and the Tally Hawk brand on the map in the correct way and this grant was an unexpected yet much welcomed early step to achieving that. I can't thank Blenheim enough for allowing me to have participated in this incredible program!"

Article provided by Blenheim EquiSports. For more information, visit www.showpark.com.

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