

International polo tournament coming to York Region this week

By Jake Courtepatte

World-class polo players from Argentina, the United States, and across Canada are converging on Richmond Hill this weekend for an extravagant three-day competition and gala.

The Toronto Polo Club has hosted the event for over 35 years, which features two international polo matches per day from June 19-21. Guests will also be "wined and dined" throughout the day, with activities happening on and off the field including gourmet lunch at the Ritz-Carlton, pony rides and bouncy castles, a silent auction, and a "champagne divot stomp" – a polo tradition.

And don't forget to wear your best hat, as there will be a daily hat competition to really honour tradition.

The festivities will kick off Thursday with a glitzy celebration called "Polo Under the Stars," when a friendly polo match will be played in the evening.

The event isn't just for show and competition – the name of the game is charity. This year proceeds from Polo For Heart will help the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

"The Heart and Stroke Foundation is dedicated to helping Canadians live heart-healthy lives, and our volunteers and donors are key to accomplishing that," said Tom McAllister, CEO, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Ontario.

The funds generated will be used for research at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, as well as for the use of an MRI to select patients in need of heart surgery.

Funds will also be allocated to Southlake, for the expansion of its Heart Rhythm program, one of the busiest in the country but severely under facilitated.

"Through such initiatives we hope to discover new ways of treating heart disease and stroke and help create more survivors," said McAllister.

The demand for our Heart Rhythm Program exceeds our current capacity and we need to add to the existing facilities to meet the demand generated by community," said Neila Poscente, President and CEO of the Southlake Foundation. "With the funding from the Polo For Heart event and contributions from our community, we will soon be able to accommodate more people in our Heart Rhythm Program."

Tickets and tables for both Polo For Heart and "Polo Under the Stars" can be purchased on line at www.poloforheart.org.