

VICTORIA LOWELL

# YOU'RE UP



VISIBILITY RAISES THE PROFILE OF OUR SPORT



*Victoria Lowell is the President of the Washington International Horse Show, which celebrated its 60th year in 2018. Vicki joined the horse show's board in 2008 and served as a volunteer president for the past six years. Previously she headed marketing for Animal Planet and TLC at Discovery Communications, where she was very involved in Animal Planet's "Horsepower: Road to the Maclay" series. She also has served on the USEF Board of Directors and now is the chief marketing and content officer. She is an active amateur show jumper and has shown at WIHS herself as recently as this year.*

The Washington International Horse Show is unique in many aspects. But first and foremost is the fact that it

takes place every year in a major metropolitan city - right in downtown Washington D.C. The stables for the horses are right on the city streets. People who live and work in D.C. get off the Metro and see the horses right there on their walk into work. That doesn't happen anywhere else in the world.

As this sport looks for new ways to get people engaged and interested, we believe premier horse shows like the Washington International play a vital role. Here in D.C., the horse show is front and center. People stop to pet the horses on their commute to and from the city. They see this event every year, and that visibility translates to ticket sales for a family-friendly event that supports great causes including TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) and the Capital Breast Care Center.

Newcomers to this sport find the event exciting. Many people remember WIHS as their first horse show experience. And exhibitors appreciate packed stands with an audience that is captivated with the sport.

There is a lot of work that goes into putting this event on every year. We shut down the city streets to create stabling. We melt the ice in the Capital One Arena (which is home to the NHL Capitals hockey team). It's quite a logistical challenge. We ship horses in and out of the city all week long. At the end of the show, we break everything down in the early morning hours, the streets open by 6 a.m. and you'd never guess there was a horse show in downtown D.C.

Part of our great visibility has to do with creative campaigns we've developed over the years. We had a \$2 ticket price on Tuesday this year, which pays homage to the prices

we've developed over the years. We had a \$2 ticket price on Tuesday this year, which pays homage to the prices from 1958. Saturdays are free for kids, and we offer free pony rides in the street. We also give out

Georgetown cupcakes to kids and to our big winners. We invite 50-some local barns from around the area to compete for prizes every year for "Barn Night." We give away a clinic with a top trainer and a golf cart. These are just some of the different ways we try to bring more people into this WIHS world and get them hooked.

We also spend a lot of time on educating the public and creating awareness about horse sports. This year, two local amateur hunter riders were part of local news broadcasts promoting the horse show and explaining hunter competitions. From the pony divisions to the professional hunters, we want our audience to understand and be invested in the event.

Tradition and prestige is a long standing part of this horse show. But it's important to us to be warm and inviting too. That's why we consider Washington International to be a family friendly "party in the city".

It's not easy to secure all of the funding to put on a successful event we work hard at fundraising. It's expensive to put on any horse show, let alone one in a major city, but we believe it is worth it. We hope to keep the history of this show alive and bring new competitors and spectators to WIHS for another 60 years to come.

*Tutoria Howell*