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For Immediate Release

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note to editor: Photo attached: Olivia Loiacono and Subway

DON DIEGO FUND SCHOLAR OLIVIA LOIACONO CAPTURES TWO PRESTIGIOUS EQUESTRIAN TITLES



Del Mar, CA ... Olivia Loiacono of Bonsall, age 20, a 2006 Don Diego Fund recipient, and her horse Subway captured two prestigious awards at Dansko Fair Hill International in Maryland on October 18, 2009: the Markham Trophy and Fittest Horse. Competing against Olympians such as Phillip Dutton and Boyd Martin, Olivia's placed 13th overall and won the Markham, an award presented to the highest placed U.S. rider age 21 and under. Her placement qualifies Olivia for the 2010 Rolex Kentucky 3-Day Event that airs on NBC TV April 22-25, 2010.

Olivia, who trains under Olympic Gold Medalist David O'Connor, states, "The honor of the Markham Trophy is fantastic and seeing my name engraved next to the greatest in the sport is humbling. Having Subway named the most fit horse was the icing on the cake."

The pair are no strangers to fame. In 2009, Animal Planet featured Olivia and Subway for 26 weeks in promotional spots highlighting its hit TV show, "Faithful Friends."

Olivia graduated from San Diego's Grace Christian School as a salutatorian in June 2006 and used her \$5,000 Don Diego Fund scholarship to major in agricultural science at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. She currently is matriculating online while pursuing her equestrian career, which dates back to taking her first horseback ride at the age of three and one-half.

Olivia has been steeped in animals and the San Diego County Fair, where she exhibited swine, steer and horses for several years. According to Don Diego Fund Executive Director Chana Mannen, “Olivia Loiacono is one of many Don Diego success stories. The rigorous selection process yields young adults who have propelled themselves to productive careers in many fields. Ashley Colburn of Fallbrook, a 2005 recipient, is a producer and host on Wealth TV, a high-def lifestyle and entertainment network reaching eight million viewers across the U.S. and Caribbean. Ashley, Olivia and other recipients say that the \$5,000 scholarships are exceedingly helpful.”

The Don Diego Fund annually awards scholarships to outstanding college-bound high school seniors throughout San Diego County who have participated in the San Diego County Fair and/or at other events associated with the Del Mar Fairgrounds. In 2010, The Don Diego Fund will award four \$5,000 scholarships. One scholarship will be awarded in each of the following categories: 1) 4-H student; 2) Future Farmers of America (FFA) student; 3) student employee at the Fair, Racetrack or Fairgrounds; and 4) student exhibitor at the Fair.

The Don Diego Fund is a nonprofit scholarship program of the San Diego County Fair formed in 1986 as a lasting tribute to Tom Hernandez, who, in the role of Don Diego, served as the legendary goodwill ambassador of the Fair from 1947 until his death in 1984. To date, the Fund has distributed \$513,000 in scholarships and grants, helping 121 students attain a college degree. The Fund welcomes sponsors at diverse monetary levels.

To learn more about The Don Diego Fund or to obtain a 2010 scholarship application, email cmannen@sdfair.com. For additional information about Olivia Loiacono, contact Christy Wilson of Heads and Tails at 760-724-3200.

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