

Horsemen opened their hearts for a great cause during the 2010 All American Quarter Horse Congress

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Horsemen opened their hearts for a great cause during the 2010 All American Quarter Horse Congress as the Congress Queen contestants and contest chairs worked toward its goal of raising \$64,000 for funding the Shirley Bowman Cancer Nutrition Center through Rein In Cancer.

Events kicked off on Saturday, October 16, when Congress exhibitors, spectators, show officials and vendors were encouraged to wear pink to raise awareness of breast cancer. As part of the day's events, bright pink donation buckets filled the show grounds as an additional fundraiser for the cause, and the Congress queen contestants sold raffle tickets toward a pair of custom-made boots by LaGrange Leather.

Fundraising efforts culminated during the Congress Equine Chronicle Masters classes on Friday night with a live auction of selected items. Auction items included a pink Schneiders Congress jacket, which brought \$2,500; a cowboy boot breast cancer awareness necklace designed by SR Gold, which was sold for \$3,400; a breeding to Hot Ones Only, which sold for \$5,000; a 50X hat donated by Shorty's Caboy Hattery selling for \$5,000; a red, white and blue golf cart donated by Salopek Golf Car Co. sold for \$15,000; a pair of custom designed pink boots donated by LaGrange Leather brought \$25,000; and a custom Berry Fit show jacket brought \$15,000. Cecilia Hylton was the leading buyer with her generous purchase of the necklace, breeding, hat, boots and Berry Fit jacket. The live auction brought a total of \$80,900.

Shorty Kroger, owner of Shorty's Caboy Hattery, began raising money in memory of her sister, Shirley Bowman, in 2006, the Shirley Bowman Nutritional Center fund at the Oklahoma University Cancer Institute was begun and boost from the Congress-raised funds brings the total raised to very near half a million dollars. The clinic, when fully established, will ensure that every patient has the opportunity to meet with a registered dietician. "None of the money goes to research or administration – just for their nutritional needs," Koger noted.

When the Ohio Quarter Horse Association presented a check for \$106,150 at the conclusion of the Equine Chronicle Masters events on Friday evening, it was announced that the money would help more than 4,200 women receive nutrition assistance. "I'm just overwhelmed by the response we received," Kroger said. "If it wasn't for the horse people and all the support they've given us, we wouldn't be where we are. Words just can't express how we feel."

Tracie Anderson, Rein In Cancer Board Secretary-Treasurer, was quick to point out the "work horses" of the event. "We appreciate so much the work and extra beyond-the-call-of-duty dedication of Kelly Diaz, Rebecca Ball and Stephanie Cline – and of course, all the queen contests for their work in selling raffle tickets!"