AMHA
American Morgan Horse Association
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LOCAL EQUESTRIAN COMPETES IN NATIONAL CONTEST

SHELBURNE, VT —The 2009 American Morgan Horse Association (AMHA) Youth of the Year Contest took place at this year's Grand National & World Championship Morgan Horse Show, held October 10-17 at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds in Oklahoma City. Fifteen young women from across the country qualified at local and regional contests to compete for a month-long trip. Competing at this year's contest was Hannah Bazzi, 15, of Forest Grove, Oregon. Bazzi earned a spot in the national contest by placing first in the qualifying contest at the Oregon Morgan Classic Horse Show this summer.

The contestants participate in a rigorous four-part test throughout the course of two days. Included are a written exam, an oral presentation and interview, a ridden or driven horsemanship pattern, and a judging division with a reasons portion.

Bazzi is a junior at Forest Grove High School, where she writes for the school newspaper. She has been competitively horseback riding for ten years and plans a future in journalism.

"Though there is only one champion, it was obvious throughout the contest that each participant had dedicated a tremendous amount of energy, time, and enthusiasm to her performance," said Amanda Ryan, AMHA's Membership Services and Promotions Coordinator. "I am very proud of our Youth of the Year contestants and of the continued growth of this program brought about by the hard work and dedication of so many volunteers, sponsors, and alumnae of the program." The winner's trip is generously sponsored by the Cynthia Elaine Epperson Trust.

Each year, dozens of youth contests are held across the country, hosted by horse shows, state Morgan clubs, and local youth groups. The Youth of the Year program offers participants an opportunity to improve his or her skills in the area of horsemanship, sportsmanship, public speaking, decision-making, and judging. The senior (age 14-21) winner of a local contest qualifies to compete in the Youth of the Year Finals, held each year at the Grand National & World Championship Morgan Horse Show. The winner of this prestigious title receives a month-long trip, during which he or she acts as an ambassador for the Morgan breed.

Founded in 1909, the American Morgan Horse Association is a non-profit organization serving more than 50,000 Morgan horse owners, breeders, exhibitors, and enthusiasts throughout the United States. AMHA serves as a parent organization to more than 100 recognized Morgan horse clubs and national service organizations. You can learn more about AMHA at www.morganhorse.com.

– 30 –