

Chester Weber Pays It Forward (And Back!) When His World Equestrian Games Winning Ribbon Is Returned To Him

Ocala, FL (April 21, 2011) – Chester Weber, the eight-time USEF National Four-In-Hand Combined Driving Champion who has competed for the U.S. in three World Equestrian Games, thought he was bidding farewell to his 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games Silver Medal ribbon when he donated the signed ribbon to a fund raising event. Weber considered it a “pay if forward” act, knowing that the proceeds from the ribbon were going to benefit the Humane Society of Marion County, Florida, in Weber’s hometown.



Weber said he felt content knowing his winning ribbon would be auctioned off on eBay and ultimately make a difference in the lives of the shelter animals. “I figured if the ribbon could raise money for a good cause, it would be much better than having it hang in my tack room,” he said.

What Weber didn’t expect, however, was for his ribbon to come back to him. While Weber’s attempts at “paying it forward” were acknowledged by fans everywhere, one fan took it a step further and bought the ribbon and returned it to Weber.

“I was really overwhelmed that someone was generous enough to help the Humane Society by buying the ribbon, but then they returned it to me with some very kind words,” Weber said. “I love my sport of combined driving and constantly find extraordinary people involved in the sport and I know this person, whoever they are, is that kind of person. I am very grateful and will proudly hang the ribbon in my tack room once again, knowing it took a little journey and has made a difference along the way.”

While the person who purchased the ribbon through the eBay auction wishes to remain anonymous, their heartfelt letter touched all of Team Weber as well as Diane Charipar, of Ocala, Florida, who spearheaded the fundraising event by selling ribbons on eBay in order to donate the money to the Humane Society. Charipar said the ribbon was purchased then returned along with the letter. An excerpt from the letter stated:

“When I read that you had donated your WEG silver medal to help a fund-raising effort for you local Humane Society, I decided that I wanted to buy it for several reasons. First, your gesture was so overwhelmingly generous that I wanted to jump right in and help support it. Secondly, I wanted to buy it out of respect for your exceptional horsemanship and sportsmanship. You show us all how it should be done!

So, here is your medal back home. I feel that you deserve to keep it and I hope that you accept it in the spirit in which it is being returned – with gratitude and respect.”

Weber, who is preparing to head to Europe to compete his famous team of combined driving horses, said he will always be touched by the kindness of the stranger. "We live in a world where bad news seems to dominate the headlines," Weber said. "But when something wonderful happens and someone steps out and is so generous, it is truly a touching experience."

For more information on Weber and his combined driving team, visit their website at www.chesterweber.com.

Photo: Combined Driver Chester Weber(center), shown here with teammates James Fairclough and Tucker Johnson, donated his signed winning 2010 World Equestrian Games ribbon to a fund raising event that auctioned the ribbon on eBay and donated the proceeds to the Humane Society. An anonymous buyer purchased the ribbon and returned it to Weber saying they bought it out of "respect for Weber's exceptional horsemanship and sportsmanship." (Photo courtesy of My Elizabeth Weber)