**Racing for Life!**

**The 31st Running of The Willowdale Steeplechase Races**

 **Celebrate Spring in Steeplechase Style**

**Contact: Andrea Collins, Race Director,** andrea@willowdale.org **610-220-3742**

**Kennett Square, PA:** The 31st Anniversary Running of The Willowdale Steeplechase will take place on Saturday, May 11, 2024, marking a spectacular rite of spring for spectators from across the region.

Set on 160 acres in the heart of Chester County’s horse country, Willowdale features rolling green hills, majestic horses, and fashionable tailgate picnics reminding of a day in the English countryside. Watch the country’s top steeplechase horses compete for $115,000 in purse money.

“Willowdale truly is a community event,” says Chairman Dixon Stroud. “It's a day to enjoy the beauty of the country, witness top-notch horse racing, reconnect with friends, and show off your impressive hats, all while supporting our worthy beneficiaries.”

These beneficiaries are the Stroud™ Water Research Center with its mission to advance knowledge and stewardship of freshwater systems through global research, education, and watershed restoration, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine’s New Bolton Center, with its mission to educate the next generation of veterinary leaders.

Our beneficiaries are leaders in preserving and safeguarding life in many different ways - so we are racing under the motto “Racing for Life”.

Willowdale features three courses set on its rolling turf: The first three hurdle races of the day are run over National fences. The feature stakes race is run over solid post and rail fences (timber) and European style hedges, open ditches, and water jumps. New this year is a second timber course consisting of leaning timber rails set in front of natural edges creating an inviting fence for the horses.

What sets Willowdale apart from other venues is its natural amphitheater, affording attendees panoramic views of almost the entire racecourse from the reserved tailgate spaces atop the hill to prime rail-side spots. And best of all, general admission ticket holders can visit friends and watch the races from a variety of vantage points!

Adding to the excitement this year are the Best Dressed, Hat, and Tailgate Contests, blending high fashion and elegant tailgating with the equestrian excellence of the local community.

The day starts at 10:30 am with the much-loved Jack Russell Terrier races followed by pony races at 11:30 am, showcasing the next generation of jockeys. Post time for the first of six sanctioned races is 1 pm. Between races, attendees can stroll by an antique car display, visit the boutique shops, food and ice cream trucks and get a cup of Gourmet coffee. For younger guests, activities include a stick pony jumping course, a coloring contest, and educational displays by representatives from Penn Vet's New Bolton Center and the Stroud™ Water Research Center. There truly is something here for everyone.

Come to the Willowdale Steeplechase on Saturday, May 11st and spend an unforgettable day in the country while supporting our worthy beneficiaries.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.willowdale.org](http://www.willowdale.org).