



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saddle Up for a Night of Splendor!
Equest Annual Blue Ribbon Gala
April 25, 2025 at Gilley's Dallas!

Kickoff festivities for the Equest Gala start November 12 at ETRO at NorthPark Center.

DALLAS, TX – October 28, 2024 – Saddle up for an unforgettable evening of splendor and purpose at the Equest Annual Blue Ribbon Gala! This equestrian-chic extravaganza, led by Chairs Kristin and James Hallam, and Honorary Chairs The Sam and Helga Feldman Foundation and Natalie and David Taylor, promises to be a brilliant night celebrating Equest's remarkable achievements of enhancing the lives of children and adults with diverse needs through the human-horse connection. So dust off your boots and get ready for a night of celebration and support!

The Equest Annual Blue Ribbon Gala – a blend of Southern charm, refined elegance, and honkytonk fun – will be held on Friday, April 25, from 6:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at Gilley's Dallas. Produced by Steve Kemble, event planner extraordinaire, and hosted by the delightful Jody Dean, the spectacular event will feature gourmet fare and cocktails, exciting live and silent auction items, and an electrifying performance by the Jordan Kahn's Manhattan Orchestra to dance the night away.

Equest will also present the Citation Award, named after the legendary American Thoroughbred winner of the same name, to champions within Equest who demonstrate the same spirit of excellence. The organization is thrilled to announce that the 2024 Citation

Award recipient is The Weber family, including Donna and Tim Weber and their daughter Katherine, a dedicated volunteer at Equest.

Equest CEO Eric Lindh expressed his enthusiasm, stating “Our Annual Blue Ribbon Gala not only celebrates our achievements but also fuels our mission to empower individuals with diverse needs through the human-horse bond. Together, we can create lasting change and foster a brighter future for those we serve. I look forward to an unforgettable evening filled with joy, purpose, and community spirit!”

Meet the Equest Blue Ribbon Gala Chairs



James and Kristin Hallam. Photo credit: James French

The Equest Gala leadership team, driven by a shared passion for the organization, is set to elevate this year’s celebration to new heights. Gala Chair Kristin Hallam, a Houston native and Baylor graduate, has a background in law enforcement as Special Agent and Federal Investigator and holds an MBA from Southern Methodist University. As the founder and CEO of Cheetah Swift, LLC, she brings extensive business acumen. Her co-chair and husband, James Hallam, an employee of Ben. E. Keith Company for 33 years, currently serves as Chief External Affairs Officer, providing strategic advice, counsel, and direction to the corporate executive team and other various boards and PACs.

Honorary Chairs The Sam and Helga Feldman Foundation and Natalie and David Taylor support numerous important charities, including many that are aligned with Equest’s mission. David, a distinguished partner with Thompson Coe law firm, and Natalie, a retired attorney, remain actively engaged in various charitable endeavors. Natalie has been a dedicated supporter of Equest since its early years, having served as both President and Treasurer, and holds the status of Lifetime member. Their daughter, Julia, is a world champion equestrian and has volunteered with Equest.

Norma Jean Schaltenbrand, Auction Chair for the Gala, is an executive in the banking industry, bringing 30 years of extensive experience as a relationship manager. Norma Jean collaborates with clients to provide financial services and products that ensure high levels of customer satisfaction. Throughout her career, she has been committed to fostering long-term relationships, serving as a trusted partner and advisor in areas such as deposits, loans, treasury management, and investments. Passionate about the mission of Equest, Norma Jean has chaired the auction for the organization’s Boots & Salutes, where she

embraces the art of securing high value and unique auction items. When asked to chair the auction committee for the 2025 Gala, she enthusiastically agreed, saying, “Of course!”

Step Into Style: Exclusive Cowboy Boots for the Equest Gala

Step aside stilettos – luxury cowboy boots are here to shine! [Miron Crosby](#), the purveyors of exquisite cowboy footwear, has teamed up with Kristin to unveil a stunning pair of custom-designed women’s boots for the Equest Blue Ribbon Gala. These sumptuous, hand-crafted metallic calfskin midi boots take inspiration from one of Miron Crosby’s best sellers, the Sophie boot, a creative collaboration with Miron Crosby owners and founders Sarah Means and Lizzie Means Duplantis and SMU student and influencer Sophie McGuire. The eye-catching Sophie boot showcases shimmering metallic leather adorned with the brand’s signature stars and a playful nod of Southern charm with the word “Y’all.” Kristin has put her unique spin on these beauties by modifying the color scheme to perfectly align with the gala’s silver and blue theme. Priced at \$1,895, these statement-making boots are not just footwear; they’re a fashion declaration!



To strut your stuff in support of Equest at the Gala, orders must be placed by December 30. These exclusive creations are available only through the Dallas studio at Highland Park Village. For more details, call the studio at (214) 238-3385. Dress to impress and let your feet do the talking!

Attend the Equest Gala Kickoff Shopping Soiree

Kickoff festivities for the Equest Gala start November 12th at ETRO at NorthPark Center from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Attendees can enjoy a day of fashion and philanthropy, as 10 percent of proceeds from purchases of ETRO fashion, Miron Crosby boot orders, and distinguished jewelry from Joan Hornig’s trunk show will benefit Equest. Gala Chair Kristin Hallam and Honorary Chair Natalie Taylor will be available for photo opportunities and questions from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. It’s a wonderful opportunity to shop stylishly while supporting a great cause!

About Equest

Founded in 1981, Equest provides equine facilitated activities, therapies and counseling to children and adults with physical, cognitive, sensory, coping and learning disabilities and

veterans with adjustment challenges. The services provided include physical and occupational therapy, equine facilitated counseling and learning, therapeutic carriage driving, therapeutic horsemanship and competition. With the help of 36 therapy horses, 10 instructors, four therapists, two counselors, and 400 volunteers, lives are changed on a daily basis for more than 3,000 served annually. Equest was the first PATH International Premier Accredited Center in Texas and remains one of the largest in the country. Equest offers an engaging volunteer program that provides 40,000 hours of direct program service opportunities each year. www.equest.org

The Equest Annual Blue Ribbon Gala will be held on Friday, April 25, from 6:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at Gilley's Dallas (1135 Botham Jean, Blvd., Dallas, TX 75215). Tables of ten start at \$5,000, and sponsorships are also available. Underwriting opportunities are available at various levels starting at \$5,000 as a category sponsor. Individual tickets will be released closer to the date. For more information and to purchase tables, please visit www.equest.org/gala or contact Malcolm Hodge at gala@equest.org or (972) 412-1099 ext. 227.

###