



Date: December 16, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Release

JUNIOR COMPETITORS “A BREED APART” AT FLORIDA CLASSIC CLUSTERS

Amazing Young People Across State Have Fascinating Stories to Tell

Brooksville, FL – In early January, people from all over the world and their dogs will gather at Florida Classic Park for the Florida Classic Clusters, the largest dog show in Florida and ranked as one of the top 20 attractions in the southeast by the Southeast Tourist Association.

Among the hundreds of competitors though, there’s a *smaller* segment of handlers sure to wow the crowd of enthusiastic spectators. Just some of these very special competitors include:

A 10- year-old from St. Augustine who is following in the winning footsteps of her 12-year-old sister

A high school junior from Bradenton ranked #1 in Florida after 10 years of training

A 13-year-old from Brooksville who has already won at New York’s Westminster Kennel Club

A 15-year-old from Ocala who won first place for Junior Showmanship in his very first competition

And a 16-year-old from Lake Mary and her parents who spend three weekends each month at competitions across the country.

These are just a few of the Juniors who will be appearing at the Florida Classic Clusters. “I try to encourage people with children to get involved,” says Mary Manning, Florida Classic Clusters coordinator. “It boosts self confidence and camaraderie. It’s a wholesome sport,” she adds.

Lucinda and Chatham – 10-Year-Old Looks to 12-Year-Old Sister for Winning

Ways. With three years of show experience, 12-year-old Chatham is the “old” pro in this family that spends nearly every weekend on the road participating in shows from New York to California. Now, 10-year-old Lucinda, after just one year of competition, is nipping at her sisters heels. From St. Augustine, both are ranked among Florida’s top 20 Juniors.

Media Opportunities – Chatham and Lucinda train during the week in the Jacksonville area.

Cali – Just One Lesson Leads to Years of Hard Work and a #3 Ranking for St.

Mary’s Teen. Three-and-a-half years ago when she was just 13, Cali took a single dog handling lesson. Now she’s 16, has handled Whippets, Dalmatians, Mastiffs and her favorite, a Basenji named Dancer, and is ranked #3 in Florida. And who’s that supporting her all the way? That would be her parents, who join her on the road nearly three out of every four weekends each month.

Media Opportunities – The family has a great story to tell any day during the week. Weekends are “on the road”.

Kellie – With Seven Years of Work Behind Her, This High School Junior from Bradenton Achieves #1 Rank Among Juniors in Florida. In addition to preparing for Florida Classic Clusters, Kellie is also planning for her fourth – that’s right fourth – appearance in the famed Westminster Kennel Club show in New York City. In addition to her high school class work, Kellie spends up to three hours every day grooming, training and caring for her champions – Bobby, a Cairn Terrier, and Tom, a Parsons Russell Terrier.

Media Opportunities – Every weekday afternoon you’ll find Kellie spending two to three hours training and caring for her show dogs.

Lida-Louise – This Middle School Student from Brooksville is the Third Generation of Dog Handlers in her Family. Although she trains in Brooksville, the site of the Florida Classic Clusters, this will be Lida-Louise’s first appearance here. The 13-year-old, who has been competing since she was nine, will be showing Lilly, a Brittany that has already won best-of-breed in previous competitions. And as might be expected, she admits to being “a little nervous” when the competition begins “depending on whom I’m up against.”

Media Opportunities – Three generations of dog handlers can be found training on the weekends in Brooksville.

Adam – This 15-Year-Old from Ocala Finds Better Grades, Greater Confidence and Lessons in Dealing with People Among Benefits. Adam may just be a natural. Three months ago, Adam attended a show in Atlanta. Two weeks after that, he showed his first dog in a competition in Melbourne and took first place for Junior Showmanship. Was he excited? “I was in shock,” he says and explains this was also the dog’s first time to compete. His grandmother, who started showing a few years ago, admits this has become a second career for her and has had a very positive impact on her grandson.

Media Opportunities – Join Adam and his grandmother in Astor, about 45 minutes from Ocala, and see them work together.


These are just a few of the stories behind the Juniors who will be competing during the Florida Classic Clusters event in Brooksville next month. There are many more young boys and girls across the country who can share their experiences. If you are interested in interviewing a Junior in your community or to learn more about Florida Classic Clusters, please contact:

About Florida Classic Clusters:

Florida Classic Clusters is the largest dog show in Florida and has been named one of the top 20 attractions in the Southeast U.S. by the Southeast Tourist Association. **Admission is free!** Parking is \$5. It takes place January 8-12 AND January 14-18 (note: no shows on January 13th),

2009 at Florida Classic Park. The address is: 5360 Lockhart Road, Brooksville, FL 34602. The shows are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Monday, January 12 is Senior Day.** Seniors at least 60 years old will receive free parking when mentioned at the parking gate. **Sunday, January 11th is Kids Day.** The first 100 children (ages 15 and under) who take the free AKC show tour will receive a free baseball cap. In addition to the All-Breed Dog Shows, there are Obedience Trials, Rally Trials, and free tours to learn all about AKC dog shows. Visitors can go behind the scenes to learn how a dog is judged, meet dog handlers and more. It's hosted by: Clearwater Kennel Club, Inverness Florida Kennel Club, Manatee Kennel Club, Pasco Florida Kennel Club and Tampa Bay Kennel Club.

Public contact for more information: 813-465-4525 or visit www.floridaclassicpark.com

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