

Barbie Hensler Memorial Toy Run

Story & photos by Woody Phillips – Strawberry, AZ

Saturday, Dec 10, 2016 the High Country Chapter of A.B.A.T.E. of Arizona held their 14th Annual Barbie Hensler Memorial Toy Run to collect toys and clothing for local families in need this Christmas. The run, started 14 years ago by Payson resident and A.B.A.T.E member Barbie Hensler, was named in her honor shortly after her unexpected death on Dec 6, 2010.

Barbie would have been proud of the turn-out this year at the Buffalo Bar & Grill in Payson which collected hundreds of toys which will be distributed by The Women of the Moose at Moose Lodge # 852 in Star Valley. The families benefiting are located from Tonto Basin to Strawberry, and everywhere in between. In addition, to facilitate any special needs and to make sure each family has a Christmas dinner to go with the toys, the High Country Chapter also raised \$2,200 which the Moose Lodge will use exclusively for those needy families. This year's efforts will help 70 families, with over 160 children, enjoy a merrier Christmas.

"CC" Ransom of Strawberry was the chapter's Event Coordinator and has been working since October "to make sure every child in need gets at least one toy this Christmas". She was not alone, however as numerous volunteers, including the Rim Country District of the Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona and a wide collection of Rim Country and Tonto Basin volunteers, many who do not ride, all joined together with the A.B.A.T.E. bikers to make this a magical Christmas for as many as possible.

Four truckloads of toys were collected. Toy collection boxes were made available at many area businesses including HB's Place and Sidewinders Tavern & Grill in Pine; The Spur Bar in Star Valley,



El Rancho and the Buffalo Bar & Grill in Payson, Jake's Corner, and Punkin Center Bar and the Butcher Hook complex in Tonto Basin.

The main event was hosted by the Buffalo Bar & Grill in Payson and featured music by Plum Crazy. Raffle and door prizes were given away, a silent auction was held, and a 50/50 drawing yielded over \$100 to the winner, Woody, who then donated the whole wad to the kids.

There was also a 'Zero Miles' poker run. Players pay to "ride" (except there is no ride) and draw 5 cards just like on a regular poker run. Don't like your hand? Pay to "ride" again. These are great when the weather turns evil, or it is just too darn cold. The run's winner was Bobbie, a waitress at Buffalo Grill. She collected a \$100 prize & donated it to the cause as well. The Buffalo Bar supplied the band and plenty of great eats and "holiday cheer".

In total, there were probably 50 or 60 volunteers that participated at some level in making this event a success. Not to mention the numerous silent auction and raffle items donated to help with the fundraising.

"Honestly, there are far too many people to thank. It is so wonderful to live in an area where everyone is willing to dig deep to help their neighbor," said Ms. Ransom.

Special thanks goes to The Women of the Moose who will sort, wrap, check their lists at least twice, and ensure that 100% of the proceeds go to the children and families that really need it the most.

"CC" would also like to thank the following individuals and organizations that made this event possible: Sue Malinski – Western Village; Robert of Payson Jewelers; Craig Triphahn – Sawmill Theaters; A New Ewe – Payson; Fossil Creek Creamery – Strawberry; Barbara and

Darwin Huber; Nancy Hubbs; Jenny Turner & Dave Anderson; Traci Scanlon; Mark Fickel; Mary Kay Donnay; Harley, Tanya and all the patrons & staff at Punkin Center – Tonto Basin; The staff and patrons of Butcher Hook – Tonto Basin; Everyone at Jake's Corner; HB's Place – Pine; Ponderosa Market – Pine; Maher Hazine of Sidewinder's Tavern & Grill – Pine; Thomas & Cheryl Piazza; Blaine, Chris, Joann and Phanie of KRIM FM – Payson; El Rancho Restaurant – Payson; Michael Shanahan; Susie and the staff and patrons of The Spur Bar – Star Valley; Pour House – Star Valley; Old County Inn- Pine; Old Bastards MC; Mike and the incredible staff at the Buffalo Bar & Grill Payson; and of course, the many ABATE and MMA Members who turned out to support this fantastic cause.

Thank you all so much. Have a Very Merry Christmas and a safe, prosperous, and joyous New Year.

Online, click title above to see more photos.