

Hooked on Healing Ride

The inaugural Hooked on Healing Ride, in support of our Veterans, took place on Saturday February 27. The San Tan Crown Rotary Club of Chandler, AZ sponsored the event. The two beneficiaries are Arizona StandDown and Project Healing Waters.

AZ StandDown [<http://arizonastand-down.org/>] works with homeless and at-risk military Veterans. The annual Stand-Down events help homeless Vets access needed resources, such as housing, court services, medical & mental health services, and so much more.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing [<http://projecthealingwaters.org/>] is a lesser-known program. It was first established at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. "There are currently 205 operational programs in 50 states including the Phoenix program. The Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing program is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities such as fly tying and rod building classes and local fly fishing outings." [from their website] Phoenix Project Healing Waters is teaching Vets the basics of fly tying and rod building

in monthly classes held in both the north and south ends of the Valley. Learning to tie flies and build rods helps to regain coordination and dexterity.

From organizer Stan Kaufman, of HealingVets.org, "The ride registration and breakfast was hosted by Chandler Harley-Davidson (thanks T.C. and Aria) and the Foothills HOG Chapter. They served pancakes and sausage as part of the registration ... a big hit.

"There were 69 pilots and 30 passengers, for a total of 99 paid participants. This was a self-paced ride which covered a total of 119 miles round trip.

"The first stop was Bass Pro Shops in Mesa where bikers hydrated. The staff had set up a number of games for us; including a bean bag toss and a large spinning wheel game. Depending upon where you landed, you got a specific prize. They had about ten or twelve different prizes ranging from drink cozies to small picnic coolers, and other small swag items.

"Our lunch stop was at Hogs & Horses Saloon in Cave Creek. Chef Joe Martini served up fish tacos which we thought appropriate given the fly fishing theme of our key beneficiary. They were yummy. Manager Hollie Butler and owner, T.C., chipped in a percentage of every meal

served by way of a check written to our fund. Thanks guys!"

This is also where Cow Pie Bingo took place, similar to Chicken Shit Bingo. A 48' X 48' corral was set up at Hogs & Horses Saloon, with 2'x2' squares marked off. Squares could be purchased for \$10/each. At 4pm the day of the ride the folks at Hogs & Horses let a bull into the corral. It took less than 4 minutes for the bull to place his first 'PIE' & thus declare a winner. Congratulations to George Macedon, for his \$300 win.

Stan noted that "Hogs & Horses was great to work with ... for the Bingo but even more so for the lunch stop."

The next stop was 21 miles down the road, at Bootleggers American Smokehouse. Here, riders enjoyed refreshments and picked up their last Poker Run beads.

Stan shared that, "The final stop was at the American Legion Post 35 on Chandler Blvd. where we had one heck of a party and a scrumptious dinner served up by General Manager and Chef, Mike Smith! The band 'Cruisin Fifties' played from 3-7pm and were a huge hit. We'll definitely have them back next year."

The raffle prize table was valued at over \$7,200. Among those items were a

continues on page 20



continues from page 19

Hooked on Healing Ride

custom built bean bag toss, EagleRider motorcycle rentals, pairs of Polaroid riding glasses, & Cindy Rottman's collection of pottery pieces.

Donations are still being estimated as of this writing, but Stan foresees Arizona StandDown receiving about \$1,200 and giving Phoenix Project Healing Waters about \$2,200. This amount can fulfill much of the annual budget for this program ~ which currently has a smaller donor base than the StandDown.

Stan sent along this message in regard to event supporters & donors to be thanked ... There are "Many, many of them but the ones that stick out are these: [1] my mentor in all things ride related, Robin Gordon, who was the ride coordinator for the Pat Tillman Ride and now supports the Military Assistance Mission Ride. As this was our first year and my first attempt at organizing a bike fundraiser, the early-on coaching I received from Robin was invaluable. Robin was also instrumental in assisting us with securing most of our patches, coins, banners, etc. [2] T.C. Conrad at Chandler H-D had my six week after week as we slugged through three months of the planning process prior to the ride. His weekly never-ending verbal support kept us going.

Thanks T.C. [3] Dennis Lunde of Lunde Peoria Volkswagen and Grady Anderson of Western States Bank were our two largest, and 'fist to the door', financial sponsors. Their generous contributions allowed our new organization fund the start-up costs of the ride. Thanks fellows. Dennis allowed our Steering Committee to take over the conference room at his dealership every Thursday November through February 27th. [4] Jacques and Nicole La Cour became involved in our ride organization very early on as website developer, social media mentors, and graphic designers for everything printed. Jacques and Nicole gave us the platform from which to work and ultimately succeed! Of course there are many others who contributed to the success of our first year, too many to mention here, but thanks to you all You know who you are!"

He continued, "The best news of the day is this We had 69 paid bikes plus about 20 volunteers who made the trip on two wheels. Add that all up 89 X 119 = 10,591 miles ACCIDENT FREE!! Safety is always the number one concern for responsible bikers and it gives us great pleasure to be able to boast of an accident-free ride.

"So, yes. We feel we had a very successful inaugural ride. Everyone had fun. Everyone returned home without accident or incident. We made money ☺! And, we have paid for all of our infrastructure, which means revenues for our 2017 ride will be multiples of 2016 results. Special thanks to our steering committee members who volunteered hundreds of hours."

Next year's date is still being determined. This year they were up against a well-established fundraiser taking place elsewhere in the Valley. So there are scheduling factors to be considered. But we have been assured that there WILL be a 2017 event. It will be posted to our calendar when they settle on a date. Until then, there is much more that can be learned about each of these organizations by following the links to their websites. And more photos are being posted to their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/HealingVets

Thank you, Stan, for helping us to share news of your event with our readers. Kudos for what your organization is doing for our Veterans.

*Betsy
event photos courtesy of
Sinister Entertainment*

