

Saddle Up For Kids

The Saddle Up For Kids Ride, sponsored by Harley-Davidson® of Scottsdale is another among the official Arizona Bike Week events. This year was its 6th annual, taking place on April 13, 2018. This event is organized by HOGZ United Charities to benefit Arizona's Camp Courage, a summer camp for young burn survivors. Camp Courage, "was created to address the emotional needs of children who have suffered severe burn injuries." {from their website, <https://azburn.org/camp-courage/>}

Many thanks to Ken & Annette Gray for their help in preparing this article.

We learned that there was an "amazing turn out, from not only riders from all over the United States but from other countries; from California to Virginia and some great folks from Australia and Germany."

An estimated 325 riders participated, with about 100 on the shorter in-town ride and about 225 taking the traditional northern ride. The northern ride traveled through Pine, Strawberry, & Payson.

Ken reflected, "Last year it was a slow process of getting riders on board for the short ride. So many love the long ride due to the northern scenic views of our great state of Arizona. We enjoy giving our riders a choice from taking a long ride or just doing a small route in town to get into Arizona Bike Week early to enjoy the vendors and bands."

Several stops along the way provided free food & drinks plus chances to win raffle tickets toward prizes. Ken got a bit mysterious here ☺ "As we do every year there is always a surprise. The riders never know what's in store at some of the stops. We don't want to disclose some of the activities. We have to keep some surprises under wrap. Have to go on this ride to see! This year on our short

ride we not only had 2 free meals provided but there were fun activities. One impracticable was at Peaks & Valleys on Carefree Hwy. They provided a fun and exciting atmosphere for our riders. Our riders really enjoyed themselves with the special activity from what we were told. Spanks Peaks & Valleys!"

Both rides are self-paced, arriving at WestWorld in Scottsdale for AZ Bike Week attractions, including the evening concert with headliner 'Shinedown'. Once at WestWorld you'll find a fire truck in the Pavilion, where the riders who have completed the run await announcements & drawings.

This year's event generated \$10,000 for Camp Courage. HOGZ UC, along with Wind & Fire MC Phoenix, have a run in June up to Camp Courage to deliver the donations plus spend time with the kids at the camp. Ken shared that, "The common purpose, [is] to shine this light of joy on these children. Our hope is that by working together, in this small way, we can make a difference in the lives of these children, so they will have a moment of joy where they can smile once again."

A secondary beneficiary this year was Nation of Patriots, for military families in Arizona. This organization, which supports AZ military families with minor children, received \$2000. You can learn about this organization via their website www.arizonanationofpatriots.com.

Ken sent along thanks to all who helped make this day a success:

We can never do all we do without the support of the riders and sponsors. We appreciate all of them. Some of our sponsors have been with us from the beginning and we can't say enough about them. Time and time again they not only give for the cause but they make it fun for our riders. Some of our amazing sponsors go above and beyond to support this camp for children and children of military families. Not only with donations but the attitude and caring of the cause:

Harley-Davidson of Scottsdale – Every year they support us and our cause 100% and they go out of their way to make us and our riders feel welcome... the amazing building/property to use, the raffle prizes

they give us to give away; the kindness, the smiles from all who work there.

Waffle House - provides a free breakfast for all the riders & also donates for the cause. They raise donations up to 2 months right before Arizona Bike Week.

Sportsman Chalet - There was an amazing lunch special provided by Sportsman Chalet in Strawberry. Plus an extra way for riders to earn more raffle tickets. Owner Tim Chalet is still very much involved for the kids. He has a big heart and enjoys being a part of a great cause.

Jakes Corner – the team at Jakes Corner are so caring not just for the kids but they go out of their way for our riders.

Law Tigers – Time and time again Law Tigers has been there for our riders.

The last couple of years we have had some new sponsors who have also stepped up for the cause:

Playa II – Great folks and great food.

Peaks & Valleys – Our riders could not say enough about them, great atmosphere, fun and they treated each rider as a special guest.

Rosati's Pizza – they also had a great band playing and food specials just for our riders.

J.S. Held

Universal Water Service

All In, Inc

There are more but we could go on and on.

He spoke very highly of the Volunteers. "Our volunteers were amazing this year. Each year it keeps getting better and better." Despite all the forms & waivers required to participate in a ride like this, they have worked to make it go smoothly. "We do everything we can to make the process quick and painless; so to speak. We want the participants to get their forms done, goodie bag, shirt etc. and out; so they can begin their adventure of riding through Arizona and having fun." Ken noted that they receive many compliments regarding this, from riders & sponsors. "We want to Thank them for that and for being so patient with the registration process at the beginning."

He continued, "We look forward to another great year and helping children as much as we can. We have some new ideas and new surprises for Saddle Up For Kids Ride in 2019 and we can't wait."

The 2019 Saddle Up For Kids is scheduled for Friday April 5. You can follow HOGZ UC on FB at www.facebook.com/HogzUnitedCharities/ to stay apprised of their upcoming activities.

Betsy

