



Make-A-Wish Ride for Wishes raises \$30,000 to help kids

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ALTON - A record number of motorcycles riders and sponsors combined to raise an all-time high amount in the fifth annual Ride for Wishes to help make dreams come true for area children face life-threatening illnesses.

“I can’t say enough about this year’s sponsors and riders,” said Norma Glazebrook, an organizer for the ride and the longest serving Make-A-Wish volunteer in Illinois.

GCS Credit Union, once again the ride's signature sponsor, led the way in donations with a \$5,000 check, plus picking up many other costs, such as sponsoring radio personality Hemmy of The Bull 93.7, new country music, at the sign-up Sept. 22. GCS also gave away a \$250 gift certificate to Ted's Motorcycle World.

"Special thanks, too," Glazebrook said, "to our first-ever diamond sponsor. Eaton B-Line." The Highland, IL, company is part of a global manufacturing business.

Good weather helped bring out more than 65 motorcycles, the most yet, for the 70-mile nonstop run through Madison and Jersey counties.

Glazebrook noted the run was made smoother and safer by two Illinois State Police motorcycle officers, Troopers Jarrod Leckrone, and Kyle Seger, and Alton Police Traffic Officer Sam Riney.

"The officers were a great help on a busy Saturday afternoon," said Jeanne Wuellner, who organized the event with Glazebrook.

Wuellner said the number of sponsors for a contest along the ride where riders count signs was up this year and so, too, were auction item contributions from local businesses and supporters.

Proceeds from the ride will be used only for children in Madison, Jersey, Calhoun, Macoupin, Greene and St. Clair counties. In the last year, some 715 wishes were granted in Illinois. The average cost to make a child's dream come true is about \$6,500, including in-kind contributions from airlines and other corporations.

The ride, the silent auction, door prizes and games were all organized by the Southern Illinois Volunteers for Make-A-Wish of Illinois. Glazebrook and Wuellner are both members of the council that administers the group.

This year, a former Wish Child, Megan Mersinger, was in the forefront on her motorcycle. Behind her were her mom and dad, Terri and Russ, on their Indian motorcycles and her older brother, Aaron, also a Wish Child, in a Slingshot decorated like the Batmobile, Provided by the Rev. Mark Thomas.

"More than ever, this year's ride was a family affair that showed how much people care about helping children when they need it most," Wullener said.