

Holiday Happenings

DWP / LAPD / CITY COUNCIL

A Very Generous Rumble

Annual Motorcycle Run delivers toys and donations to hospitalized children.



Santa's reindeers took the day off as DWP Employees – and members of two area motorcycle clubs – took on the duty of delivering toys to children in the L.A. County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center's pediatric ward.

The groups' fifth annual Motorcycle Toy Run took place Dec. 7. The DWP employees teamed up with members from the Sundowners Motorcycle Club from the San Fernando Valley, and the Our Gang Motorcycle Club.

Santa Claus, who bore a strong resemblance to Ray Reynoso, Toy Run Founder and DWP Heavy Duty Truck Operator, gathered everyone at Catch 21 Seafood Restaurant. Thanks to the City Council, Fifth Street was closed from Central Avenue to Gladys Avenue so the many motorcycles could line up on the street. At 8:25 a.m., the roar of engines could be heard from many blocks away.

As the riders got off their motorcycles, they walked to the west side of Catch 21's parking lot to sign waivers and drop off their toys. They also bought raffle tickets to raise money for Child Life Services. This program at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center helps the half-pint patients deal with their illnesses, and their parents and siblings cope with having a loved one in the hospital.

More than \$4,300 was raised as part of the raffle. The Club donated City watches for the raffle. Other contributors included: Austin Contracting and Associates; Bartels' Harley-Davidson; BJ's Restaurants, Inc.; Black Bike Wheels; Bubba Gump Shrimp Company Restaurant and Market; California Harley-Davidson/Buell; Catch 21 Seafood Restaurant; Claim Jumper Restaurants, LLC; Corbin Pacific Inc.; Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort Hotel and Casino; Elephant Bar Restaurant; EyeRide; Fuse Beverage LLC; Harley-Davidson/Buell of Glendale; Hollywood Chamber of Commerce; In-N-Out Burger; Islands; Johnny's Bar and Grill; Laidlaw's Harley-Davidson; Linens-n-Things; Los Angeles Harley-Davidson; Pirate's Dinner Adventure; Sectran Security, Inc.; Staples Center Foundation; The Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites; Utopia Optics, Inc.; Water and Power Community Credit Union; Wholesale Art and Frames; and Yard House.

The winner of the 50/50 drawing, Richard Pacheco – DWP Electrical Distribution Mechanic, showed his generous heart by donating a large portion of his winnings back to the cause. With that heart-felt gesture, everybody proceeded to his or her motorcycles and cars to begin the run. The LAPD Central Traffic Division pulled out the red carpet for the more than 200 riders. More than a dozen police officers, on motorcycles themselves, led the Toy Run participants from Central Avenue on Fifth Street all the way to the Harbor (110) freeway.

The "angels" watching over the riders were the LAPD Helicopter Unit personnel, who flew over the caravan of motorcycles and chirped the siren to let the riders know they were being watched over.

Once the riders arrived at the hospital, Cristie Suzukawa-Abo, the hospital's Director of Child Life Services, walked the children who were well enough to step outside to watch the riders and look at the motorcycles. She was touched by all



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the toys as well as the cash donation.

Two Kris Kringles deserve special recognition: Wisarn Petch, Communications Electrician, DWP, who not only devoted time and effort into making the Toy Run T-shirts and hats but also donated all the proceeds, totaling \$2,310 from the sale of these items; and Charles James of Austin Contracting and Associates, for the generous donation of \$1,000.

After arrival, a select few motorcycles were taken to the pediatric ward for the other children to see. The children were just as surprised when they saw the motorcycle exit the elevator onto their floor. One little boy was allowed to sit on the motorcycle.

How do you make a biker guy cry? Have him deliver toys to a bedridden child connected to machines that appear to be as big if not bigger than the child is.

When all the toys were delivered, Santa Claus and his helpers returned to the North Pole. Mr. Herrera and his motorcycle rolled out first, followed by Santa Claus and his helpers.

After leaving the hospital, riders gathered to eat, relax, and talk about this amazing experience at the Ports O'Call Restaurant in San Pedro.

Santa Claus would like to give special thanks to all the sponsors; all the participants; the non-riding volunteers; Bronko Anderson, DWP; Nora Castaño, Los Angeles Unified School District; Gervaise Estrada, DWP; Janet Petch, Granada Hills High School; Harris Sutherland, DWP; the LAPD Central Traffic Division and Helicopter Unit; the City Council and Councilmember Jan Perry; American Legion Post #804; The Live Ride, the *Thunder Press Quick Throttle Motorcycle Magazine*; The Sundowners M.C. SFV; Our Gang M.C.; and last but not least, the 2008 Motorcycle Christmas Toy Run Committee: Greg Algorri, DWP, Ray Algorri, DWP, Brad Ditzel, DWP/Sundowners; Ruben Montoya; DWP, Al Ramirez of The Gas Company/Our Gang; and Ida Torres, DWP.

Next year's sixth annual Motorcycle Christmas Toy Run will be held Sunday, Dec. 6. Santa Claus invites all classic cars to join the motorcycles. Anyone wanting to volunteer time or have new ideas is welcomed to call Ray Reynoso, (562) 857-9888, or Ida Torres, (626) 298-5808.

