

Hooked on Healing 2018

The third annual Hooked on Healing Veterans Motorcycle Ride took place on Saturday February 24, 2018. The event was organized by the San Tan Crown Rotary Club of Chandler, AZ. Its purpose is to benefit those American Veterans who have returned from deployment and find themselves either homeless or injured and in need of physical, mental, or spiritual rehabilitation. My thanks to event organizer Stan Kaufman for your help with this story.

Sign-in was at Chandler Harley-Davidson, at 6895 W Chandler Boulevard. It was a chilly 35° that morning {unless you're Canadian... then it was near zero ☺}. And that's BEFORE adding in any wind chill factor. That being said, 60 hardy pilots + about 24 passengers signed up for the 120-mile ride.

The self-paced route stopped at VFW Post 9400 in Phoenix, then The Social Hall in Tempe for lunch; followed by an early afternoon pit stop at American Legion Post #44 in Old Scottsdale. The final stop and party was at the American Legion Post #35 in Chandler. Total distance this year was just under 80 miles. Stan noted that, "In our three years of riding our patrons have ridden over 26,400 miles accident free!!!" Well done!

At the stops each rider took a 'selfie' which had to include an identifiable interior or exterior image of the location. At the final stop they showed their photos and were dealt the cards. The winning hand took home \$100. Worst hand winner collected \$50 and contributed it all back to the cause☺.

Activities at Post 35 included music by DJ Tyler Pham. C2Tactical had a training simulator at their booth. Stan

noted that the Raffle Table was the hit of the day. There were 26 gifts valued at over \$7,000! Plus, every 10 minutes from 2-4pm they gave away Door Prizes (total value over \$700.) Nice!

The primary beneficiary of Hooked on Healing remains Phoenix Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing {PHWFF}. This organization is {from their website} "dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings." and "PHWFF has become recognized as an innovative leader and model in the field of therapeutic outdoor recreation for the disabled, through its successful application of the sport of fly fishing as a rehabilitation tool."

I learned from Norm Johnson of Project Healing Waters that since its inception, more than 142 veterans in the Greater Phoenix area have participated in these programs. This program is far more than just taking a day to go out fishing. PHWFF reaches out to military personnel who are seeking ways to deal with their disabilities. Ongoing classes & activities provide confidence building, improved motor skills, camaraderie, & socialization. The program is free to participants and is funded by donations; including those by events such as the Hooked on Healing Ride.

Those who want to learn more about PHWFF should visit online at www.projecthealingwaters.org/

The secondary beneficiary this year was Fans Across America {<https://fansacrossamerica.org/>}

I was curious that since the Healing

Vets organization is Veteran oriented that a non-Vet cause was chosen as the secondary beneficiary. Stan's answer made complete sense. The Hooked on Healing team was introduced to FANS through a fellow Rotary Club member. "Many of the homeless families and families in transitional housing that 'Fans' assists are post 9-11 Veterans. A significant number of these are down on their luck because of the ravages of PTSD."

Stan shared that, "We will be able to distribute somewhat in excess of \$13,000 to these two organizations this year☺. That certainly 'bests' last year at \$9,400 and our first year at \$2,700." Outstanding!

When asked if the organizers have sponsors & supporters to thank Stan replied, "Many, but our principal sponsors are Lunde's Peoria Volkswagen, The Safeway Foundation, and Western States Bank."

He added, "We continue to be thrilled with the growing support we are garnering from the community, not only our corporate sponsors but all of those individuals and companies that donate time and goods and services on a 'pro bono' basis. The ride continues to grow in terms of economic impact: \$2,700 in 2016, \$9,400 in 2017, & \$13,000+ in 2018. We are expecting similar growth next year ... SAVE THE DATE FEBRUARY 23, 2019."

Learn more about the Hooked on Healing programs at their website www.healingvets.org and follow the organization on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HealingVets/

Betsy

