

2017 was the 6th annual ACMC Christmas Toy Run. This year's event was held on Sunday December 17th. It is a family-friendly activity, welcoming the general public to participate in addition to all motorcyclists. My thanks to ACMC Secretary Marcus 'Moe' Vincent for sending along news of the day.

Representatives of at least 31 member organizations {Motorcycle Clubs, Rider Clubs, & Motorcycle Associations} gathered at the Wal-Mart at Bell Rd. & 19th Ave from 7-Noon. Marcus noted, "We do not have a count of actual participants, as this is an 'open to the public event' that draws support from within the motorcycle community, & from the general public and shoppers at Wal-Mart. I would estimate around 400+ participants & supporters."

All donations from this day benefited Andrea's Closet at Arizona Children's Center. "Final count on toys & donations was close to 1200 toys, items, & bicycles. This included 57 bicycles with helmets, and \$500 in toys, that were donated to the event directly by the ACMC. All of this in roughly 4 hours of activity in front of the Wal-Mart store." Well done!

After the Toy Drive concluded at noon, there was an after party at the Road Runner Saloon in New River. It was a self-paced ride of mostly motorcycle clubs, rider clubs, plus general public supporters. Marcus explained, "It is not a poker run so no games, stops, or prize on this ride. Our main focus is to generate toy donations for the kids at the Arizona Children's Center so we do not promote any sales or revenue associated with this event. To us, in regard to this charity event, the only 'winners' should be the kids." He continued, "The Road Runner Saloon serves as a good destination for a short ride where everyone can gather for lunch, listen to the live band they had playing on the patio, and reflect on the wonderful event of the morning. From here, those that would like to, are led by Santa Claus on a ride directly to the Arizona Children's Center, along with the truck full of toys, to present them to the hospital. Once there, the toys are presented to the children by Santa Claus and his 'elves'. Santa and his elves allow children at the hospital [to] come outside where

they are able to pick out any toy or bike they want & take it home for Christmas right then. After that, they took wagons full of toys, room by room, & let those children pick out toys as well. Once this is done, the remaining toys are stored in the hospital's Andrea's Closet store room, nearly filling it to the ceiling."

When asked about event supporters to be thanked, Marcus stated, "This is the ACMC's main holiday charity event every year, and thus, our focus is to make it as big and successful as possible... This would not be possible without the help, support, and generosity of many key motorcycle clubs, rider clubs, businesses, organizations, and individuals. Really, too many to thank. However, in all of this, there are a few that we would like to mention in appreciation. Thank you to the AZ Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs and ALL of its members & associates that continue to participate & support this event every year, rain or shine. Thank you to the Hooligans Motorcycle Club that organizes, sets up, & helps to facilitate this event each year. Thank you to Kenny & everyone at Andrea's Closet who continue to do an amazing thing for the children in all of our Arizona hospitals. Thank you to Josh, Trey, & all of the Wal-Mart family at the store on Bell Rd. & 19th Ave, whose help & support of this event every year is integral to its success. Thank you to Kyla & all of the amazing staff at the AZ Children's Center who are, without a doubt, *angels in scrubs* doing amazing things every day. Thank you to the Road Runner Saloon for always hosting our lunch and entertainment for this event. Thank you to All My Sons Moving for allowing us to use their truck for collection & transportation of all the amazing toys each year. Thank you to our Santa Claus who rides in on his Harley sled, in full Santa dress, ready to spread good cheer & smiles to as many kids and adults as possible, regardless of how cold or rainy it might be. He is truly amazing and connects with the children to bring big smiles on all of their faces. It is a heartwarming sight to behold. Finally, Thank You again to each & every person that donated big & small to this event. We would have people driving by in their car, walking into the store, riding by on their bike, just wanting



to help, to be involved, to spread Christmas cheer. People came with shopping carts full of toys to donate & left with nothing in return but the knowledge that they helped bring a smile to a child's eyes this Christmas. These are the real heroes here and their compassion and generosity is truly moving."

In conclusion, Marcus commented, "This year's event started with a little bit of rain, cold temps, and continued with partially cloudy skies throughout the morning. Although it was another great success in terms of donations, I believe the weather hampered our overall participation just a bit. In addition to the weather, the lack of local news media support is a bit disappointing. Our local news stations were notified, but failed to send coverage this year. I feel they missed a great opportunity to show how strong & involved the motorcycle community can be when all the clubs & riders come together with the local community to focus on a greater cause. That's OK. We will be back again next Christmas, collecting toys for the children, getting the word out, & trying to improve on the previous year's successes. All that said, the children are truly the focus here & it is our honor to be able to do something for them again this year at Christmas."

Kudos to the ACMC & its members for their efforts on behalf of the kids at AZ Children's Center {www.mihs.org/arizona-childrens-center/}. Learn more about the AZ Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs {ACMC} via their website www.azcmc.com/

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