

# Suicide Awareness Poker Run

The Ride to Fight Suicide Poker Run took place on Saturday October 27, 2018. The beneficiary of the day was Team Rudy Roo, in preparation for their participation in the AFSP 'Out of the Darkness' Walk.

Registration took place at the Queen Creek Café. Stops on this self-paced ride were at the River Bottom Saloon in Florence, Porters Café in Superior, and Rosati's Pizza in Gold Canyon. The destination was Superstition Harley Davidson, located at 2910 W. Apache Trail in Apache Junction. According to Brina at SHD, there were 45 riders; plus at least another 100 people attended the after party in support.

Fundraising events are put together for many different causes.... And for a wide variety of reasons. There's a lot of work that goes into organizing a fundraiser. You have to have some dedicated souls involved to make it come together successfully.

The beginnings of this gathering are particularly poignant. On August 4th, 2017 Rudy Bencomo took his own life... at the age of 17. This set his family on a path they never imagined traveling. Part of the networking that has helped them deal with such a difficult time in their lives brought them to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Activities at Superstition HD included speakers, vendors, and music. SHD employees Jeff & Jose were at the grill, cooking of burgers & hotdogs for the participants.

There was a vendor from an organization called Project: Rock Their World. They are Survivors of Suicide... Parents & other loved ones. They offered creatively decorated 'kindness rocks' which

donors are encouraged to take to different destinations, photograph, then post to Facebook to show how far the rocks have traveled. Their mission is to spread kindness & suicide awareness.

Information was made available from the National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255, AZ Teen Lifeline 1-800-248-8336, and a Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741.

The fundraising raffle table offered a wide variety of goods... Something to draw most anyone's interest. They were grills, a Craftsman rollaway toolbox, kitchen appliances, glassware sets, adult beverages, a toolbox with tools, a gift basket, an Olive Mill collection, numerous gift certificates offering HD goods, nursery discounts for those with green thumbs, spa visits, & more.

The band 'Headstrum' entertained. During band breaks there were speakers. A lady named Joronda Montañó was among the day's speakers. She represents an organization called NotMyKid.org. She made a very good presentation regarding teen suicide... handling a topic which many admit is very difficult & uncomfortable to discuss. She offered stats, explained the need for empathy, and pointed out some of the stressors that teens are up against days.

Low hand winner of the Poker Run was Fat Bastard and Jack Marshall won High. They both donated their prize money back to Team Rudy Roo.

The AFSP is headquartered in New York, with local chapters, programs, and events in all 50 states. There are some very sobering statistics regarding suicide available on their website <https://afsp.org> It is "a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advo-

cacy to take action against this leading cause of death." AFSP is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. A disturbing statistic they share is that "Suicide is currently the third leading cause of death among young people age 15 to 24."

Among the AFSP goals is to 'change the conversation about Mental Health'. They are working to 'reduce the suicide rate 20% by 2025'. These Walks, which take place nationwide, help raise awareness about suicide and funds for programs to education people about suicide and reach out to those at risk. From the AFSP website, "We fund research to improve interventions, train clinicians in suicide prevention, and advocate for policy that will save lives."

Among the AFSP activities is the 'Out of the Darkness' Walk for Suicide Prevention. Team Rudy Roo and the Bencomo family will be taking part in the Phoenix area walk, coming up December 15. This October Poker Run raised \$2235 toward the Team's goal of \$5000. Since that day, they have met and exceeded their goal... with more fundraising time to go. Well done!

YOU can help Team Rudy Roo's efforts on behalf of AFSP by donating to their Walk... There is STILL time! All donations to AFSP and Team Rudy Roo are 100% tax deductible.

Your support is greatly appreciated!

Thank you Brina, from Superstition Harley-Davidson for your help with this article!

Betsy

Learn more about Walking to Fight Suicide here.

