

2020 Barbie Hensler Memorial Toy Run

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High Country Chapter (HCC) of ABATE of AZ held its annual Barbie Hensler Memorial Toy Run on Saturday, 12 Dec, 2020 at the Tonto Rim Bar & Grill in Star Valley, Arizona. The event had been moved to this location from the Buffalo Bar & Grill in Payson because the Tonto Rim Bar & Grill offered a much larger outdoor venue during this time of social distancing and other safety measures. At each location, masks, hand sanitizers and even gloves were available for the patrons and members use.

This year, as in most past years, we were joined by our brothers and sisters from the Rim Country District (RCD) of the Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona (MMA-AZ.org).

While the crowd inside the bar did get a bit bigger than desired at times, there was almost constant movement between the bar and the outdoor patio where Chris Higgins of Payson's own KRIM-FM 96.3 was spinning classic rock. Chris did an amazing job entertaining everyone. So much so that, at times, the patio crowd joined in with the song being played for a group sing-a-long!

While all this was happening, the HCC Event Coordinator, CC Ransom, was manning a drive-through toy drop-off set up in the Moose Lodge parking lot a little further up the road where a few folks took advantage of the extreme social distancing to drop off their toys.

Besides collecting all the toys from the numerous toy collection boxes spread

all of Rim Country from Tonto Basin to Strawberry, the event also raised money to help fill in the gaps where specific items might be needed either for the children of the families needing some help, or the parents themselves. In fact, ABATE of AZ's Sergeant at Arms, Lee "Cheyenne" Thompson, sold almost \$1,200 of 50/50 tickets BY HIMSELF! The winner of the 50/50 raffle, Rich from Payson received \$591 in cash! (see photo in this gallery).

Also available to attendees were almost 100 raffle prizes, most donated by area businesses, that were ultimately scooped up by just about everyone present.

When it was all over and the dust settled, HCC had collected about 4 pick-up trucks full of toys which was presented to the Women of the Moose from the Moose Lodge #852 in Star Valley. Also presented to the Women of the Moose were the money raised during the run, and the donations from businesses near and far prior to the run. Not including 4 jugs of coins and cash from the patrons and owner of the Punkin Center Bar & Grill in Tonto Basin (too much to count at this time, but we will have an update later with the tally) HCC and RCD presented the Women of the Moose with \$3,500.00.

Next comes the really difficult part. The Women of the Moose are true Christmas Angels as starting tomorrow morning they will begin sorting the collected toys and clothing items and matching them to the lists Santa has provided. They will use the money to make certain every family on the list gets what they need to have a very Merry Christmas.

HCC and RCD want to thank everyone who participated in any way for the incredible gift of Christmas that they have

shared.

Please have a Very Merry Christmas, and a Happy, Safe and Prosperous New Year!

- Update: Saturday, December 19, 2020 -

The 18th Annual Barbie Hensler Memorial Toy Run at Tonto Rim Bar & Grill was our most successful to date.

Totals:

4 pick-up trucks of toys

Harley's 4 jugs of coins and cash from Punkin Center Patrons and Staff: \$432.00 (Cash only. Coins yet to be counted)!

Amount raised at Toy Run: \$3,750

Previous HCC donations (Deb Smith's memorial): \$400

Additional donations brought the cash total to over \$5,000

With this money and the large number of toys and clothes collected, the Women of the Moose were able to:

Take care of all of their vetted kids;
Give each Teenager a \$25 gift Card for Walmart;

Give Each Family a \$50 Gift Card for Walmart;

Invite families from Tonto Basin Elementary to participate;

Take on 5 families from the Elk Lodge Christmas effort after they ran short of resources; and

Use the excess cash to purchase gifts to support the local Angel Tree.

We cannot thank you enough for all the generous support. You made a huge difference this year.

Merry Christmas to one and all!

Click on the article title above to view the Photo Gallery.

