

Shriners Ride for Kids!

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Most people think of Shriners as the guys in funny hats and tiny cars riding in parades with clowns, but don't know much else about them. First of all, every bit of that is true. They do don silly hats called a Fez. They sometimes dress up as Clowns and they are those guys riding in little cars in parades; but that's not all you get. There's more, much more! Arguably the coolest Shriners are on motorcycles raising money for kids.

Here's a little history: Shriners International is a fraternity that was formed by Masons Walter Fleming, M.D., and theatrical actor Billy Florence way back in 1870; based on the tenets of Freemasonry but with the added elements of fun and fellowship. They thought it would be cool to have an Arabic-themed fraternity; so, they chose to don funny Fez headgear, named after the city of Fez, Morocco. It serves as an outward symbol of membership in the fraternity. 154 years later, Shriners are now a worldwide fraternity that has established a globally-recognized

pediatric specialty health care system. Shriners Children's Hospitals treats kids at No-Cost who are suffering from orthopedic issues, birth deformities, injuries, and musculoskeletal diseases. They also provide kids treatments that are suffering with burn injuries, cleft lip and palates, and spinal issues such as scoliosis.

Shriners' main goal, besides just having fun, is raising money to provide kids in need treatments at their 22 hospitals in the United States. If there's not a Shriners hospital nearby, your local Shriners will provide transportation and lodging for the kids and their families while being treated.

There are over 200 Shriner temples, or chapters, in the United States and internationally, and most every Shrine has a motorcycle unit who participates in spreading the word about raising money for the kids' Shriners hospitals. They do this by riding in parades with a precision drill team, riding Big Bikes in little circles dodging horse poop, and by creating fun-

filled events to raise money for the kids being treated at Shriners Children's Hospitals.

The Phoenix, Arizona El Zaribah chapter of the Shrine was Chartered in 1896; way before Arizona officially became a state. The head of each local Shrine has a leader, or Potentate who is elected every year. In 2024 Darrell Mandrell was the head guy with the funny bedazzled Fez at El Zaribah - which by the way means "Hunter's Paradise" in Arabic. The President of the El Zarabah Shrine Motorcycle Unit is Robb Marquis. He decided this year that it would be a fantastic fund-raising idea to plan a Springtime ride and it became a big deal real fast. The entire motorcycle community in the area all rallied behind the Shriners to participate and donate in a ton of ways to help the Shriners kids.

The inaugural 'Shriners Ride For Kids!' event was held Saturday April 13, 2024. It was conceived to be more than a ride, but

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something special for the community and have a good time in true Shriners form. Justin Umbs, owner of Superstition Harley-Davidson in Apache Junction got early word of the event and immediately jumped on board providing his dealership as a venue for the ride destination and event.

Easyriders Magazine sponsored the bike show. Tons of killer bikes by local builders showed up to support the kids and show off their 2-wheeled craftsmanship; with a chance to win a ‘Babe and Bike’ feature in the world’s finest motorcycle magazine for men. *Easyriders* honchos came out in person and brought out February 2024 *Easyriders* cover model Cassie Loza to autograph magazines and pose with

Todd Shafer’s Knuckle Bobber.

Entertainment was emceed by the infamous Tumbleweed, who has become a staple behind the mic at events all over the west and Sturgis; keenly keeping the show moving with his wit and even a little blues harmonica, jamming along with Music by the Black Hole.

Superstition Harley-Davidson provided a beer garden to wet your whistle and food trucks were on site to satisfy the gastronomical appetites of the riders that traversed the backroads on a 45-mile scoot escorted by the Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association through the beautiful Sonoran Desert; from the Phoenix Shrine, north along scenic Sagua-ro Lake and winding up in Apache Junction. There, epic views of the monumental Superstition Mountains, home of the infamous Lost Dutchman’s mine, were in full view on this splendid Arizona afternoon.

Pre-registered riders received ride T-shirts, Pins, and a ride patch. They were greeted at the end of the ride with gift bags by key sponsors Toro Insurance Group, Law Tigers motorcycle lawyers and many others that joined in to make the inaugural event an overwhelming success.

You can see the Shriners Ride for Kids! bike show winner Greg Bakel’s 1952 Panhead

in the August issue of *Easyriders*. There were 9 classes of bikes that won amazing custom trophies artfully sculpted by the guys at Dean Speed Customs. They will surely be prized and cherished by all bike show winners.

The most incredible thing about this whole day of fun with the Shriners Motorcycle Unit at the “Shriners Ride for Kids!” was the fact that 100-percent of all the thousands of dollars raised went to treat the kids at Shriners hospitals. That’s a lot of fun, and a lot of love from the Phoenix biker community. It’s also a great reason to come out and join the El Zaribah Shriners Motorcycle Unit for the Second Annual “Shriners Ride for Kids” event; coming April 12th, 2025. I’ll see you there!

In the meantime, if you know of any kids needing help with any of the issues that Shriners Children’s Hospitals treat, call (800) 237-5055 for urgent care or use the online appointment request form at <https://www.shrinerschildrens.org/en/contact-us>.

Keep the rubber side down!

Pulverizer

