



# EDMONTON TOY RUN ASSOCIATION

Making a difference in the lives of children since 1984

## NEWSLETTER

Issue #8 - September 2025

### Santa's Mailbag

Hello? Hello? Is that the road calling? Did you answer?

Someone asked me the other day, "Jay, what makes a great motorcycle ride?". I always respond with, there is more to riding than just getting from point A to point B. A great ride is a blend of freedom, scenery, connection, and a little bit of adrenaline. Whether it's a solo trip through winding mountain roads or a group cruise across the open plains, the best rides share common elements that transform them into memories you'll never forget.

**Ah, the perfect route.** Great rides start with great roads. Twisting curves, rolling hills, mountain passes, or scenic coastal stretches elevate the experience. The best routes balance smooth pavement with just enough technical challenge to keep things exciting.

**Stunning Scenery!** A ride through breathtaking landscapes, towering mountains, vast prairies, sparkling lakes, or endless forests feeds the soul. The combination of open air and panoramic views turns a simple ride into a sensory experience.

**The right weather.** Sun on your face, clear skies above, and just the right temperature. The weather sets the tone for a ride. While some enjoy the challenge of rain or wind, the best rides often come under that sweet spot of perfect riding weather. As I said last month, don't forget your rain gear.

**Good company.** Riding solo can be meditative, but sharing the journey with fellow riders adds camaraderie and connection. A tight-knit group that rides well together makes the miles fly by. And let's be honest, laughing over stories at rest stops or after the ride is half the fun.

**Comfort in the saddle.** The right gear and bike setup make all the difference. A well-padded seat, good riding position, and wind protection prevent fatigue and keep the focus on the road ahead. Not to mention a kick ass playlist for those who listen to music when you ride. When you're comfortable, you ride farther, longer, and with a bigger smile. Smiles per miles is everything!!!

**Flow and rhythm.** A great ride has a rhythm. Accelerating through straights, leaning into corners, syncing with the

road. That feeling of flow, when everything clicks, is pure magic and one of the main reasons riders chase new routes.

**Food and fuel stop.** Memorable rides often include memorable stops. Whether it's a small-town diner, a roadside café, or a hidden local gem, good food and coffee shared with fellow riders enhance the journey. Sometimes it's good to get off the beaten path and explore. Come in and ask me about some of my favourite stops!

**Freedom from stress.** A great ride isn't rushed. It's about leaving behind daily worries, clearing your head, and being present in the moment. Not answering your emails or phone calls. The less stress, whether from traffic, time constraints, or mechanical issues, the better the ride.

**Safety and confidence.** Confidence in your bike, your gear, and your skills creates peace of mind. Smooth mechanical performance, proper protective equipment, and awareness of road conditions allow you to relax and enjoy every mile.

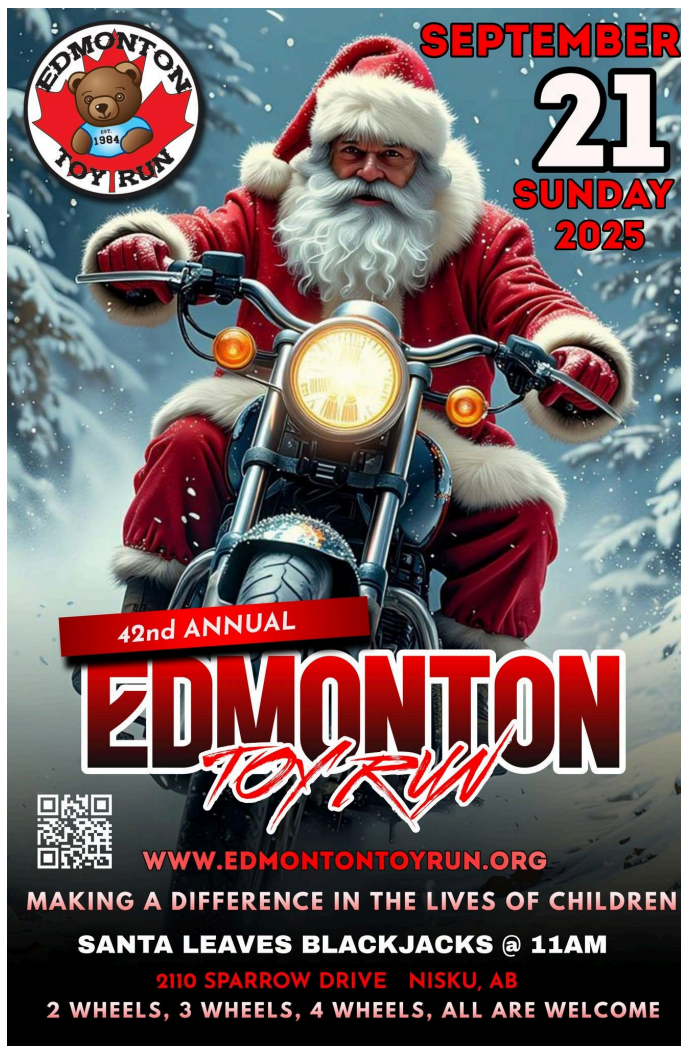
**The feeling you can't describe.** Finally, the best rides give you that indescribable mix of freedom, adrenaline, and joy. It's the wind in your face, the rumble of the engine, and the sense that in this moment, there's nowhere else you'd rather be. That's what keeps us riders chasing the next unforgettable journey.

A great motorcycle ride isn't defined by distance or speed. It's about the combination of road, scenery, people, and emotion. The top rides stay with you long after the engine cools, etched into memory as experiences rather than just trips. Whether you're planning your next adventure or reflecting on past journeys, remember that the best rides are built on more than miles; they're built on moments.

Remember, there is no sooner or later, only now, and always remember to enjoy the ride!!

**Jay Padilla**  
**Planning Committee Chair**  
[www.edmontontoyrun.org](http://www.edmontontoyrun.org)

## Upcoming Events by Edmonton Toy Run



**September 16th - Bike Night @ Blackjacks** - This is our last bike night. Be sure to come out and say hi!

**September 21st - 42nd Annual Edmonton Toy Run.**

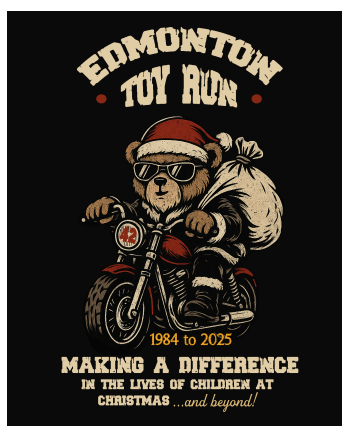
Check out our web page for even more events!

<https://edmontontoyrun.org/event-calendar->



Edmonton Toy Run now has back patches! They are \$75 for the complete set and can be purchased through our website:

[www.edmontontoyrun.org](http://www.edmontontoyrun.org)



If you missed out on the pre-order, there will be a limited number of t-shirts available for purchase at the event. If we do not have your size at the event, you will be able to place an order, but these must be paid for at the time of purchase, and you will be contacted when they are available for pickup (approximately 3 weeks).

T-shirt - \$30.00

Long-Sleeved T-shirt - \$40.00

Hoodies (pullover and zip-up) \$60.00

Purchase from our website [www.edmontontoyrun.org](http://www.edmontontoyrun.org)



Get your tickets for the **WestJet Gift of Flight** raffle in support of the Edmonton Toy Run before time runs out!

Tickets are only \$20 each, and you could win

**ONE ROUND-TRIP FLIGHT FOR TWO GUESTS** to any regularly scheduled and marketed WestJet destination.

Tickets are available at any of our events or through the website: <https://edmontontoyrun.org/raffles>

AGLC licence #728222

**Draw date: September 21st, 2025**

**Where will your travels take you?**



## **Featured Rider(s)/Business**

We at the Edmonton Toy Run are so pleased and honored to feature Blackjack's Roadhouse and Games Room in this month's newsletter. Here we have **Krysta Shields**, *Director of Marketing and Sales Blackjack's Roadhouse*, sharing with our Toy Run members how Blackjack's has come to be the premier supporter of all things motorcycles and riding, within our community. Enjoy learning more about Blackjack's special brand of community engagement and innovation that has so supported our riders and the riding family community!

*At Blackjacks Roadhouse and Games Room, we're proud to be more than just a spot for bikers to grab a burger or catch a concert — we're a place where community happens. Year-round, we open our doors to support causes that matter, whether that's raising money for Santas Anonymous, serving free meals at Christmas, or helping out local non-profits like the **Leduc & District Food Bank, Stars Air Ambulance, Rise Up Society, Second Chance Animal Rescue, the Edmonton Shriners, Alberta First Responders, and Leduc Community Living.***

*Of course, we're deeply tied to the riding community too. From Bike Nights to rides like **Motorcycle Ride for Mom, Ride for Dad, and now the Edmonton Toy Run** — bikes have always been a part of who we are. Over the years, people have even started calling Blackjacks **the riding hub of the community**. But the truth is, Blackjacks is about more than just motorcycles. It's about people. It's about creating a "home away from home" where*

*everyone belongs and where giving back is just part of who we are.*

### **What first inspired you to partner with the Edmonton Toy Run and dedicate space at Blackjacks Roadhouse for its charitable events?**

*Honestly, this all goes back to my dad, Clarence. He's been part of the riding community for over 40 years, and he and Jay Padilla built a friendship back in '99 at the old Nisku Truck Stop. From day one, Dad always believed bikers had the biggest hearts. He's always been the guy people call "Santa Claus" because he gives so much of himself to others. So, when the Toy Run needed a home, it was just a perfect fit. For me, watching Dad's passion for helping people through rides and charity work made it a no-brainer to carry that torch. Hosting the Toy Run here feels like coming full circle.*



Photocourtesy of Photography by Gail

### **How do you decide which areas of the roadhouse—whether tent space on Bike Nights, stage space for concerts, or the outdoor plasma screen—to allocate for Toy Run activities?**

*We try to create the best experience possible for both riders and supporters. The big 8,000 sq. ft. tent and stage are perfect for concerts and bring that "wow" factor. The*

*plasma screen lets us highlight sponsors and keep people in the loop. Honestly, we look at what works during Bike Nights — food, vendors, live music, and the energy in the lot — then crank it up a notch for the Toy Run.*

### **In what ways does supporting the Edmonton Toy Run reflect Blackjacks Roadhouse's core values and its "home away from home" ethos?**

*To me, Blackjacks has always been about people walking through our doors and feeling like they belong here. That's what the Toy Run is too. It's not just about the ride — it's about families, kids, and community coming together to do something good. That sense of belonging, of being part of something bigger than yourself, is exactly what Blackjacks is built on.*

### **Can you share a standout memory from hosting a BC/DC tribute concert or another Toy Run event that really captured the spirit of community?**

*Our first Edmonton Toy Run Bike Night in 2024 will always be etched in my memory. The parking lot was packed, music was blasting, people were laughing and hugging, and everywhere I looked, someone was carrying a toy or buying tickets to support Santas Anonymous. The energy gave me goosebumps. It was one of those moments where you stop, look around, and just think: "This is why we do it."*

### **How do you ensure Blackjacks Roadhouse remains a welcoming hub for riders of every skill level and background?**

*By treating everyone like family. You don't need to be in a big club or have the flashiest bike to be part of what we do. At Bike Nights, every week a different club hosts, and they*

get the chance to talk about their causes, run a 50/50, and sell their merchandise. That setup has created this amazing mix of riders — from brand-new riders to seasoned vets — all respecting each other and supporting one another's causes. That's how a community should work.

**What feedback have you heard from riders and Toy Run participants about their experiences at Blackjacks, and how has it shaped your team's approach?**

*The one thing I hear over and over is: "I feel at home here." That's the best compliment we can get. Riders tell us they love that Blackjacks celebrate their lifestyle while also spotlighting the causes they care about. Hearing that keeps us focused — we know people want fun, they want purpose, and they want connection. That's what we build every event around, and that's what keeps people coming back.*

**Beyond the Toy Run, you host an annual community Christmas dinner for the riding community and beyond. How do these traditions strengthen your bond with the broader community?**

*The Christmas Dinner is so close to my heart. My family has been doing this for 40 years, starting with my grandpa Jack in Fort McMurray. His belief was simple: no one should be alone on Christmas Day. Last year, we served over 2,500 meals here in Leduc, and riders are a huge part of making that happen — from volunteering to donating to just showing up. But what makes it beautiful is that it's not just about bikers — it's about anyone who needs a place to go. It brings our whole community together in the best way.*

**How has your involvement with the Edmonton Toy Run influenced Blackjacks**

**Roadhouse's reputation or community focus over the years?**

*Hosting the Toy Run is something we're incredibly proud of. It's one of those major events that really showcases what Blackjacks is all about — being a home for both the riding community and our surrounding communities. The Toy Run reminds people that Blackjacks cares, and that we're a place where non-profits can come to fundraise, raise awareness, and connect with people who want to help. Over time, that's what has shaped our reputation — not just as a venue, but as a partner in building traditions that matter.*



**For new supporters and riders, what should they expect when they arrive at Blackjacks for Bike Night?**

*They should expect a blast! You'll hear live music, smell burgers on the grill, and see bikes lined up everywhere. There's a beer garden, vendors, and a 50/50 every week. But the real magic is the people — each Bike Night is hosted by a different club, so you get to hear about their causes and meet some incredible folks. Whether you ride or not, you're going to feel the energy and leave with new friends.*

**Can you share an example of a rider-focused initiative you've**

**launched that strengthened bonds within the motorcycle community?**

*The Motorcycle Ride for Mom is one I'm really proud of. We started it to raise money for Victim Services, and it's grown into a ride that pulls people in from all over. It's not just about raising money — it's about conversations, awareness, and showing what the motorcycle community is really about. Every year, that ride reminds me how powerful we are when we ride together.*

**Could you describe a standout rider connection or friendship that emerged because of an event hosted at Blackjacks?**

*We've seen it all here — from friendships and partnerships to even engagements that started at Blackjacks. Families come out with their kids just to grab a burger and check out the bikes, and you can feel that sense of community everywhere. For me personally, one of the most special friendships is with Ashlee Taylor, the founder of One Broken Biker. We met because of hosting Bike Nights, and now she's one of my very best friends. That's what makes Blackjacks so unique — it's not just a place to park your bike, it's where real connections are made. People call Blackjacks **the riding hub of the community**, and I think that says it all.*

**Looking ahead, what new ideas or initiatives are you most excited about for future collaborations with the Edmonton Toy Run and other community-driven causes?**

*I'm excited to keep building on what we've started. For Bike Nights, that means more opportunities for sponsors and more ways for clubs to showcase what they do. For the Toy Run, I'd love to see the concert side grow even bigger. Bands like BC/DC*



*bring such an incredible energy — pair that with raising toys and funds for Santa's Anonymous, and it's the kind of night people never forget. My dream is for Blackjacks to keep being the place where those unforgettable community traditions are born.*

### **Thank-You**

*On behalf of my family and the whole Blackjacks team, I want to say thank you to the riders, the non-profits, the volunteers, and every single person who shows up to support events like the Edmonton Toy Run. You're the reason these traditions thrive, and you're the reason Blackjacks feels like home. Together, we've built something special, and I can't wait to see what we create in the years ahead.*

Krysta Shields  
Director of Marketing and Sales  
BlackJacks Roadhouse  
2110 Sparrow Drive  
Nisku, AB  
T9E 8A2  
Cell: 780-920-0539

[krysta@blackjacksroadhouse.com](mailto:krysta@blackjacksroadhouse.com)

Every month, we try to feature a rider or business within the community. Do you know of an individual either in the biking or car world, or a business you would like to see featured? Would you like to be featured in our next newsletter? Send an email to [Edmontontoyrun@gmail.com](mailto:Edmontontoyrun@gmail.com)

### **Bursary**

Did you know the Edmonton Toy Run has a bursary available for those applying to any post-secondary education? Applications are now being accepted. Click on the link below for more

information and to access the 2025 Bursary Package.

<https://edmontontoyrun.org/bursary-1>

**The application deadline has been extended to September 15th, 2025.**

### **Sponsorship**

Every year, our sponsors play a big part in what we do by donating to a great cause.

If you would like to become a sponsor or know of a business or individual that would like to become a sponsor, please let us know by sending an email to us at [Edmontontoyrun@gmail.com](mailto:Edmontontoyrun@gmail.com)



### **Last Months Event Recap:**

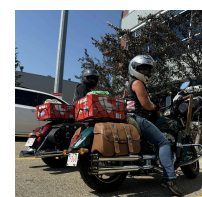
The 2nd Annual Poker Rally was held on August 16th. Although the weather was not the greatest, we had seventeen people buying poker hands. The ride took us from Six Pak Saloon to Alberta Beach, over to Gainford, then to Onoway and back to Six Pak Saloon. Thanks to all who attended, we collected 2 bags of toys and some cash donations for those in need. All the donations will be

donated to the corresponding areas where they were collected. Thanks to the generosity of those who attended by buying poker hands, bidding on silent auction items, or enjoying brisket on a bun, we were able to raise \$1802.00.



Photos courtesy of Photography by Gail

Also August 27th, Now Radio held a Stuff the Studios in support of the Bissell Center - Tummies and Tushies, all things baby campaign. Nik, Denise, Hazel, and Heather all went down to the studio to present them with diapers, wipes, and a \$250 donation on behalf of the Edmonton Toy Run.



### **Dad Joke:**



## Volunteers Needed!

The Edmonton Toy Run is always in need of volunteers to help with our events. We would welcome your help at one or all of our events.

### Events That Need Help 🧑

#### Bike Nights

The next night is September 16th  
Help is needed with setup/tear down  
Directing parking  
Tent and building monitors  
(basically to remind people not to exit the tent/building with alcohol)  
50/50 sales

#### Poker Rally

Next Event August 15th, 2026  
Help is needed with setup/tear down  
Food prep and/or service  
50/50 sales  
Registration Desk  
Check point monitor

#### Main Event – Annual Toy Run

September 21st, 2025

Signage set-up and/or take down.  
Set-up is the night before the event, and take-down is directly after the event.  
Set up/tear down at the starting point (Blackjacks Roadhouse)  
Set up/tear down at endpoint (Edmonton Inn and Convention Centre)  
Directing Parking  
50/50 sales  
Toy collection

#### Annual YEG Motorbike Show

Set up and/or tear down the booth  
Booth coverage (minimum three-hour shift)

#### BC/DC Concert at Blackjacks Roadhouse

Door coverage  
Set up/tear down silent auction  
50/50 tickets

#### We also need people to help with:

Deliver/pick up toy collection boxes  
Sponsorship – we need people to help obtain event sponsorship  
Promotion – can you help with PR

#### We can be reached at:

[Edmontontoyrun@gmail.com](mailto:Edmontontoyrun@gmail.com)

Get your 2025 Membership through the website @  
<https://edmontontoyrun.org/memberships>

### Contact Information:

#### Edmonton Toy Run:

[edmontontoyrun@gmail.com](mailto:edmontontoyrun@gmail.com)

### Committee Members:

Jay Padilla, Hazel Gillis, Heather Gillis, Nevin Kublik, Landon Kublik, Gabe Barrington-Moss, Nik Hewlett, Denise Chenier, Daphne Dowbush, David Dowbush, Freya Giroux, Danielle Rowland-Dow, Terrence Rowland-Dow, Madison Paterson, Amanda Thiessen, Darren Thiessen

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### Links to Edmonton Toy Run:

