



Gruene Harley Toy Run doubles participation

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Santa's sleigh looked a lot like a motorcycle Saturday, with more than 100 bikes rumbling into Gruene Harley Davidson loaded with toys.

The second annual Gruene Harley Davidson Toy Run was Saturday afternoon, with a parade of bikers and Comal County Sheriff's deputies cruising through the county collecting gifts to benefit St. Jude's Ranch for Children.

"The support has been amazing, and it's very exciting for the kids," said Tara Roussett, the campus director at St. Jude's Bulverde campus. "Without events like this, many of these kids wouldn't have a Christmas."

St. Jude's Ranch is a faith-based organization that works to aid children who have been abused or neglected.

Around 40 St. Jude's children received gifts Saturday, after the caravan of bikers returned from collecting toys from event sponsors GVTC and H-E-B.

"I'm just blown away at the number of bikers who showed up to give these kids gifts for Christmas," said Gruene Harley Vice President and General Manager Trevor Bird, who said almost twice as many riders turned out this year. "It's overwhelming."

After the ride, children had a chance to eat lunch, ride Harleys with some of the bikers and visit with Santa — with a leather vest over his red jacket.

"It's just a nice thing," said HOG member Joe Gonzales. "I'm hoping through events like these that people can see the positive side of motorcycle riders, instead of what they see on TV."

Gruene Harley and the Gruene chapter of the Harley Owners Group worked in partnership with Comal Cops for Kids Green Santa program to put on the event with help from the San Jacinto High Rollers and the National Guard.

"It's amazing how many people pitched in to help," said Detective Sgt. Tommy Ward of the Sheriff's Office.

Bird said the ride is one of a number of charitable events Gruene Harley hosts year-round, with the For the Love of Kids and Harley fundraiser raising more than \$200,000 for area charities in September, including \$50,000 for St. Jude's.