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W I E S E M I

Tuesday | Mar 30, 2004

Last Update 2:17 pm

Reno Rodeo Foundation announces thousands in charitable donations



GUY CLIFTON - RODEO

RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL
1/19/2004 09:40 pm

The annual Reno Rodeo runs for nine days every June, but those nine days have a financial impact on the community that lasts for years.

The Reno Rodeo Association — the all-volunteer group that puts on the rodeo — is a nonprofit organization and through its charitable arm — the Reno Rodeo Foundation — it puts many thousands of dollars back into the community through charitable donations and scholarships. In fact, since the Reno Rodeo Foundation came into existence in 1986, it has returned nearly \$2 million to the community, mostly to organizations and charities involving children.

This past week, the Foundation announced its latest round of giving — more than \$230,000 in all.

Among this year's recipients:

o The Angel Kiss Foundation, which provides financial assistance to families who have

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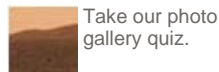
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children with cancer.

- o Big Brothers/Big Sisters, which provides positive role models for at-risk youth.
- o The Boys and Girls Club of the Truckee Meadows.
- o The Boy Scouts of America, Northern Nevada Council's Operation Scoutreach.
- o Girl Scouts Outreach Troops.
- o Kids Café, a program administered by the Food Bank of Northern Nevada.

In addition, the Rodeo Foundation continued its annual tradition of providing 10 college-bound students with four-year, \$1,000-per semester scholarships.

It also made the following one-time donations:

- o \$10,000 to the Justin Cowboy Crisis Fund.
- o \$10,000 to the Sierra Safari Zoo.

The Foundation has also entered into an agreement with Washoe County to raise \$1 million over the next three years to fund a 10,000-square-foot multipurpose/recreational facility at the county's Family Campus. Most of those funds will come from the Reno Rodeo Team Roping Invitational, the richest amateur roping event in the country, which organizer Perry DiLoreto has turned into a charitable juggernaut in the past several years.

Does the money make a difference? Ask Bridget Rhodes, a sophomore at the University of Nevada, Reno and recipient of a Reno Rodeo Scholarship.

"It's given me a chance to attend school," she said. "Without this scholarship, I probably wouldn't be able to go. My parents couldn't afford to send me."

Ask Kathleen Hale, executive director of the Angel Kiss Foundation.

"It means everything," she said. "We're completely funded by grants and charitable donations. That \$4,000 they gave us today is enough for us to help three or four families."

Reno Rodeo Foundation President Jon Solari made a special point to recognize the volunteers who spend an entire year making sure those nine days in June are worthwhile.

"Without the volunteers, the membership and the sponsors, we would not have the ability to give through the foundation to all the programs that we support," Solari said.

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Tom Cates, 2004 president of the Reno Rodeo Association, presented Solari with a check for more than \$94,000 — the association’s annual contribution to the foundation for money raised during the rodeo.

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“It’s days like today that make what we do so special,” Cates said.

In the past year, foundation has also benefited from other income sources as well.

Proceeds from the Rodeo State license plate is split between the foundation and the Nevada High School Rodeo Association.

In 2003, the foundation teamed with the Reno Philharmonic Orchestra for Rhythm & Rawhide — a fund-raiser that teamed the orchestra with cowboy singer Don Edwards and cowboy poet Waddie Mitchell for an evening of entertainment. It was so successful, the event with the same entertainers is being brought back this year. Tickets are on sale now for the May 8 event.

Tickets are also on sale for this year’s Reno Rodeo, which runs June 18-26. If you’ve always wondered where the money from your tickets goes, now you know.

PRCA UPDATE: The National Western Stock Show, the first Tour rodeo of the 2004 season is under way and at least one Nevada cowboy looks like he will be picking up a check for the first round.

Battle Mountain’s Matt Marvel scored 81 points on his first-round ride in the saddle bronc and is tied for third place Oklahoma cowboy Brett Franks. They are two points behind leader Glenn O’Neill, who scored 83 on his first-round ride.

PBR UPDATE: Former UNLV star Justin McBride picked up his first victory of the season on the Professional Bull Riders’ Built Ford Tough Series by winning the Phoenix Invitational.

McBride topped Page and Teague Bucking Bulls’ Mossy Oak Mudslinger for 92 points in the championship round to finish with the high score. He also took home \$32,820 for the victory.

The Phoenix Invitational will be telecast on NBC this Sunday. The scheduled start time is 1:30 p.m.

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