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Riding for children

Motorcycle run raises funds for brain tumor foundation



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Dave Carter, owner of Carter Powersports, decided to bring a version of the Ride for Kids motorcycle ride to Las Vegas last year.

This year's ride, the second annual, was held Oct. 1. The ride began at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, then the riders took the Las Vegas Beltway to Charleston Boulevard, made a loop of the scenic route in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, and ended the ride with a luncheon at Blue Diamond's central park.

"I used to participate in it in L.A.," Carter said. "I first heard about it because it was something the Honda Corporation is involved in, and it gave me the chance to do something worthy."

The Las Vegas Ride for Kids, and all other Rides for Kids throughout the country about 40 cities hold such events benefit the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation of the United States.

Carter said a pediatric brain tumor has not affected anyone in his family, but he now feels a connection to the disease because of his years of participation in the Rides for Kids.

"Almost anyone who participates in the ride runs into people who are personally affected by the disease," Carter said.

Carter continued by saying that the ending ceremony, the Celebration of Life, is an interesting and moving experience. During the ceremony, donors are introduced and thanked, and the survivors are interviewed.

Nico Giordano, 13, is a pediatric brain tumor survivor who has participated in both rides.

"Nico is our favorite local poster boy," Carter said. "He has beaten the odds. He's a great kid."

Nico's father, Frank Giordano, spoke about his son's triumphs.

When he was 7 years old, Nico began vomiting in the mornings. His parents took him to a doctor and were initially told that it was a stomach virus. After the vomiting didn't cease, Nico was diagnosed as lactose intolerant.

"But that still didn't seem right," Giordano said. "We knew something was wrong. Then, after another month or two, he started having headaches. So his mother wrote a journal of what he ate and what his symptoms were and gave it to the doctor. The next day, Nico had an MRI, and two days later, he had his tumor removed."

The surgery left Nico without the use of his legs. This year, he started the school year without a wheelchair, the first time since his surgery.

"It was a huge success. He has no mental problems, he's an A and B student, he even served as the president of his student body," Giordano said. "He's a great kid. I'm very proud of my boy. He has routine MRIs to check everything out, and I'm just a wreck on those days, they scare me to death. But that's why he had the (chemotherapy) and radiation, so that it doesn't come back, and he's doing really well."

Giordano said his family had only days to gather information on Nico's disease, but soon after, they became familiar with the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. The nonprofit organization's quarterly newsletter was where Giordano initially found out about the Las Vegas Ride for Kids.

The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation of the United States, www.pbtfus.org, aims to find both the cause and cure of brain tumors in children by supporting and funding research and by increasing public awareness of the illness. And although the group's efforts target children, the research is also applicable to brain tumors in adults.

Carter Powersports, 3535 W. Tropicana Ave., carries motorcycles, motocross vehicles, ATVs and other merchandise from Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki. Carter said he expects his new store at Decatur Boulevard and the Las Vegas Beltway to open in November, and then the store on Tropicana Avenue will be

closed.

In this year's Las Vegas Ride for Kids, about 300 participants raised \$61,660 for the charity.

"All I know is that if there is anything we can do to improve the lives of these children, we'll try to do it," Carter said. "They didn't deserve or expect this to happen to them. We just do what we can to help out."

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