

Dream Ride raffles off new motorcycle

Proceeds will go to Special Olympics

By **BOB MARTIN**

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LACONIA — Laconia Motorcycle Week is often associated with the loud rumbling of bikes cruising through The Weirs and surrounding areas, but philanthropy is also a major aspect, and Dream Ride is a prime example of this.

The Dream Ride personnel parked a massive trailer located on Chrome Hill, which is in the parking lot across from The Naswa Resort. The organization has also set up shop right in front of the entrance to The Naswa, where they are raffling off a brand new motorcycle with all proceeds going to the Special Olympics.

The Dream Ride is coming off a monumental year, where \$1.3 million was raised, and since its inception 16 years ago, it has raised more than \$4.7 million.

According to Marketing and Event Coordinator Danielle Zercie, the bike being raffled off is a 2016 Harley-Davidson Street Glide worth \$35,000, which has a stage one kit, custom exhaust, custom wheels, custom trim and brand new paint. Second prize is an IGA gift card, and third prize is an American Express gift card.

Senior Special Events Coordinator Karen DeAngelis explained that Dream Ride is based out of Cheshire, Conn. The organization has assisted in a variety of causes over the years, including bringing water to assist

after the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001.

The organization's CEO Mike Bozzuto then started The Hometown Foundation in 2002 to expand its reach and support core community needs. The foundation's focus is the military, children in need, intellectual disabilities, life threatening illness, emergency response personnel and animal rescue.

DeAngelis said the first Dream Ride was a one-day ride in Connecticut, but it then morphed into a weekend event known as The Dream Ride Experience. She said riders come in from all over New England and Canada, adding that Dream Ride has 24 satellite locations, including one in Concord. There are also athletes that come from all over the world to get involved, and can ride around in exotic vehicles through what they call the Dream Cruise. This weekend-long event takes place at the Farmington Polo Club in Farmington, Conn.

"There's all kinds of activities that go on," said DeAngelis. "There's plenty of great food and music, and much more. It's just an amazing weekend."

The ride consists of a 40-mile cruise throughout the Connecticut countryside, with thousands of motorcyclists

getting involved. There will also be a juried motorcycle show sponsored by American Iron Magazine, a Dream Car Show sponsored by Motorcars, Inc. with celebrity judges, including Wayne Carini of "Chasing Classic Cars," a family fun zone and a firemen chili cook-off.

Part of the mission of the representatives of the organization at Laconia Motorcycle Week was to promote this weekend event taking place from Aug. 26 to 28. All of the registration costs for the event go directly to the Special Olympics.

"Every dollar raised goes to Special Olympics and stays in the state where it is raised," said DeAngelis. "That's our major charity for The Hometown Foundation."

DeAngelis explained that four years ago, they started riding from southern Florida all the way up to Connecticut, which spans about 2,000 miles. There are stops where athletes meet and greet them, and registration costs for this event also go to Special Olympics.

"It just keeps growing every year," said DeAngelis. "It's amazing."

This is the first time Dream Ride has been at Laconia Motorcycle Week, and DeAngelis said they are more than happy to be at the world's oldest motorcycle rally



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to promote their cause. She thanked the Naswa Resort for being so hospitable and letting them be a part of the experience.

"We knew we really needed to have a presence here at the oldest motorcycle rally around," said DeAngelis. "93 years is pretty cool. Everything has been working out very well."

The motorcycle will be raffled off on Sept. 1, and tickets are going for \$20. The organization set

the bike up outside of the Naswa on Wednesday afternoon, and they said they already sold dozens of raffle tickets.

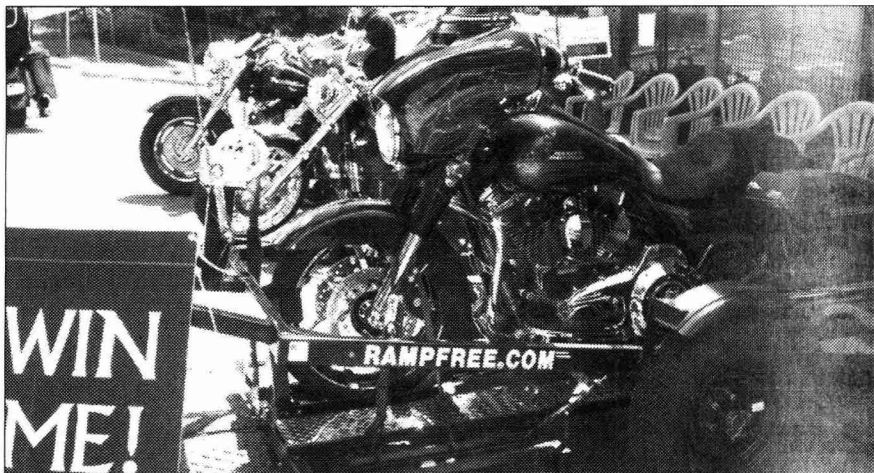
The motorcycle will be on display in front of The Naswa all weekend, and Dream Ride officials encourage people to stop by and purchase a ticket for a great bike and a great cause.

For additional information about Dream Ride and The Hometown Foundation, log onto Dreamride.org.



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DANIELLE ZERCIE, left, and Karen DeAngelis of Dream Ride are in front of the Naswa throughout Laconia Motorcycle Week selling raffle tickets for this brand new Harley-Davidson Street Glide. All of the proceeds will benefit the Special Olympics.



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