

Hard-Ridin' Mamas Cruise to Cure Breast Cancer

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, an initiative that began in 1985 by major charities to promote early detection. It's also time for another great calendar from Harley's Angels! Harley's Angels is a group of women motorcycle enthusiasts that have joined together to raise money for breast cancer research and promote education toward awareness and early detection. A passion for riding and a passion for finding a cure for breast cancer are at the heart of the group.

The group raised money for several good causes, "but the girls wanted something fun and different," Hyde says, "and somehow, the idea for a calendar came up."

The 2003, the first Harley's Angels Cruzin to Cure calendar was released. It was an immediate success! The girls kept it real; showcasing members on their bikes. The calendar is not full of scantily clad women draped over motorcycles, but real women who ride for a cause.

That first year \$60,000 dollars was donated to Baylor College of Medicine Breast

Though their efforts to save women's lives, it hasn't been without heartache. A memorial page on their website, Angels in Flight, honors members lost through cancer and motorcycle accidents. Part of the Harley's Angels message is always wear helmets and protective clothing when riding, they strongly recommend that new riders take a motorcycle safety training course, and most importantly get annual mammograms.

Brandy Reed is the Events Coordinator for the Harley's Angels. She is not a



In 2001, a Ladies of Harley (LOH) group in Houston began what has become a call to all lady riders to ride for a cure. Their Harley Owners Group (HOG) had several hundred members so why not get some photos of the ladies and their bikes and print a calendar? They expected to sell their calendar at the HOG meetings to members, family and friends and raise several hundred dollars. Accounts vary as to how the original idea evolved, but everyone credits Karen Hyde for much of the first calendar's success. In 2001, just a year after learning to ride, she was Director of the Houston Area #1 Ladies of Harley.

Center to fight breast cancer through research. Could they do it again? You bet! The 2004 Calendar donated \$40,000 to M.D. Anderson's Research Programs. From then on Harley's Angels made the decision to split all future proceeds equally between Baylor and M.D Anderson's breast cancer research programs. To date the organization has donated over \$360,000 to the breast cancer program of these great institutions.

To broaden participation for the calendar, the group invites all women motorcycle enthusiast to become involved. They set up booths at numerous events throughout the Gulf Coast region, and beyond. They raise money and awareness through these outreach functions that include selling their calendar, other "pink" items, and coordinating poker runs and rides. At one location, a small girl stopped at the booth, mesmerized by the gleaming cycle in front of her. Her mother said 5-year-old Hannah recognized the distinctive rumble of a Harley and wanted to ride one when she got older. "I sat her on my bike," says Debbie Campbell, "and we took her picture. I love the fact that we're a positive role model for girls like her."

They rarely encounter a negative reaction, "When people see us with our motorcycles and find out what we're doing, they'll make a donation even if they don't need a calendar... a few have even given \$100 bills," says Linda Riley. "People who know someone with cancer or who've been through it themselves — they'll buy calendars for everyone they know," says Karen Jordan.

breast cancer survivor, but she is deeply committed to finding a cure. As a Medical Imaging Technologist at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, she notes that, "my work and my volunteer life are very closely related." She is involved in many research protocols involving different types of breast cancer. After her mom joined the group, Brandy noted, "I thought what a wonderful thing these ladies were doing and jumped on, full throttle, and haven't looked back." She had no trouble selling the 2008 calendar because she was actually in it. She says, "That's one thing about us ladies, we are real people with passion; no supermodels here, and we do love to sign our name next to the picture."

With a membership of over 100 women strong, of which more than 10% are breast cancer survivors, Harley's Angels keep on cruising!! They are a phenomenal group that inspires women who are battling this deadly disease to keep fighting. It is empowering to see their outpouring of generosity and love. It's a perfect combination of two passions: riding and finding a cure.

How can you help? Visit their booth at many of the upcoming rallies and events around the Gulf Coast and beyond, join one of their poker runs or rides, or go online and purchase their calendar or other items. Harley's Angels, Cruzin' to Cure, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization. As such, all purchases are considered donations and fully deductible to the extent of the law.

Catch Them in September:

September 10-13, 2009 - The Texas Rally
TheTexasRally.com
Somerville, TX

September 13, 2009 - Calendar Launch Dinner & Party
HarleysAngels.org
Houston, TX

September 18-20, 2009 - Oldest Town in Texas (OTT) Rally
September 19 - Poker Run at OTT
OTTRally.com
Nacogdoches, TX

