

2022 Eldridge Children's Home Ride.

History

Twenty years ago, 4 friends from Northwest Alabama, that are bike riders decided that they wanted to start a charitable bike ride Christmas event in their local community. They had participated in many motorcycle "toy runs" in other locations but they wanted to do something local. These 4 friends decided that doing something with the Eldridge Children's Home would be perfect. They then worked with the home's board of directors for approval. It took lots of hard work, but it became a reality. The focus of this event is different than just a toy run that provides a once a year Christmas party. This event raised around \$160,000 last year, over \$1,000,000 total for the past years and is a very important part of the community and the Children's home. The home currently has 24 residents both male and female and this fundraiser helps pay the bills, make improvements as well as providing scholarships.



This event has developed over the years and is made possible by great organizational skills and a lot of hard work from volunteers, local businesses and even some from out of state like the Iron Horse Campground in North Carolina.

Now 20 years later it has grown into well over 500 bikes from as far away as North Carolina, Florida and some over 600 miles. This year they are planning for 700 people.

THIS RIDE IS ALWAYS THE FIRST SATURDAY IN DECEMBER. Here is the web page:
[Eldridge Toy Run 2022! - Eldridge Toy Run](#)

Ride Report

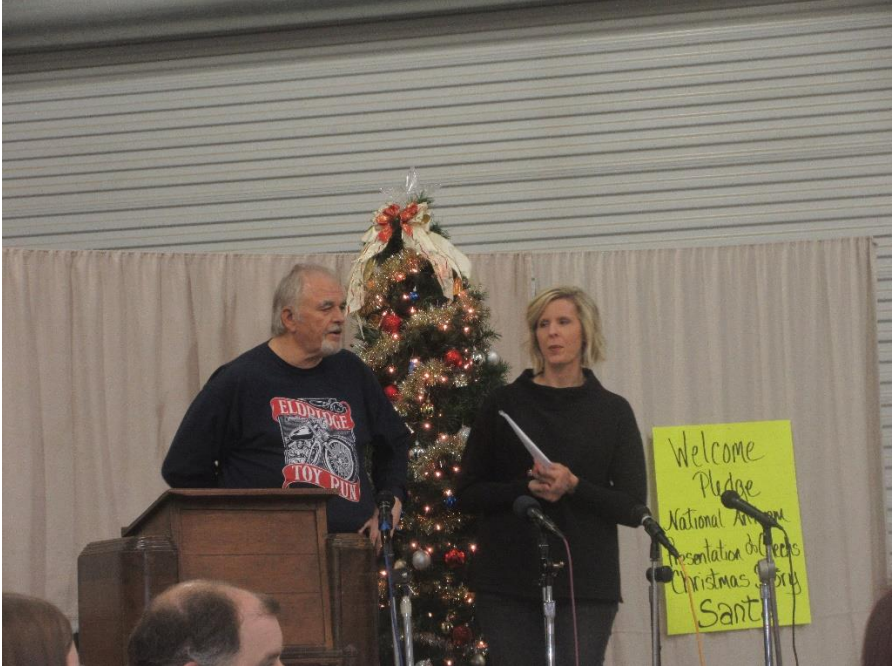
Laurissa and I started our 210 mile ride Friday about 10:30 am with a planned stop for lunch in Starkville. The weather was a chilly 54 degrees, overcast and a light on/off drizzle. We took Hwy 43 to Kosciusko then Hwy 12 to Starkville for lunch at Chick-fil-a. We rode to Columbus on 82 then 18 to Vernon and 17 and 36 to the Hilton in Winfield, AL.



While fueling the bikes across the street from the hotel, bikes started pulling up behind us and then at the hotel there were even more bikes and riders. There were lots of nice folks at the hotel and the tall tales started and never stopped. Great fun. Laurissa and I have been to the event several times in the past but unfortunately we have missed some. Last week Fletcher reminded me so now that we are both retired we can make more of them. Thank you Fletcher! The event starts on Friday night with the “long Distance” riders that just cannot ride in on a Saturday morning. To keep the chaos to a minimum there was van service to the Children’s home for the evening. There is a meal served along with a program that honors the different groups that work hard to raise money. One group had contributed over \$17,000 last year and were hoping to exceed that this year. The children sang and their Jazz band played Christmas music.



We got to see many old friends and made some new ones. This was a good night. But a big shout out to Don Norwood who is one of the four founders and I am proud to say that Don is a friend. Another shout out to a friend and club member Fletcher.



Saturday morning came and we slept a little late and after a short 15 minute ride we made it to the home about 10:00 am. At this time there were maybe 50 bikes or so. Saturday included a car show and lots of bikes riding in and then a fantastic lunch. Stay as long as you like and then head home.



Being a part of this event is very heart warming and besides knowing that you are helping the Children's Home, seeing the smiles on ALL of the resident's faces is priceless. They all help with different chores and it is very obvious they are appreciative. It had rained and the ground was soft so someone had cut up small pieces of plywood and several of the children that were helping with parking gave them to riders for the bike side stands to keep the bikes from falling. Then they handed each biker a small bag of sweet goodies and a thank you note. Even grinch was sporting a smile!



We toured the buildings and viewed the pictures on the walls of current and past residents. We talked to the director and a house mom or two and then on to the car show. About 11:30 a long line of bikes riding side by side started rumbling in. For at least 45 minutes they kept coming and coming and coming and coming. The leader of the group said the ride started in Amory MS and that bikes just kept joining. He estimated there were at least 250 bikes. Now it was time for lunch with pulled pork, Brunswick stew, chicken tenders and PBJ sandwiches on the menu. After lunch we headed home. The weather started out at 65 and when the sun showed up it soon reached the 70s. Great riding and because we did not need to stop we made fast work of the ride home. We had a very good 2 day trip and I want to say how humbling and rewarding this event was. **MY goal for next year is to have a group of no less than 10 riders with me. MAKE YOUR PLANS for the FIRST SATURDAY IN DECEMBER 2023!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**







