

Cattle Barons' Ball is rearing to raise money

The fifth annual American Cancer Society's Cattle Barons' Ball will kick off Saturday, Jan. 26 at the City of Palms Park, in the Fort Myers' River District.

The "Ball" is the top fundraiser in Lee County and the top ranked Cattle Barons' Ball in Florida. Last year the event raised more than \$760,000 which went to help the more than 6,000 people in Southwest Florida who each year hear the words, "you have cancer." What sets this gala fundraiser apart from others is its "country casual" dress code and its unbuttoned, relaxed atmosphere.

"The community's response has been amazing," said Melinda Isley, chair for this year's event said. "The Cattle Barons' Ball is an event that allows the community to have a direct impact on the fight against cancer, created perfectly as a good ole' fashioned country gathering. It's a truly unique event!" ■



COURTESY PHOTO

Because of generous support at the Cattle Barons' Ball last year, all 25 kids from Southwest Florida who registered were able to go to Boggy Creek Camp for a week of freedom from the worries, anxieties and illnesses associated with cancer. They got to canoe, horseback ride, enjoy a campfire, have a food fight and make friends for life, with other kids dealing with cancer. This year's event is Saturday, Jan. 26.

The American Cancer Society R.O.C.K. (Reaching Out to Cancer Kids) Programs

>>R.O.C.K. Camp – Because of generous support of the R.O.C.K. programs at the Cattle Barons' Ball last year, all 25 kids from our area who registered were able to go to Boggy Creek Camp for a week of freedom from the worries, anxieties and illnesses associated with cancer. They got to canoe, horseback ride, enjoy a campfire, have a food fight and make friends for life, with other kids dealing with cancer. Boggy Creek is a full medical facility, so even kids undergoing treatment can participate in the fun and get away under the supervision of a medical staff and volunteers.

>>R.O.C.K. Families Weekend – The 2007 Cattle Barons' Ball also played a huge role in sending over 400 families, including 16 from the South Gulf Coast, to Orlando for a weekend educational gathering. Parents, siblings and kids battling cancer gain support from other families going through a cancer journey of their own, while learning about the latest and greatest on the medical forefront. At the end of the weekend, the whole family gets to pick a theme park of their choice for a well-deserved day of carefree, family fun!

>>R.O.C.K. College Scholarships – Cancer can take a huge financial toll on a family and puts plans for college on hold. The R.O.C.K. Kids Scholarships awards monies to college age students who are battling or have battled cancer. The money raised at the Cattle Barons' Ball will also go to help cover tuition and books and makes dreams of college come true.

>>R.O.C.K. Research – This year some of the dollars raised for our R.O.C.K. programs will be designated to childhood cancer research projects. We know it's important to make lives better for the kids now, but research will be the key to finding drugs and cures to fight childhood cancers before they are ever diagnosed.

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