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15TH ANNUAL “TIM DOLLARD MEMORIAL RIDE” TO BRING THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAYS TO YOUTH AT ADMH’S PSYCHIATRIC ADOLESCENT UNIT AT EAMC

Montgomery Ala.— For the fifteenth year in a row, members of the Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group-Pelham Chapter gear up to brighten the holidays for teens and children committed to the Alabama Department of Mental Health’s (ADMH) Psychiatric Adolescent Unit at the East Alabama Medical Center (EAMC) in Opelika. The ride is a partnership between the Alabama Department of Mental Health’s Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, JBS Mental Health in Birmingham, the Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group and EAMC.

On Saturday, December 8th, a caravan of Harley-Davidson motorcyclists will leave the Pelham dealership at 9 a.m., arriving at the ADMH unit at EAMC around 11:30 am to visit and distribute gifts which they have collected and wrapped.

The annual ride combines the excitement of gifts and fellowship with the thrill of a motorcycle ride. Due to the severity of their mental illness, these adolescents will spend the holidays in the hospital. The unit at EAMC serves adolescents committed to the ADMH statewide and has the capacity to serve up to 10 adolescents.

The dedicated group of Harley riders have consistently taken time to help ensure the youth have a special Christmas. “This is one of the rides that we look forward to all year long. It’s a great opportunity for us to help make the holiday season a little more special for the kids. We look forward to gathering gifts and donations and delivering them. The kids enjoy seeing all the bikes roll in and they always have a special program for us during our visit,” said Roddy Sample, CGR, CAPS, Director of the Pelham Chapter, Harley Owners Group, Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson.

“This is such an important event, offering a fun day for the children at EAMC. We thank the riders greatly for their love and compassion for this cause for the last 15 years,” said Commissioner Lynn Beshear, Alabama Department of Mental Health.

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The Harley riders not only donate gifts to the youth but have also chosen to spend the afternoon with the kids. The riders and kids share a meal and sing carols together. The generosity of both tangible gifts and the intangible gift of their time, along with the joy and excitement it brings to the children, truly exemplifies the spirit of the season.

The ride was initiated by Tim Dollard, past Director of Children’s Services at JBS Mental Health. He was a charter member of the Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group and wanted to find a way to ensure those adolescents in the state psychiatric hospital had a wonderful Christmas. Tim passed away in 2016 but the HOG members have continued the ride for the youth.

Press Information:

- Contacts: Gayla Caddell, 334-324-1557, Peggy Olson 415-819-2023
- Location: East Alabama Medical Center, 2000 Pepperell Parkway, Opelika, AL 36801
 - Riders will arrive at approximately 11:30 a.m.
- **Press will be allowed to accompany the riders and staff to the administrative office only.**
- Check in at the information desk in the lobby and state you are there for the Harley Ride presentation
- **Cameras may be used in front of the hospital as the riders approach the facility**
- **Bikers and gifts may be photographed**

About Us: The Alabama Department of Mental Health serves more than 200,000 Alabama citizens with mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and substance use disorders. The department strives to Serve, Empower, and offer support to create awareness while promoting the health and well-being of Alabamians. Visit www.mh.alabama.gov for more information.

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