

Rodeo Raises Money For Injured Riders

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SHARTLESVILLE (Berks Co.)

— Brandy Crago is a rodeo rider with a mission. She performs trick riding at The Old Timers Benefit

Rodeo to raise money for injured riders. On Sunday, August 27 at 2 p.m., Brandy will team up with

Shane Lattimer of Lockwood, N.Y., to provide rodeo entertainment at the Shartlesville Mountain Resort.

Brandy got hooked on becoming a stunt rider when she watched a rodeo in Bucks County in 1980.

She took stunt lessons for two weeks and practiced for a year before she became a professional trick rider.

Her popularity took her to rodeos across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. She spent six months performing with Circus World in Florida and enjoyed five seasons at Frontier Town in New York.

In 1993, Brandy was one of three trick riders selected to work at the National Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma.

"Safety has always been an important factor in this kind of work," Brandy said.

Despite Brandy's cautions, two years ago, her horse fell on her while performing a stunt.

A crushed lower back and pelvis required one month of traction at Albany Medical Center.

It was tough for Brandy to be confined to total inactivity. She was surprised and encouraged to find out that her rodeo family did not forget her. She received a check to help with medical and personal expenses.

Nine months after the accident, Brandy was back on the saddle and performing at rodeos.

But she never forgot the despair of laying on that hospital bed and the encouragement she received from her rodeo family.

She said, "Their thoughtfulness

was such a blessing to me and my family. We are thankful to so many people who care and to God for such great healing."

Brandy repays the debt she feels by helping other injured riders by doing what she is best at — stunt riding.

The benefit performance is put on annually to raise money for the Rodeo Contestant Crisis Fund (RCCF).

Tony Tice, who helps organize the benefit, said that unlike most professional athletes, rodeo cowboys and cowgirls do not belong to teams or have trainers or team doctors. Professional rodeo riders pay their own entry fees and expenses, and when a ride goes bad, their own medical expenses.

In 1992, George Bell a world champion steer wrestler had an accident on the way to a rodeo. He is paralyzed and in a wheel chair. Through the help of the RCCF, Bell went to a saddle and harness making school in Oklahoma and has established his own business in Virginia.

Bell will be at the rodeo and ride with the aid of a special saddle, which he designed and made himself, and compete in team roping.

In addition to lots of rodeo action, the benefit rodeo will also feature door prizes and fun events for the whole family.

The rodeo will be held at Shartlesville Mountain Resort located off Exit 8 on Route 78. Performance begins at 2 p.m. Admission is \$5 per person. Children 5 years and younger are free. All proceeds go to benefit the Rodeo Contestant Crisis Fund.



Brandy Crago thrills crowds with her stunt rodeo tricks. Since recovering from a serious injury, Brandy is back to performing. This Sunday, she will perform to raise money for other seriously injured rodeo riders.

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