

# Trail ride to grant children's wishes

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## OKOTOKS WESTERN WHEEL

Some locals will be saddling up their horses and putting on their cowboy hats this summer for a trail ride to make dreams come true for sick children.

Cowboys and cowgirls from all over the foothills will be taking part in an Alberta Wish Trail Ride on Aug. 22 to raise money for the Children's Wish Foundation.

"The Wish Trail Ride was always my dad's passion and since he passed away I have taken it over," said Irene White, the main organizer for the event. "I have always loved horses and thought it was a great cause."

Participants get pledges before the ride to raise money and have a choice of a three to four-hour ride or a seven to eight-hour ride.

Until this year, previous trail rides for the Children's Wish Foundation have always taken place in British Columbia.

"My father started this 13 years ago and I would always go out and help," White said. "When he passed away last year we got talking about how there were no rides in Alberta."

So far 26 people have registered, including two from Okotoks. Registrations are still rolling in as other riding clubs and groups have said they will be participating as well.

"Lots of people have started collecting pledges but we need to get the word out about registering as soon as possible," White said.

There are only 150 horses allowed in the Kananaskis for the ride so there are limited spots available.

White has been planning the ride since last August along with a committee of eight, who she said have been amazing.

The eight-hour ride will be departing at 8 a.m. and there will be a pancake breakfast in the morning starting at 7 a.m.

For every \$25 someone raises they will receive a raffle ticket to win a saddle, along with other prizes.

"I am just amazed at how places have been so receptive," White said in regards to businesses providing donations of prizes.

After the ride there will be a barbecue and live music with the event wrapping up around 6 p.m.

The last trail ride in Kelowna raised \$27,000 and included 47 riders, although White said this is the first time in Alberta so she doesn't know what to expect.

"I would love to hit 150 people but would be thrilled with 75 or 100," she said.

Each wish for the Children's Wish Foundation costs about \$10,000.

"If we could grant two to three wishes I would be thrilled, it would be wonderful if we could do more," White said.

White added it is amazing the different wishes children ask for. She said Disneyland is always popular but they have had requests for computers, a horse and even a little boy who asked for a headstone shaped like Mickey Mouse.

"Some of the kids are terminal, many are ill and don't get better," White said.

Those wanting to participate in the trail ride have to have their own horse. There are places to rent horses, but organizers will not be offering to help with those arrangements.

"What we are looking for is cash donations, pledges and riders," White said.

As long as there is space left people can register up to the day before the event. Also, people who do not have a horse or do not want to ride can still come out with a minimum pledge of \$25. Donations can be made, or pledge and waiver forms can be printed off from their website [www.albertawishride.ca](http://www.albertawishride.ca).

"It is hard because of the economy but if we get people donating cash we can cover our expenses, which there aren't many, and donate more to the Children's Wish Foundation," White said.

They will be meeting in Little Elbow at the overflow area near Forget-Me-Not Pond southwest of Bragg Creek.

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**Irene White enjoys a trail ride through the Kananaskis. A similar ride will take place on Aug. 22, to raise money for the Children's Wish Foundation. It will include participants from the Foothills and area, photo by Roger Matas**