

# RIDE FOR A CURE



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This October, local ranch owners, Dale and Heather Gibson will open their facility to the public to raise funds and awareness about cancer and Parkinson's disease. The second annual Ride For A Cure event is sponsored in partnership with ETI Corral 210.

The Corral had been in existence for about a year when the membership alighted on its community purpose. Under the shade of a 100 year old pepper tree at Gibson Ranch, a group of the Sunland Riders members met to discuss putting together a fundraiser. Jo Martinetti, a boarder at Gibson Ranch and a self-proclaimed "bad" Corral member, revealed that she would love to participate in a fundraiser for Parkinson's, since the effects of it were really starting to affect her riding. She needed to do something, anything to fight against it.

"I don't think anyone at the ranch knew before then that she

event will stretch over a two-week period, beginning Saturday, September 20th with a Mounted Shooting competition and ending with the Main Event on Saturday, October 4th. The seven-day interactive event will include a trail ride, a poker ride, pony and wagon rides for the kids, an exotic animal petting zoo and a "street fair" boasting a host vendors and local artisans. For the more passively inclined spectators, live music, exhibitions by trick ropers, stuntmen and various equestrian groups including The Buffalo soldiers, and Corral 210's award-winning mounted drill are certain to delight and excite.

Recently, several members of Corral 210 were diagnosed with cancer. Other members have close family members also afflicted with the disease and so, this year, the decision was made to split the spoils of the fundraising between the American Parkinson Disease Association, Inc. and The Roy and Patricia Disney Cancer Center at Providence St. Joseph's. The decision to work with these charities hits home

led her to various remedies that ultimately failed. Several doctors offered what turned out to be a series of misdiagnoses, so Jo gave up on looking to the medical community for answers.

Then, her left foot started to drag a bit. The seriousness of her condition hit home on the day she tried knocking on a door but her left hand wouldn't knock; it seemed dead. Shortly thereafter, she realized that she couldn't cue her horse with her left foot. She finally forced herself to see a neurologist who diagnosed the symptoms as Parkinson's disease. "I began to sob uncontrollably," Jo admits. "At which time, this doctor suggested that I was 'over-reacting.' I drove home in a daze. Once home, I fell into a heap of tears and rage. I thought about the people who spent a lifetime abusing their bodies; while I've exercised my whole life." Outside of the gym, Jo was a long distance runner, running up to ten miles a day four days a week. Her body was muscled and fit and she'd been a health food nut since she was a kid. Getting this illness didn't make sense. It was just so damn unfair. Jo found a new neurologist: a compassionate movement disorder specialist, who confirmed the Parkinson's Disease diagnosis. Today, Jo is on medication that allows her the mobility to continue enjoying her life. "Generally, I no longer dread my future, I admit that there are occasional bouts, but I truly believe a cure is in sight and I'm going to get there."

A lover of horses all her life, Jo continues to ride her gentle Palomino mare, Chick, pictured above. "I'm not nearly the rider I was, since my body doesn't listen to my mind. But I have discovered that the more I ride, the more I exercise, and the more I keep doing what I've always done, which includes eating healthy, being positive and trying to be as good a person as I can, the more hopeful and positive my future appears." Nanette Tevrow's fight with head and neck cancer began four years ago. She has undergone five surgeries, radiation treatment, and the emotional and

physiological adjustments to a life with cancer. These experiences have opened her eyes to the many things that life has to offer, the most significant being the healing power of horses. Nanette is the proud owner of a 16H dark bay quarter horse named, Moe. "His kind eyes captured my heart five years ago. After each surgery as soon as I was able, I would go riding." Quiet trail rides would help to ease the pain of surgery and the impending doom of her cancer diagnosis. Tevrow's doctor was always impressed with her rapid healing, her positive attitude

steady flow of pain medicine pumped into her veins could not put out the raging fire of pain that burned uncontrollably through out her cells. "I felt as if I was about to go insane," says Nanette. Creative visualization and a profound connection to her equine companion are what brought this former art teacher out of the woods. "I surrendered to the machines and drugs that were keeping me alive and I forced my mind to take me to Moe. Together we rode through the thick fragrant brush and stood with our feet in the cool waters of



and that she would get back in the saddle so soon after surgeries.

This past January, another large tumor was discovered on the floor of Nanette's mouth, reaching to the base of her tongue. To remove this tumor and to eradicate any possible tainted tissue a 14-hour surgery was scheduled to remove more of her tongue, replace the bone with titanium, and graft skin from her arm into her mouth. The estimated recovery time was three to four months. Anticipating a lengthy recovery time that would tax her body to the limit, Nanette decided to send Moe up north to be turned out to pasture for four months, feeling this would be the best solution in order to maintain the "horse" in him. The following day Nanette's doctor inquired about my horse. She told him of her plan to turn Moe out to pasture. Knowing nothing about horses, Tevrow's doctor counseled her against this decision. "He told me to keep Moe where he was, that riding was the one thing that would get me up and out of that hospital bed." In Tevrow's estimation, that was enough of a verification of the healing power of horses. She listened and kept Moe home at Gibson Ranch.

Waking up in the ICU after this extensive surgery, Nanette was not so sure that she was glad to be alive. Feeling betrayed by her body and her doctors, the

the creek. The power of his body gave my weak body strength. The warmth and softness of his coat gave my skin a sense of relief."

Showing remarkable signs of recovery, Nanette was released from the hospital before her originally scheduled date and with in weeks of being home, took her battered body and wounded spirit to the barn. "Moe the best doctor I know," says Tevrow.

With any luck, the 2008 Ride For A Cure will turn more people on to the restorative power of horses. The event is certain to offer something for everyone, even if it is only the small personal satisfaction of helping advance research in cancer and Parkinson's therapies. The event kicks off a two-day Mounted Shooting Competition, open to all levels of experience, beginning Saturday, September 20. The second weekend gets off to a speedy start with the Sanctioned Barrel Race on Saturday, September 27. Riders of all levels can experience their own connection to the horse by joining the Poker Ride on Sunday, September 28. Steed-less urban cowboys and -girls need not fret, as a limited number of horses will be available for rental. Additional event details and updates are available at [www.corral210.com](http://www.corral210.com).

2007 ride for the cure photos courtesy of the Valley Horse Journal.com



was even ill," says MaryLouise Eckman, Co-Chair of The Ride For A Cure. "Once the word was out about Jo's condition, the Corral just blossomed." Last year's Ride for a Cure event consisted of full day of live music, celebrity guests, a silent auction, competitions and performers in the Gibson Ranch arena as well as vendors selling food and wares. Proceeds from this one-day extravaganza exceeded the Corral's fundraising goal of \$20,000 all of which was donated to the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

This year's Ride For A Cure

with Corral 210' members Jo Martinetti and Nanette Tevrow. For Jo Martinetti, it started out innocently enough. She noticed it was becoming difficult to mount her horse. Then there was the slight wag of the middle finger on her left hand. And she was feeling a little stiffer in the morning. But she assumed these difficulties were all nothing more than hallmarks of the aging process. Several years of substantial anxiety, betrayals of her traditionally athletic body, restless nights of sleep that left her screaming, punching and kicking,

