

From the President

LET US ALL RESOLVE, IN THE
MEMORY OF MIKE TRAYNOR, TO
GENEROUSLY SUPPORT OUR
CHARITY OF CHOICE.

Giving Back

Helping Others Is A Way Of Life For AMA Members

by Rob Dingman

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of Ride for Kids co-founder and AMA Life Member Mike Traynor in early September. Together with his wife, Dianne, Mike launched in 1984 what has become one of the most philanthropic motorcycle charity rides in the world.

Mike and Dianne, both avid motorcyclists, saw the suffering of a co-worker's child who had been stricken with a brain tumor, and they decided then and there to give something back. For eight years they sacrificed every free moment to organize first the Atlanta Ride for Kids, and then the Chicago Ride for Kids. After raising a million dollars, and with corporate backing from Honda, the Traynors then took their passion on the road, working nonstop to start Ride for Kids events across the country. Under the umbrella of the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTf), the Ride for Kids program grew to encompass 39 events a year (a total of well over 400 to date), each staffed by scores of dedicated local volunteers who were touched by Mike's heartfelt passion to help children stricken by one of the world's deadliest cancers.

As we go to press, the PBTf has raised \$54.7 million. Even more remarkable is that 82 percent of these funds are

being channeled into the foundation's research and family-support programs. None of this would have been possible had Mike and Dianne not demonstrated to a skeptical public and the medical community that people who ride motorcycles have big hearts and are very generous when they see a need that must be met. These same people are the ones who will carry the PBTf mission forward in memory of Mike's vision.

I am reminded that thousands of AMA members participate in noteworthy charity rides. Since the beginning of this year, the AMA has sanctioned nearly 80 "official" charity rides. I use quotes around the word "official" because proceeds from other AMA-sanctioned events support AMA-chartered clubs doing good works in their own communities as well. Locally, clubs like the Schuylkill County Motorcycle Club in Pennsylvania support the Crippled Children Society with their annual benefit run. The Blue Knights and Axemen motorcycle clubs fund scholarships for the children of fallen police officers and firefighters.

During the holidays, dozens of AMA clubs host toy runs, collecting thousands of toys for underprivileged children in cities across the U.S. The giving doesn't stop where the roads end, either. The

Colorado 500 Invitational Charity Rides (on- and off-road) have distributed more than \$1 million in 34 years, supporting many charitable agencies and schools in the state. These efforts, plus national events such as the March of Dimes Bikers for Babies, the Women's Motorcyclist Foundation Adventure for the Cures, and the Real Divas Ride—Divas for a Cure demonstrate that American motorcyclists are arguably the most effective fundraisers of any community anywhere.

Occasionally, I get a letter from a member asking the AMA to help raise funds for their charity. In a polite manner I remind them that the AMA officially supports a 501(C)3 charity of our own: the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum. Take a moment to check out our holiday card fundraiser, which underwrites the Hall of Fame's mission to showcase the legendary figures that have made lasting contributions to motorcycling.

Forgive me if I have not mentioned your favorite motorcycle charity in the limited space of this column. Let us all resolve, in the memory of Mike Traynor, to generously support our charity of choice.

Rob Dingman is president and CEO of the American Motorcyclist Association.