

Janna Smith plans gymkhana

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Janna Smith, 16, who just finished her sophomore year at Holyoke High School and is a member of Paoli Hustlers 4-H Club, is planning her second annual gymkhana to raise money for both Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and young diabetics in Northeastern Colorado.

Riding for Hope is the name Smith has chosen for the Sunday, May 31 gymkhana that's set for the Haxtun arena. Events include barrels, poles, stakes, flags and keyhole in four age divisions: pee-wee, junior, senior and adult.

Registration starts at 11 a.m., with events at 1 p.m. The Haxtun arena is located on Highway 6 on the west side of Haxtun, just two blocks west of Highway 59.

Prizes for high-point in each age division are embroidered jackets. Sponsors for the gymkhana include Legg Creations, Mountain Man Nut Co., Haxtun Locker Plant, Haxtun Super's, Mr. D's, Stockman's Pharmacy and Sterling Livestock Commission. Other sponsors are being sought.

Riding for Hope was born from Smith's own experiences with juvenile diabetes beginning at age 10. She has a fierce desire to help other young people in the same situation her family was in: covering medical expenses with no insurance.

Her dream is that a cure for Type 1 diabetes will be found soon, instead of the present necessity of young diabetics taking multiple shots of insulin per day.

Smith's first gymkhana in April of 2008, Gymkhana for the Cure, began as an FCCLA STAR event project. FCCLA, a national high school organization, stands for Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.

STAR events are created to demonstrate leadership skills, with the letters standing for Students Taking Action with Recognition. She continued the endeavor in the summer of 2008 in 4-H in a Leadership project at the Phillips County Fair and at the Colorado State Fair.

In the spring of 2009, Smith won a commendation from the Spirit of Prudential for her volunteer work with raising money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, along with participating in Walk for a Cure in Denver.

A donation of \$20 covers entry fees. All proceeds, including concessions and bake sale, will benefit children with diabetes.

Smith is the daughter of John and Denise Smith of Holyoke, and is a nine-year 4-H member.

For more information, contact Denise Smith, 970-854-3901, 970-580-8717, or dmsmith@pctelcom.coop.