

# Rally for a Reason!

By Heidi Goehring #181764

**I HAD NEVER BEEN TO A RALLY** before. I didn't own a motorcycle. I didn't even *ride* a motorcycle. So I was a bit surprised when my BMW MOA motorcycling brother suggested my daughter and I go with him to the Wisconsin Dells Rally, hosted by the Wisconsin BMW Club. That was in 2002, the first year it was being held at the Chula Vista Resort in the lovely Wisconsin Dells.

His reasoning was simple. I needed a getaway. The resort has a waterpark, and the club has a Kiddie Carnival, ample things to keep my 11-year-old occupied. My brother also rattled off all the things that were included with the rally fee: Friday and Saturday night meals, 24/7 beverages (non-alcoholic of course), fruit and donuts in the morning, live music, beer tent, yadda-yadda-yadda, and the fact that they were letting us pitch tents on the lawn. It was quite cost effective—so we were off!

I was a little concerned at first. You see, my daughter Mariah also has Down syndrome. I didn't know how a group of bikers would respond to a young lady with special needs. But the BMW community embraced

her—more than at some events I'd taken her to over the years that were *supposed* to be for people with different abilities. Anyhow, it was an awesome weekend, and I got the motorcycling bug.

While attending the rally, I also discovered Camp Wawbeek—an Easter Seals camp located right there in the Dells about 2.5 miles away from Chula Vista. I did a little homework and started sending my daughter to various camp offerings there. Every time I pick her up, she doesn't want to leave. She absolutely *loves* this camp and the amazing, caring staff and volunteers who keep the oldest Easter Seals camp in the nation running. But I digress...

The following year we came back to the Wisconsin Dells Rally. This time I had a motorcycle license and was riding a 1995 Ural with my daughter in the sidecar. In 2010, I upgraded to a 1991 BMW R 100 R with a sidecar. (I say upgraded because the older BMW actually allows me to keep up to speed with traffic.) We haven't missed this rally in 14 years, truly enjoy all the friendships we've made and always look forward to welcoming the new "rally virgins." Somewhere during that time, I became an MOA member, too.

Changes started in 2016. The site location was just not working out for either the club or the resort. A move was called for and I

received an interesting phone call in January from Ambassador Brian Manke, rally chair.

Brian is a good friend and has learned quite a bit about Mariah over the years. Thus, he knew about the camp and how much she enjoys it. He started asking about the Easter Seals location and amenities on the site. I shared with him what I knew and told him I'd place a call into the camp director, who is also a good friend. That phone call went something like this:

Me: Hi Carrissa! You know Mariah and I have been attending the BMW Dells Rally for years now, and they've got a situation. We are wondering if there would be an option of moving our rally to Camp Wawbeek?

Carrissa: That would be great! What are the dates your looking at?

Me: September 9-11.

Carrissa: (*getting excited*) That's an open weekend! How many people are we talking?

Me: They're planning for 400, hoping for five.

Carrissa: (*sigh*) We only have beds for 200.

Me: No, no, no! We camp! How much space for tents?

Carrissa: (*perking up*) We have 400 acres!

We continued to discuss options. We can



use the buildings we need for registration, hospitality, vendors, and the dining hall for our meals. Plus bathroom facilities with showers! For those that don't want to camp, this year's rally is offering bedroll space at steal-of-a-deal pricing.

I returned the call to Brian, shared the news, and put him in contact with Carrissa. He set up a date and time for him, the club president, and two other Wisconsin club members to get a tour of the camp, and they were IM-PRESSED. They began work on the contract, working out details like storage space for their rally supplies, etc.

The New Dells Rally location is Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek! *We are Rallying for a Reason!*

Easter Seals Wisconsin provides support services for those with disabilities as well as our veterans. They offer respite opportunities for caregivers, provide vocational training, consult with the Wisconsin Department of Vocational Resources and have numerous camping and programming options for those with special needs. This is a non-profit organization that truly uses their resources to support those differently-abled vs. big salaries for administrators.

You can't believe how beautiful this camp is! Four hundred acres of pristine woods around some clearings and buildings! Rally central is bigger than a football field. There are trails to ride and walking paths to admire all Mother Nature has to offer. It's like a national park!

If you haven't been to the Dells rally in a while, you might just want to give it a try this year. \$10 of every registration fee goes straight to Easter Seals Campership Fund—providing scholarships for those less fortunate.

If you want to get a bunk in a dorm, it's \$10/night/person—try finding a hotel for \$20. There are also a few small group rooms available at the same price. All money raised from bedroll space goes directly to Easter Seals general camp fund to maintain the facility.

Find rally information in the "When and Where" section of this ON, or visit [www.wiscbmwclub.com](http://www.wiscbmwclub.com). ☺

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