



Lending a Helping Hoof

Hereford juniors strive to make a difference for Ronald McDonald House Charities.

by **Bridget Beran**



2013-14 National Hereford Queen Brooke Jensen chose Ronald McDonald House Charities for the Helping Hooves service project during the JNHE.

Each year when National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) youth gather to participate in contests inside and outside the showing during the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), they also come together to do something to benefit others. Started in 2012 by then National Hereford Queen Amanda Bacon, Helping Hooves is a service project that is led each year by the National Hereford Queen. This year, National Hereford Queen Brooke Jensen, Courtland, Kan., chose to collect pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC).

“Each year our National Hereford Queen chooses a community service project that they feel will benefit others in a profound way,” says Alise Nolan, National Hereford Women (NHW) president-elect. “Brooke’s decision to do the pop tabs for the RMHC will bring much-needed media attention and hopefully give other organizations this great service opportunity idea.”

Ronald McDonald Houses collect pop tabs instead of entire aluminum cans because it’s more hygienic to store tabs than cans, and collection and storage is easier. According to the RMHC website, the program is an easy way for people of all ages to support RMHC and know they are making a difference for families and children.

For the past two years, Amanda asked juniors to collect toiletry items from hotels that they visited throughout the year. In the first year alone,

Hereford youth donated more than 1,100 items to Hope Harbor homeless shelter in the host city, Grand Island, Neb. The following year, youth were able to collect 2,424 items to donate to Hope House of Kansas City, Mo.

“We need to remember how lucky we are, as NJHA members, to be involved in this industry when a lot of people don’t even have the basics,” Amanda says.

With 610 juniors and their families in attendance at the JNHE, this year’s project also had excellent results. Throughout the week, juniors were able to collect more than 78 lb. of pop tabs.

“The turnout this year was fantastic! The Ronald McDonald House Charities is a great program and I hope this will inspire people to continue to support the program outside of Helping Hooves throughout the year,” Brooke says.

Brooke chose to partner with the NJHA mentoring program. Mentors and their protégés decorated small tubs for collecting pop tabs throughout the week.

“I’m excited about this project because of the cause it stands for, helping families afford to be near their loved ones while he or she is being cared for medically,” Brooke says. Brooke says she thinks this project was successful both because juniors want to make a difference and to help those less fortunate and because she knows first-hand how many cans of pop are drank and brought to a cattle show on a daily basis.

When Amanda first began Helping Hooves, she hoped to set an example of service and to leave a lasting impression on juniors about how fortunate they are. She hopes this tradition of service will continue for years to come. **HW**



More than 78 lb. of pop tabs were collected.



Hereford youth participating in the JNHE mentor program collected pop tabs throughout the week to assist with the service project. Pictured here, mentor Mason Blinson, Buies Creek, N.C., and protégé Emily Adkerson, Starkville, Miss., are decorating their collection bowl to use throughout the week.