

# Greene County MESSENGER

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## Helping Hands across Greene County

By Steve Barrett

### Part 1

### A 'Ride' to remember

More than 30 riders revved their engines and opened their hearts on July 18 to help raise money for a benefit bike run, titled "Let's Ride 2009," which was held in memory of Shylynn Elizabeth Roberts.

Shylynn, the daughter of Jessica Kesner and grand-

daughter of Debbie Kesner of Waynesburg, passed away this past April at the age of three months from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Debbie Kesner said friends and family decided to hold the benefit in Shylynn's honor and also raise funds to help with her funeral costs; but they also wanted to raise money for the local chapter of S.I.D.S. of PA, a non-profit agency committed to providing support to families of SIDS victims.

"We obviously wanted to honor Shylynn's memory, but we also wanted to help a

local agency that may be able to help other families that have gone through the pain of losing a loved one to SIDS," she said.

According to SIDS of PA, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is the death of an apparently healthy infant, which remains unexplained after a complete post-mortem investigation, including an autopsy, death scene investigation and review of the baby's history.

SIDS is the major cause of infant death after the first month of life. According to information provided by

SIDS of Pa. Approximately 3,000 babies die of SIDS every year in the U.S., including almost 100 each year in Pennsylvania.

The local SIDS of PA chapter represents families of SIDS victims in Greene and Washington counties. The agency is also affiliated with the national "Cribs for Kids" campaign, which provides cribs and educational materials about ways to reduce the risk of SIDS and accidental suffocation.

Debbie Kesner said the

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# SIDS

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idea to hold a benefit in Shylynn's honor came to fruition earlier in the summer, when her boyfriend, Mike Basinger, suggested a benefit bike run.

"Mike got the ball rolling and got our friend Terry Wise on board," Debbie said. "Terry helped map out the route for the run and also got his good friend, Jerrod Dunker — who owns Tradesmen's Inn in Scenery Hill — involved."

The 105-mile ride, which was open to the public, began with registration at Waynesburg Yamaha and concluded at Tradesmen's Inn, with several stops in between.

The evening ended with a complimentary dinner at the inn and music was provided by "JJ the DJ" of Scenery Hill.

In addition to the ride, family friend Becky Cain sold "Cookie Lee" jewelry and held a 50/50 drawing, in which all proceeds were donated to the cause.

In all, a total of over \$450 was donated to the local SIDS of PA chapter, while another portion of the proceeds was used to help pay for funeral expenses.

The donation was presented on Monday to Eileen Carlins, director of support and education for SIDS of PA.

"We are very grateful for this donation and for the support of Shylynn's family and friends," Carlins said. "Being a non-profit agency, it's no secret that generous donations like this help keep



Friends and family of Shylynn Elizabeth Roberts recently presented the local chapter of S.I.D.S. of PA with a donation raised from a benefit ride that was held in Shylynn's honor on July 18. Proceeds from the ride were divided between funeral costs and the S.I.D.S. chapter. Shylynn passed away in April at the age of three months from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Pictured (l. to r.): Terry Wise; Debbie Kesner, Shylynn's grandmother; Mike Basinger; Jessica L. Kesner, Shylynn's mother; Ed Montanari; Eileen Carlins, SIDS of PA, director of support and education; and Jerrod Dunker, owner of Tradesman's Inn. (Photo by Steve Barrett)

our mission going. We strive to do whatever we can to help families of SIDS victims."

Debbie Kesner said she was pleased with the event's success and anticipates that the fundraiser will become an annual event.

"We definitely want to hold it again next year, and we want to make it even bigger and better," she said. "From here on out, all the money that we raise through this benefit run will

be given to the SIDS chapter.

"And, we encourage family members of other children who have lost their lives to SIDS to participate in our future rides," she added. "This is a special way to honor the families...and to remember our babies."

She also thanked the many businesses, organizations and individuals who helped make "Let's Ride 2009" a success.

"We would not have been able to hold this ride without the love and support from people in our communities," she said. "From the bottom of our hearts, we thank them. For honoring Shylynn, because she's the most important part of all of this."

*(For more information about the local chapter of SIDS of PA, go online at [www.sids-pa.org](http://www.sids-pa.org) or call 1-888-721-CRIB.)*