

# Heartland Heat

## Helping Fire Victims In Need

Story and photos by James Pratt

On a cold January night, a sudden fire turned the world upside down for the Richardson family. Forced out of their home into an unfamiliar city, this family of 5 had nowhere to turn. Most of their belongings charred to a crisp, so they took refuge in a friend's house until finding an apartment for rent a few days later. No clothes, no furniture, not even a television, they had no choice but to start over as best they could. At least they had each other – and unbeknownst to them, the thoughts of fantastic group of motorcyclists.

Dressed in street-worn black leather and riding thundering Harley Davidson motorcycles,



some people in the Walmart parking lot might have thought trouble was brewing. But they soon discovered a group of hard riding – yet big hearted – firefighters were descending on the giant supercenter not for trouble, but to purchase little girls shoes, a young boy's underwear, a teenager's Levi's, and a mother's sweater. Not to mention a new television set, a few games, and several shopping carts full of bedsheets, blankets, and clothing.

I discovered the Heartland Heat chapter of the Wind and Fire Motorcycle Club over Christmas, when they volunteered time to help the Salvation Army distribute food after the "Toy's for Tots" drive. Quiet and unassuming, I soon learned these leather-faced riders had hearts of gold. Comprised of local OKC metro area firefighters who love and ride Harley Davidson motorcycles, this group of local heroes quietly hold fundraisers throughout the year to help fire victims who may be without a home, without insurance and without family and friends to help in their time of need

– Steve Capps, President of Heartland Heat, calls them "the have nots".

The fundraisers are held at area motorcycle events during the year such as OKC Thunder Roadhouse "Thunder Run". Heartland Heat members man vendor booths at no cost, and encourage other motorcyclists attending the event to donate to their cause. Every penny of the money raised is used to help fire victims such as the Richardsons.

As we left the Walmart parking lot, I followed the Heartland Heat riders, thinking about



how privileged I am to know such a cool group of motorcyclists. Turning into a nearby apartment complex, the deep throaty rumble from their Harley's chromed exhaust reverberate throughout the complex, announcing to bystanders that "the cavalry is here".

The group gathers up bags of clothing, while two riders grab the new 32" TV and an Xbox game console from the back of accompanying pickup truck. At first I thought it was a bit odd to be providing a TV and game console, but I soon learned that was just what a family needed – entertainment to take their minds off the disaster that had befallen them. Obviously Heartland Heat members had done this many times before and knew what it took to bring a bit of normalcy back to a displaced family's home.

Seeing the excitement and gratitude of the Richardson family, I quickly understood just why this group of hard core motorcyclists devote so much time and effort into their club. Being the modest riders they are, Heartland Heat member Matt Capshaw was sure to tell the Richardsons that the gifts were not just from Heartland Heat, but from all their motorcycling friends who had donated money to help out with their charity efforts.

After gracious thank you's and multiple hugs, the group paused for a shot with the Richardson family in front of their Harley Davidson's. It was with a feeling of great pride that I watched as this great group of motorcyclists thumbed the start switches on those big v-twin's, bringing Milwaukee's best to life in a deep "thump-thump-thump, and then slowly ride out of the parking lot, leaving hope and joy in their wake.



**Shadow® Spirit™ 750**

**IT'S ALWAYS COOLER IN THE SHADOWS.**

Looking for the coolest new middleweight cruiser on the road? Then check out the 2007 Honda Shadow Spirit 750. With a super-low 25.7-inch seat height (the lowest of any of our 750-class bikes), light weight, and plenty of V-twin torque power. Check it out now at your Honda Dealer.

MSRP \$3,999. Dealer price may vary. ©2006 Honda Motor Co., Ltd. All rights reserved. Honda, Shadow Spirit, and Spirit are trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. in the U.S.A. and other countries. Honda is a registered trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. in the U.S.A. and other countries. Honda is a registered trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. in the U.S.A. and other countries. Honda is a registered trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. in the U.S.A. and other countries.

PERFORMANCE FIRST

**DESIGNED TO STIR YOUR SENSES**

**BURGMAN 400**

MSRP \$2,999. Dealer price may vary. ©2006 Suzuki Motor Corp. All rights reserved. Suzuki, Burgman, and Burgman are trademarks of Suzuki Motor Corp. in the U.S.A. and other countries. Suzuki is a registered trademark of Suzuki Motor Corp. in the U.S.A. and other countries. Suzuki is a registered trademark of Suzuki Motor Corp. in the U.S.A. and other countries. Suzuki is a registered trademark of Suzuki Motor Corp. in the U.S.A. and other countries.

**Green Country Cycle City**  
BROKEN ARROW, OK

West of the Elm Place Exit on the BA Expressway

**LARGEST ACCESSORY & APPAREL INVENTORY IN OKLAHOMA!**

**Motorcycle/ATV Accessories**

- Performance Products
- Riding Apparel
- Chrome
- Helmets
- Leather Boots
- Saddle Bags

Mon-Fri 10am-7pm  
Sat 9am-6pm

[www.gchonda.com](http://www.gchonda.com)

918-317-0400 or  
918-258-4774