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## **Volunteers bring Christmas to county elderly**

*By Kristin Latty*

CENTRE — Weiss Lake Southern Cruisers recently held Christmas for the Elderly at a local nursing home facility. The idea for the event came to Southern Cruisers member Hal Wilson during the summer when the group got together to brainstorm ideas for hosting an event in the community.

“Hal came up the idea of maybe some of us dressing up and visiting residents at Cherokee County Health and Rehabilitation Center (CCHRC) for Halloween and again at Christmas,” said Cruiser and event volunteer Steve Wilson.

Although the Halloween plans fell through, fellow Cruisers Ray and Pat Gardener got the ball rolling for Christmas. They collected over \$1,000 from the businesses and individuals in the community, plus enough presents for 140 residents. Local school children eagerly decorated the gift bags.

“They did a fantastic job of cutting out Santa Clauses and drawing Christmas scenes on all the bags,” Steve Wilson said of the students. “Have you ever tried to wrap 140 Christmas gifts in one evening? As it turns out, if you have 15 volunteers, the job gets easier.”

CCHRC Operations Administrator John Boggs, Activities Director Kim Hayes and members of her staff assisted the Southern Cruisers at the event Dec. 16. They gave 10 residents with no nearby family special individual gifts and visited the rooms of all the residents with the rest.

“My hats off to these people,” said Steve Wilson. “It is hard to come up with the words to describe the appreciation evident on the faces we visited. It was a very heart-moving experience for this old biker.”

Wilson said the day was complete when a little 97-year-old lady climbed onto one the Cruiser member's Big Dog chopper. They had 15 bikes and 20 members take part in the ride, even though the temperature was around 37 degrees.

Wilson said the Southern Cruisers are grateful to all 80 members of their chapter, along with the Wingmen Motorcycle Club, Danny's Builder

Supply, 10¢ and More, J&W Cycles, 411 Dollar Store employees, Midway, Cedar Bluff Piggly Wiggly, Biker 411, Cedar Bluff School first and second grade students, Gaylesville first grade students and the Glencoe Middle School Library for helping make the day for the CCHRC residents.

“I think this is something we'll be doing every year from now on,” said Steve Wilson. “I think we enjoyed it even more than the folks we met at CCHRC.”