

Children take over Round-Up Arena

Kids with special needs got a taste of the cowboy life at Children’s Rodeo

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — For Angie Betts, Thursday is the best day of Round-Up week. The Adams resident — who’s been attending Round-Up for more than two decades — watched her daughter, Isabelle, 9, participate in the 35th annual Children’s Rodeo at the Round-Up Grounds.

“A lot of these kids don’t get the opportunity to participate in these sort of activities,” Betts said.

When slack cleared out of the arena Thursday morning, the hourlong Children’s Rodeo — organized for children ages 5 to 10 with special needs — took over. More than 50 kids took part in the event. The arena was a sea of rosy pinks, thanks to the annual Tough Enough to Wear Pink fundraiser that takes place on Round-Up Thursdays.

Betts said her daughter watched her brother participate in the rodeo last year and joined in for the first time this year. She said one of the hardest things for some children with special needs is watching other kids participate in something they can’t.

“This is an opportunity for them to shine,” she said.

Each child was partnered with an assistant volunteer, and a cowboy or cowgirl to walk them through a wide array of rodeo activities. Volunteers included area FFA members, Round-Up contestants and Intermountain Education Service District employees.

Frank Rendon, who owns Legendary Longhorns, brought four of his steers — Showgun, Shotgun, Winchester and Rawhide — out to the Children’s Rodeo for kids to ride.

“I knew these guys were bombproof,” Rendon said.

He’s been coming to the Children’s Rodeo for about five years from Sweet Home in Linn County.

“This is part of Western tradition. Kids see steers as these big animals. They learn they are majestic, gentle giants,” Rendon said.

Children also had the chance to participate in other activities like roping a hay-



Memphis Jones, a student at Sam Boardman Elementary School, rides a horse with the help of his cowboy, Kenzie Hansell, during Thursday’s Children’s Rodeo.



A young cowgirl takes a ride on a faux bull with the help of her cowboy during Thursday’s Children’s Rodeo at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena.



Kindergartner Miguel Lozano gazes into the eyes of a goat during Thursday’s Children’s Rodeo at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena.

bale steer, riding in a horse-drawn carriage, petting goats and practicing Native American drumming.

Courtney Carter, mother of 5-year-old Brandon, enjoyed taking her son to

the Children’s Rodeo for the first time now that he’s old enough.

Brandon attends Pendleton Early Learning Center, where Courtney first heard about the rodeo. Being from

the area, she said that Brandon had grown up around western culture.

Courtney said she was happy to see the support provided by the assistants and the cowboys and cowgirls.

“There are plenty of professionals around. It’s nice to sit back and watch, and let him enjoy things,” Courtney said.

The Children’s Rodeo is organized by the Inter-

mountain Education Service District in partnership with the Pendleton Round-Up, and is open to children from school districts in Baker, Umatilla, Morrow and Union counties.

Spokane teen wins Junior American Indian Beauty Pageant



Above: Pageant winners (from left) Faith Sobotta, 12, of Lapwai, Idaho; Adoniah Guillory, 11, of Spokane, Wash.; and Ava Ashleigh Zamudio, 13, of Corvallis, pose with Chief Gary Burke at the Junior Native American Beauty Pageant on Thursday at Roy Raley Park in Pendleton.

Left: Adoniah Guillory, 11, of Spokane, Wash., waves to the crowd during the Junior American Indian Beauty Pageant at Roy Raley Park on Thursday afternoon. Guillory finished first place in the contest.

Photos by Rachael Owen for the East Oregonian