

Rodeo Round Up

From volunteering to attending as a guest, the rodeo is a hit for Cy-Fair families

By Joy Atkinson and Marlena Solomon

From the first time you get to see a calf born in the baby section, chicks hatching in incubators, or your child ride a pony in the children's exhibit, memories of a lifetime are being made at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Shannon Warren of Cypress cherishes those memories of her children having fun at the HLS&R. "I will never forget the glee in my children's eyes the first time they got to see a baby chick peck his way out of his shell," she says. "Children never forget that special moment, nor do parents."

A Chance to Give Back

Cy-Fair families have many different reasons for making the HLS&R a part of their lives. Warren, who has served on the transportation committee for the past six years, jumped at the chance to volunteer when the opportunity presented itself. "Living in Houston for over 21 years and attending the rodeo, I always wanted to volunteer but due to my schedule it was not possible," she says. "I would see the volunteers each year when I would go to the rodeo with my children and I would think to myself, 'They always seem to have so much fun.'"

Soon, her daughter, Madeline, got interested in the rodeo, too, and will serve in the 2010 HLS&R as a third-year volunteer on the junior rodeo committee, formed in 2007 for committeemen's children between the ages of 16 and 20. "She got to see how much fun I had volunteering each year interacting with all the patrons that attended the rodeo, and she knew she wanted to join," says Warren.

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—Joe Bruce Hancock

Her two sons, Brandon, 12, and Lucas, 10, look forward to the day when they are old enough to follow in their mom's and sister's footsteps and volunteer at the HLS&R. "The rodeo has become an important part of my family's life, because my children get to see the importance of volunteering and what it means to help people," Warren says. "Although it is a lot of fun, they realize that without all the volunteers that give their time each year, the rodeo probably wouldn't exist."

Activity-Packed Family Fun

In tough economic times, many Houston families have been putting fun family activities on the backburner. To make the Rodeo experience more affordable, the HLS&R has brought back value days, which offer various savings to those who attend on the three Wednesdays during the run of the event. "The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo continually looks for new ways to bring affordable, family-fun entertainment to our visitors," says HLS&R General Manager Joe Bruce Hancock.

For \$10 per person on Wednesdays, you receive admission to Reliant Park and a concert ticket in the upper level of the stadium for feature artists such as Dierks Bentley on March 3, Rascal Flatts in conjunction with Salute to Our Troops Day on March 10, and Gary Allan on March 17, in addition to the championship rodeo. For visitors who don't want to attend the concert or rodeo events, value days offer free admission for seniors 60 and over and children 12 and under, \$5 general admission to Reliant Park, free or reduced parking, and shuttle service up until 3 p.m. There will



Catch cowboys competing in rodeo events like bull riding



Kids can learn more about farm and ranching life in Kids Country



In Mutton Bustin', kids compete to see who can ride a sheep the longest



Photos courtesy of Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo



Little cowboys and cowgirls can participate in fun activities like line dancing at the kids' country stage



Horse enthusiasts of all ages can put their skills to the test in a variety of events



Enjoy family time during Rodeo Houston with a variety of concerts, activities, and events



The livestock show is a great way for kids to see farm animals up close

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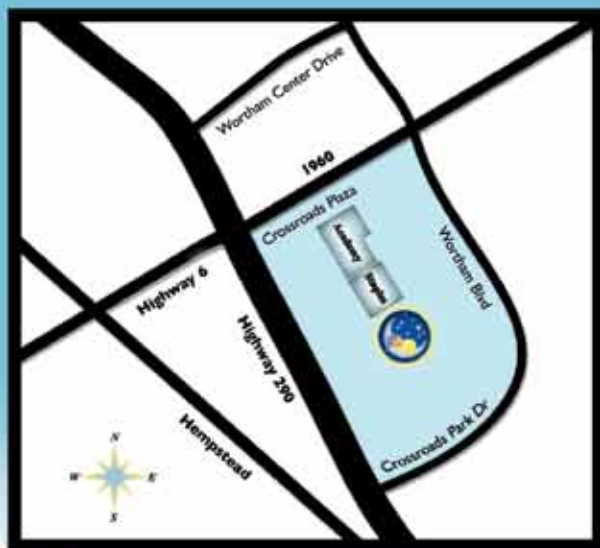
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Rodeo clowns provide distractions in the ring while amusing the crowd



Students who raise animals can earn scholarships in the livestock show

also be discounts at various food and merchandise booths on value days.

For Little Cowboys and Cowgirls

For Cy-Fair families with younger children, the Kids Country Carnival offers activities for kids ages 5-12, since some rides at the main carnival are not suitable for younger children. Entertainment includes crazy animal races, the play Farmyard Follies, the Kids Country Stage with sing-along songs, animal acts, and a petting zoo. Little cowboys and cowgirls can also test their luck on the mechanical bull or take a leisurely pony ride.

Entertainment for Everyone

Along with the traditional rodeo events and competitions families have come to know and love, the HLS&R concert line-up has become a highlight of the event. Featured artists include Dierks Bentley, The Jonas Brothers, Tim McGraw, Rascal Flatts, Brad Paisley, Gary Allan, and Brooks and Dunn. When selecting music performers, HLS&R sends surveys to rodeo staff members and volunteers. Concert tickets range in price from \$16 to \$300.

Every year, the HLS&R sees people of all ages from all over the Houston area. With a range of events, Rodeo Houston seeks to offer a fun outing for the whole family. Hancock likes the rodeo competitions and seeing fellow Houstonians enjoy the show. "It's amazing to see the crossroads of people that show up," he says. The HLS&R will be held at Reliant Stadium March 2-21. CFM

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Special Rodeo Days

★ **March 5**
Black Heritage Day

★ **March 14**
Go Tejano Day

★ **March 2-9**
International Days

★ **March 4**
Ladies' Night Out

★ **March 3, 4, & 9**
Lil' Rustlers Rodeo

★ **March 10**
Salute to Our Troops