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RODEO ROCK STAR

Red Bluff teacher is barrel racer, Round-Up competitor

Red Bluff, Calif. (March 13, 2017) – Kaillee Hamre is somewhat of a rock star in her own classroom.

The fourth grade teacher at Bidwell Elementary in Red Bluff, Calif. is also a cowgirl, a barrel racer who will compete at the Red Bluff Round-Up in April.

And because she's a cowgirl, and for many kids, the only cowgirl they know, kids she doesn't even know will greet her in the school hallways, and tell her they love her horse.

It all started last year when Hamre brought her students, then the second and third grade class, to the Round-Up to watch her compete. She made her barrel racing run in slack, the extra competition that takes place during the day, so the students made a field trip out of it. She and the students visited after her run, and she brought her horse so students could see it and they could talk about the equipment – saddle, reins, spurs, boots, and hat – that she uses in barrel racing.

It was a hit, she said. Students sat in the stands and cheered for her as she competed. "They thought it was so neat that they knew somebody who was doing that. They had so much fun." Her students chanted her name, hollering for Mrs. Hamre, so that "a couple of people said, 'Well, I see you brought your students,'" Hamre said.

Hamre and her husband, AJ, live in Los Molinos, and AJ visited her students as well last year. A bull rider, he competed at last year's Round-Up but has retired from the sport and won't be competing this year.

Students love to hear how she and AJ did on Monday mornings. "Every time we come back from a rodeo, I'll show them the video (from the weekend's competition). They think it's cool."

Attending the Round-Up is a real treat for her students, Hamre said. The Round-Up gives tickets students who participate in the Cowboys and Kids program, and she said several of her kids came to the rodeo that night. The Round-Up is "one of the biggest rodeos in California and the nation, and it was neat to expose them to an element of it."

Hamre, who is in her ninth year of teaching and third year in Red Bluff, says she competes at about 30 rodeos a year, mostly in the summers. She and her husband used to compete at the same

rodeos until he retired. “We are weekend warriors,” she said, “because of our jobs.” AJ is a territory manager for a heavy equipment company.

This year, spring break falls on the same dates as the Round-Up, so Hamre won’t be bringing her class to it. But she’s hoping some of them will be in the audience to cheer her on. “I’ll spread the word and recruit some students to come.”

The Red Bluff Round-Up is April 21-23 at the Tehama District Fairgrounds. Tickets range in price from \$14 to \$30 and are available online at www.RedBluffRoundup.com, at the gate, and through the Round-Up office at 530.527.1000. For more information, visit the website or call the office.

Performances of the Round-Up kick off at 7 pm on April 21, 2:30 pm on April 22, and 1:30 pm on April 23.

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Cutline: Kaillee Hamre, barrel racer and teacher at Bidwell Elementary School in Red Bluff, Calif., talks to her second and third grade students at the 2016 Red Bluff Round-Up. The students were treated to a field trip to watch their teacher compete in the barrel racing. Photo by Ruth Nicolaus.

Cutline: Kaillee Hamre, Los Molinos, Calif., makes a barrel racing run at the 2016 Red Bluff Round-Up. The cowgirl, also a fourth grade teacher, took her students to the rodeo last year to see the barrel racing. Photo by Hubbell Photos.