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For the Red Bluff Round-Up

A HELPING HAND

Red Bluff resident loves Round-Up, volunteers her time

Red Bluff, Calif. (February 10, 2020) – It takes a lot of people to make the Red Bluff community’s biggest week of the year happen, and Kelley Dolling’s smiling face and voice is just one of those people.

With smiling eyes and an enthusiastic spirit, she coordinates the several hundred volunteers who turn out to put on the North State’s biggest rodeo, the Red Bluff Round-Up.

A native Red Bluffian, she grew up attending the Round-Up but just began her time as volunteer coordinator for the event, which celebrates its ninety-ninth birthday this year.

“I grew up going to the rodeo,” she said. “My parents were born and raised here, so I come from a long line.”

Two years ago, John Trede, a good friend of her father-in-law, Tod Dolling, asked her if she’d be interested in organizing the volunteers. “You have your hands in a lot of pots,” he said, “and you know a lot of people.”

So she accepted the job, and works to coordinate volunteers for a variety of roles at the Round-Up.

The biggest spot needing volunteers is for the token booths. Rodeo goers purchase tokens to be used to buy alcohol at the Round-Up. She works to get help in five token booths scattered around the arena. She also lines up help to sell tokens at the Saturday night dance, which this year features Casey Donahew).

Not-for-profit organizations are offered the chance to work the token booths and are given a donation by the Round-Up for their labor.

Last year, Dolling made the token booths more fun and exciting to work. Awards were given for the token booth with the best decoration and the booth with the most spirit.

The groups manning the booths: the American Cancer Society, the Red Bluff Union High School Sober Grad committee, and the 20-30s Clubs of Red Bluff and Redding, decorated their booths in whatever way they wanted: with glitter cowboy hats, bandanas, cowboy decorations, and matching shirts for workers. The Soroptimist/Big Splash Project worked the Saturday night dance.

This year the booths will be manned by volunteers from these groups: the Boy Scouts' parent groups, Buster's Paw Prints, Red Bluff High School Sober Grad; American Cancer Society, and the Soroptimist/The Big Splash Project (for the Saturday night dance.)

It's a great way to get into the spirit of the Round-Up, Dolling said, and a way to make it more fun for rodeo fans, too.

The Round-Up brings people together in a town Dolling considers already having a strong sense of community. "That's why I love this town so much," she said. "There's this common collective unity, and everybody joins forces for the greater good."

Dolling has always loved the Round-Up. When she began dating her husband, Travis, she sat with him in his office's box seats at the Round-Up, "and my love for him went up even more," she joked.

"I always look forward to April (and the Round-Up) so much. It's like Christmas to me. I love it so much and I wanted to give back any way I could."

The 99th annual Red Bluff Round-Up is April 17-19, 2020. Performances begin at 7 pm on April 17, at 2:30 pm on April 18, and at 1:30 pm on April 19. Tickets are on sale online at www.redbluffroundup.com and range in price from \$16 to \$35.

For more information, visit the website or call the Round-Up office at 530.527.1000.

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Cutlines:

Travis and Kelley Dolling pose together at the Red Bluff Round-Up. Long-time fans and attendees of the Round-Up, Kelley is volunteer coordinator for the event. Photo courtesy Kelley Dolling.

Volunteers with the Red Bluff High School Sober Grad organization pose outside of their drink token booth at the 2019 Round-Up. Their booth was voted the best decorated and most spirited for last year's rodeo. Photo courtesy Kelley Dolling.