

HEARD & SCENE

Children Get In on the Hamptons Parties



There were inflatable wrecking balls and obstacle courses at the Family Day Wild, Wild West Carnival presented by the National Women's Division of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

BY MARSHALL HEYMAN



EAST HAMP-TON—Why should adults get to have all the fun in the Hamptons? That's right, they really shouldn't. Which explains the advent of the outdoor fundraising carnival.

You know, the kind that's sponsored by a private aviation corporation, with lots of miniature bottles of coconut water and kosher sweet potato fries, and the potential to see Christie Brinkley or the actress Kelly Rutherford, of "Gossip Girl," taking a ride down a giant slide.

Parents aren't left to their own devices. Besides plenty of junk food to nosh on and the requisite screaming children to soothe, they can a) win stuffed Angry Birds toys for their brethren at the water shooting gallery and b) get a massage on the premises, the latter probably being the more tantalizing option.

As it happens, there are now two big summer Hamptons philanthropic family carnivals.

This year marked the third annual "Roar for a Cure" carnival thrown by the Max Cure Foundation, a nonprofit devoted to funding pediatric cancer causes, including at Memorial Sloan Kettering. (It was sponsored by Town Residential, a real-estate company, and took place on the grounds of the East Hampton Indoor Tennis Club.) The afternoon was also dedicated to the memory of Katy Stewart of Sag Harbor, who lost her battle with hepatoblastoma, a rare form of liver cancer, in December 2010.

The chairman of the Max Cure Foundation is David Plotkin, a financier who lives in Manhattan and Amagansett and was inspired by his 8-year-

old son Max's battle with a rare form of B-cell lymphoma. Max is now in remission, and the mascot of the organization, Lion Max, is named after him because he is "big and furious," Mr. Plotkin explained.

"Our theme is to 'be brave,'" Mr. Plotkin added. "So we had things like obstacle courses and boot camps."

One thing you see at these carnivals in the Hamptons are really over-the-top bouncers. These are not the "Moonwalks" you might have been in as a kid, or even your typical Bouncy Castle. At Roar for a Cure, near the bucking bronco and the mini-mini golf, there was a climbing wall and a bouncer that was safari-themed.

Meanwhile, at the 22nd Annual Family Day Wild, Wild West Carnival, presented by the National Women's Division of Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Net Jets at the Ross School, there was some type of inflatable wrecking ball bouncer as well as an inflatable obstacle car course. There were also things for children who don't like bouncers, or who occasionally need a break from them, like a hula hoop and watermelon eating contest, though not at the same time.

The Wild West theme has stuck, said the philanthropist Jackie Harris Hochberg, who has been one of the event's chairs for six years, because "it just fits out in the Hamptons. You're in a big field." Guests are encouraged to wear cowboy boots and hats, the buffet is called the "chuck wagon" and the Port-a-potties are "outhouses."

"Every year we try to bring in new activities," Ms. Harris Hochberg explained. "This year we have a Knicks basketball toss and a Knicks city dancer doing clinics with the girls."



In addition, "we try to bring in new jumpy castles. You just pump them up and you're good to go."

New York Fun Factor is the events company responsible for producing both the Wild West Carnival and the Roar for a Cure. "We're not limited to carnivals," said Cal Nathan, the owner of NYFF, which was at one time called New York Fun Factory. The company produces private parties such as bar mitzvahs, corporate events (like IBM's coming 100th anniversary at the Metropolitan Opera House) and university projects at schools like NYU and Hofstra. "But in the city there's no space. You're more constrained."

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As for trends in bouncers, "being in the entertainment business, you have to turn over your inventory," Mr. Nathan explained. "You want to carry the latest and newest. It's like clothing. Every year they come out with new fashions."

"Kids get more sophisticated. And as they get more jaded, you need to keep things more exciting. They want something bigger and better," Mr. Nathan continued. "In the olden days, kids were happy in a regular bouncer. Today they want to see a bounce and a slide and some obstacle course. And the obstacle courses are larger and grander. They're demanding that."



Clockwise from above left: Jackie Harris Hochberg with Amanda Poses; Sebastian, Luis Felipe, Gabriella and Anna Pinheiro on the slide; Tyler, Zachary, Alexi, David and Stephanie Winston Wolcott; Kenny and Shoshana Dichter; and Mitch and Nina Renner Davidson with Eliana, Gabriella and Joshua



Left: David and Richard Plotkin (top) and Max and Antemarie Plotkin. Above: Charlie and Lauren Walk and Kelly Rutherford with Lion Max



From top: Justin/Patrick McMillan (4)

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MAX CURE

The Spinners Roared

BY JACK GRAVES

Romaine Gordon of the B-East Fitness Studio said following Saturday afternoon's spin at Amagansett Square to benefit the Max Cure Foundation, that given the brief time she had to put the event together, it had, thanks largely to her staff of instructors and college and high school kids, gone off quite well. "In the beginning, we thought of bringing the [ReelRyder] bikes to the beach, but settled on the square. It seemed to be the perfect spot — we wanted to call attention to the cause," she said. "I rode horses as a child and I remember the gymnastics we had, so we added a free Be Brave adventure course for the children. Jim Kennedy built all the obstacles. I found a 'spider web' that they could crawl under, and I got ideas from our own Boot Camp. We made sure it was easy and safe."

Gordon's spinners, numbering around 70, donated \$75 per hour to Max Cure, whose founders, David Plotkin and his father, Richard, have been working assiduously since 2008 to underwrite efforts to provide less toxic treatment for pediatric cancers and, ultimately, of course, to find cures.

David Plotkin's 8-year-old son, Max, after whom the foundation is named, was found four years ago to have a rare form of lymphoma in his right forearm after he had fallen while playing ball with his grandfather.

A seven-minute video that the spinners watched traced Max's ordeal — how his father and mother, Annemarie, had come to learn the bad news, initially through X-rays in which the bone appeared to be covered by "a curtain of moths," and how they and David's father resolved not to give in, but to fight back, not only for Max, who has been in remission for the past two years, but for all the other children in the country who have been similarly stricken.

When the video had ended, David Plotkin introduced, to applause, his handsome brown-haired son, whom he

called his hero, and who said, "Thank you all for coming — it means a lot to me."

Gordon said afterward that "we had 53 bikes and when, about halfway through, 10 or 15 got off, they were immediately replaced. As it turned out, we had more who wanted to participate than we were able to accommodate. We made \$5,000 through raffle prizes generously donated by local businesspeople ... I think we raised in the ballpark of \$16,000 for the foundation, and we sold tickets to the [Aug. 20] carnival too."

"In three and a half years, the foundation has raised more than \$2 million," said Max's grandfather, Richard, a longtime Amagansett summer resident and retired lawyer who has now "devoted [his] life" to the cause.

"Usually lymphoma is in the tissue, not in the bone, which made Max's case rare," he continued, adding that one of his legs had been attacked as well. "A hematologist at Ohio State identified the type of cancer it was and he went through two years of heavy-duty chemotherapy between the ages of 4 and 6. He's in remission now — they check him once a year. Hopefully, he will continue in remission."

In reply to a question, Max's grandfather said, "He's an active, regular little boy, in the third grade at the Dalton School, doing everything. He won't be playing football, but he can do noncontact sports."

"In September, on the 24th, he and his father are going to address a Congressional panel that is studying pediatric cancers and their treatments' side effects. We asked Max what it would take to get him there, and he said, 'Two weeks at Disney World.' So be it!"

"Each year, 12,500 children are diagnosed — 80 percent survive," said the elder Plotkin, adding that grant money the foundation has earmarked for pediatric cancer research has been yielding some promising results. "Pediatric can-

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With music thumping, stationary cyclists were pumping Saturday at Amagansett Square, their exertions dedicated to the Max Cure Foundation. Jack Graves

Spinners Roared

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cer in this country is incredibly underfunded, but it can be shown that sufficient advances are being made through private foundations, then the National Institutes of Health will take over."

The foundation's carnival this Saturday, from 2 to 6 p.m. at the East Hampton Indoor/Outdoor Tennis Club in Wainscott, is being dedicated to the memory of Brigid and Jim Stewart's late 12-year-old daughter, Kary, who died of a rare form of liver cancer at the turn of the year.

The Plotkin and Stewart families, who might not otherwise have met, were brought together as the result of their children's struggles with cancer, and in short order became fast friends. This Roar's for Kary! will include a rock wall, mini-golf games, inflatables, an auction, a raffle, basketball, live music, and a country-style picnic.



Max Plotkin, 8, is his father's hero, as well as the hero of his grandfather, Richard, who's shown with him above. Jack Graves