



Blue Bars



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...on the front cover

CORVETTES AND ST JUDE

A long discussed idea for an exciting fund raising Corvette Drive culminated in the first ever Corvette Drive from Peoria to Memphis May 3rd and 4th 2012.

The event is modeled after the very successful, 10 year, St Jude Harley Ride from Peoria to Memphis.

The first annual St Jude Corvette Drive is an event for St Jude, initiated and endorsed by Mid-Illinois Corvette Club and underwritten by Gary Uftring of Uftring Chevrolet in Washington, IL.

Mike McCoy, Peoria County Sheriff, Peoria, IL, and member of St Jude Research Children's Hospital Board of Directors along with Angie Wiebler, St Jude run/ride/drive manager, worked with Sandy Arnold and her committee from Mid-Illinois Corvette Club to organize the St Jude Corvette Drive.

The purpose of the drive was to raise funds for St Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN. For each car that participated, the only requirements were to raise \$1500 and, of course, drive a Corvette. If you were a driver without a 'co-pilot' you only had to raise \$1000.

In Sheriff McCoy's words, "all you have to do is raise your money, show up for the drive and expect to have a good time." WE DID! What a special way to enjoy your Corvette, meet other Corvette enthusiasts and raise funds for a very worthwhile cause.

Thirty seven Corvettes, having raised a phenomenal \$50,000, left Uftring's in Washington, IL on the morning of May 3rd 2012 for the seven hour trip to Memphis. There were members from the Mid-Illinois Corvette Club, Washington, IL, Mid-West Corvette Club, Milan, IL and several Corvette enthusiasts who participated without a club affiliation. The event was open to anyone with a Corvette.

There were gas stops, potty breaks and a lunch stop along the way. The Corvette caravan had a police escort from Peoria to Memphis. The caravan was met outside Memphis by the Shelby County, Police Department motorcycle patrol to escort us the rest of the way to our hotel in Memphis. They stopped traffic at all the intersections for a 50 mile stretch so that the Corvettes were not separated and we all arrived together at the hotel. Quite an exciting show of riding expertise was displayed by these motorcycle officers in getting through and stopping traffic for the Corvettes. These guys are true professionals in every aspect!

After arriving at the hotel and getting settled in, we experienced some of the local color of Memphis; Beale Street, southern cooking at the ever famous Blues City Cafe, trolley rides, Graceland, etc. The following morning, May 4th 2012, we drove to St Jude Children's Hospital where we had an orientation session in the auditorium. Sheriff McCoy introduced research doctor Elizabeth Stewart, a close friend of a former St Jude patient. She spoke to our group about her role/job in the research department, quite an awesome young lady. Richard Gilbertson – MD, PH.D and director of Comprehensive Cancer Center spoke to us about the latest research and technology in treating childhood cancers. He was so good at explaining their approach to diagnosing and treatment of the kids. He paralleled diagnosing problems with and fixing our Corvettes to diagnosing and trying to 'fix' the kids. What a presentation!! We then took guided tours of the hospital. Afterward, the children that were able participated in a small car show. They viewed the Corvettes, sat in the, honked horns and had the most wonderful time pretending they were driving. One little girl told a Mid-Illinois Corvette Club member, "When I get well and grow up, I am working at this hospital and I'm buying a Corvette to bring here to show the kids". What an amazing outlook from a small child!

The whole experience was very humbling. To see these suffering children with the attitude that they know they will get better, is mind boggling. They know nothing of self-pity. We as adults can take a lesson from their strength and resilience.

Please look for information regarding the 5th annual St Jude Corvette Drive May 12 and May13, 2016. We will begin planning the 2017 St Jude Drive as soon as the 2016 event is completed.

We would love to share this experience with you! For more information, please go to the St Jude Drive website; stjudedrives.org.

**Submitted by Mourina Sweet
Mid-Illinois Corvette Club**

