

Rock super group to headline benefit concert

Mansfield man enlists friends to raise money for St. Jude.

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MANSFIELD — Just more than a year ago, Mansfield resident Randy Ryder simply was one of dozens of paying participants attending a rock 'n' roll fantasy camp in Hollywood.

Unlike the other campers, though, Ryder came away with friendships established with some of the music industry's notable rockers.

That connection led to Ryder co-hosting a VH1 Classic show in March in New York City. An accomplished guitarist who has nurtured a lifelong passion to play rock 'n' roll, Ryder and his new acquaintances took their musical bond a step further and Ryder created the organization TrueJams Charities Inc., which will be the driving force behind a proposed event to return music to the children of New Orleans.

While those plans are being finalized, Ryder and his TrueJams partners are looking at something more immediate to help children in need. They have decided on a benefit concert next month in Natchitoches with all proceeds going to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

Jude Jams 2007, as Ryder has tagged the event, will feature celebrity rock super group Scrap Metal, comprised of multiplatinum lead singers and frontmen such as Kelly Keagy of Night Ranger, Gunnar Nelson and Matthew Nelson, twin sons of rock 'n' roll legend Ricky Nelson, and Mark Slaughter of Slaughter.

Northwestern State University's Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity will co-host the concert.

"This event is an opportunity for our community to do something significant and great for the families and, especially, the children who rely on the charity of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for their life-saving and necessary care," said Alan Hardin, TKE faculty adviser.

Ryder, a Northwestern State alumnus who is technical director of nuclear cardiology with Cardiovascular Consultants LLP in Shreveport, said he knew Scrap Metal was the band that should headline the inaugural fundraiser. Band members share the dream of doing something special for St. Jude and Louisiana, he said.

"TrueJams was originally established as a charitable organization which creates unique musical experiences that bring rock 'n' roll dreams to life while raising money to support post-Katrina Louisiana," he said. "Jude Jams 2007 is a logical extension of this effort and is intended to further amplify the need for continued support of children everywhere, not just here in Louisiana.

If you go

WHAT: Jude Jams 2007.

WHEN: 7 p.m. Oct. 25.

WHERE: Prather Coliseum at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches.

ADMISSION: \$15. Tickets can be purchased at the NSU athletic ticket office and www.nsudemons.com or by calling (318) 357-4278.

TO JOIN SPONSORS OF JUDE JAMS 2007: Call Randy Ryder at (318) 393-8817 or send e-mail to truejams@yahoo.com or call Alan Hardin at (318) 609-6000 or send e-mail to hardina@nsula.edu.

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"I know St. Jude (Children's) Research Hospital was very instrumental in caring for post-Katrina children by arranging flights to pick up these brave children and their families who were battling two life-changing disasters," Ryder said. "We, as native Louisianans, need to recognize their efforts not only in monetary support, but also getting the word out St. Jude's cares and continues to care about our little ones."

Slaughter, who is on the TrueJams board of directors, added, "A unique chain of events, chance meetings and circumstances brought the band Scrap Metal and all involved in Jude James together to make a difference in a child's life. And I want to personally say thanks to all who care about what happens to these children.

"We have a great city, a perfect venue and a campus full of rock 'n' roll fans to help us give back to St. Jude. "» You know helping your fellow human beings doesn't have to be a downer; we can still throw a party and celebrate our freedoms while remembering those who need a helping hand."

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