

TULSA WORLD

Teams race 'bed-to-bed' to raise funds for Hospitality House

Inaugural event at ORU raises \$47,000 for Hospitality House of Tulsa.

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Rob Carlson (left), Kristin Pebsworth, Barbara Moschovidis, Wes Pebsworth (right) and Tina Sojin (on foreground gurney) from the law firm Gable Gotwals take part in a gurney race fundraiser at Oral Roberts University on Saturday. The event benefitted Hospitality House of Tulsa, which provides housing for families in medical crisis. MATT BARNARD/Tulsa World

Taking a break from fighting crime, some of the world's top superheroes stopped by at the Oral Roberts University campus Saturday to race hospital stretchers against teams from all over eastern Oklahoma.

They raced for prizes. They raced for bragging rights. But most of all, they raced for charity.

The Hillcrest Hospital Cushing Superheroes, consisting of Spider-Man, Superman, the Hulk, Iron Man and the Black Widow, competed against 13 other teams in the Route 66 Gurney Tourney, a fundraising event for Hospitality House of Tulsa.

The rules were simple. Two five-person teams, each pushing a highly decorated gurney (and one person riding), race across ORU's Lewis Field, competing in mini-games along the way. The team that makes it all the way to the finals and wins takes home the trophy.



“It was actually a last-moment thing through our boss,” said Rodney Wells, a Hillcrest employee donning a Spider-Man costume. “The president of our hospital recommended us, and we thought up our team and became the Superheroes.

“We chose to wear these costumes because superheroes fight crime. Well, we’re the superheroes who fight medical problems and stuff like that.”

Their first race saw them pitted against the Bed Bugs, a group of friends who signed up together. Although their name lacked intimidation factor, the Bed Bugs put up a tough fight for the Superheroes but were unable to prevail in the last straightaway.

The situation turned grim in the team’s matchup against Monroe Manor, a nursing facility in Jay. The Superheroes struggled to keep up at first, but a broken wheel on the Monroe Manor’s gurney allowed the heroes to take the lead.

Still huffing from the previous races, the Superheroes met their downfall in the semifinals against the Global Health Rafterers.

“The wheel locked up on us,” Wells said.

The team finished the race in good spirits, though, and pushed its faulty gurney to the finish line.

It’s not the winning that matters, said Kyle Sprangle, who sported a Superman costume. It’s raising money for those who need it.

Hospitality House of Tulsa, a faith-based organization, provides lodging, meals and other support services for families of inpatients in Tulsa-area hospitals that live at least 30 miles outside the city. The charity also serves outpatients coming from more than 50 miles to receive daily and weekly medical treatments.

Saturday’s Gurney Tourney raised \$47,627 for the Hospitality House, organization President and CEO Toni Moore said. Considering this was the first year for the event, Moore considered it a success and said the race will return next year.

“We’ve seen this kind of event at other places that work well, and we thought we would try it this year,” Moore said. “We had a great turnout.”

http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/teams-race-bed-to-bed-to-raise-funds-for-hospitality/article_eaba5b65-750e-5f6e-aaba-b8e0375a0570.html