

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOMETOWN AMBASSADOR

Phillipsburg woman loves her new town, benefits from rodeo funds

Phillipsburg, Kan. – July 17, 2023 - A Phillipsburg transplant is a walking billboard for her new hometown.

And she's also benefitted from Hope in the Heartland funds.

Laura Flores, who moved from Kansas City to Phillipsburg two years ago, was diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer in September of 2022.

In October of last year, the growth was removed, and in December, a port was placed in her chest, for her chemotherapy treatment. In May, she was done with her six months of chemo treatments. Each treatment included sitting at the hospital in Kearney or Alma for a couple of hours, then having chemo through a pump for the next 46 hours, at home.

In October, after surgery, Laura came home and opened the mail, seeing an envelope with Hope in the Heartland funds.

"I saw the check and thought, what in the world is this? I read the letter and immediately started bawling," she said. "I haven't lived here long, and it's one more thing that made me feel like this is where I belong."

She's always felt a sense of belonging in Phillipsburg. Laura had become good friends with Lacie Shields, another Phillipsburg resident, when the two lived in Kansas City. After Lacie moved back to Phillipsburg in February 2019, Laura visited her the next year. "I came to visit one weekend, and then it turned into another weekend, and another weekend, and I fell in love with the town, and then her brother," she said. She is engaged to be married to Derek Shields, Lacie's brother.

Laura loves Phillipsburg. "I really enjoy the slow pace here, and the community has just been amazing. I feel like for the very first time, in a long time, if not ever, that I feel like I'm home. I just love it. Everybody's been so amazing and friendly. It didn't take me any time at all to feel like I belonged here."

So far, she's only missed three weeks of work, due to recovery from surgery and procedure days to place the port and for chemo. Her workplace doesn't have medical leave, but with the Hope in the Heartland donation and private donations, she's able to pay her bills.

“With the donations I got, I was able to stay home. Without the (donated) money, I would have had to worry about bills, and I didn’t have to. That made me feel good.”

This year, “pink” night at the rodeo is Thursday, August 3. For every fan wearing pink to the rodeo that night, one dollar is donated to Hope in the Heartland, with matching funds by these local sponsors: A&A Distributing, Amber Wave, B&B Redimix, Inc., Farmers State Bank, Rodgers & Associates, and the Phillipsburg Rodeo Association.

Since the rodeo began its Tough Enough to Wear Pink night in 2006, over \$135,000 has been raised, with 100 percent of donations given out; none is held back for administrative costs.

The 94th annual Phillipsburg Rodeo is August 3-5. Rodeo performances start at 8 pm nightly. Tickets are on sale online at KansasBiggestRodeo.com and start at \$17 for adults and \$13 for children.

For more information, visit the website at KansasBiggestRodeo.com or call 785.543.2448.

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Cutline:

Cancer survivor Laura Flores, her fiancé Derek Shields, and the couple’s dogs. The Phillipsburg woman has benefitted from funds raised by Kansas Biggest Rodeo. Photo by Jacque Bretton.