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For the Red Bluff Round-Up

RODEO BUDDIES

Gerber bull rider, little boy find connection through rodeo

Red Bluff, Calif. (April 15, 2019) – A special little boy has a special friend at the Red Bluff Round-Up.

Takota McAllister, from Weed, is friends with bull rider Colby Demo, from Gerber.

But it's not just any friendship, but a special one.

Takota, who is nine years old, was born prematurely. His lungs do not work correctly; he's on oxygen around the clock, and he has an immune deficiency that limits how much he can be in public. His mom, Christina McAllister, home schools him to keep him away from the germs that can be found in school. Any infection he gets could be detrimental to his health. Sometimes when he's out with Demo, he wears his oxygen tank in a backpack.

Takota loves rodeo, and met his friend Colby at a rodeo in Oregon. Colby had Takota help him get ready to ride a bull, and when Colby won the bull riding, he gave the buckle to Takota.

They are fast friends. Colby and his buddies stop by to see Takota if they're in the area. Takota and his mom travel to Colby's rodeos when they're close, and a few months ago, Demo and his friends took the boy snowboarding.

Takota is all about rodeo and the western lifestyle, his mom said. "We bought him his first pair of Wranglers (jeans)," she said. "He wants to be a cowboy, one-hundred percent. He doesn't leave home without his cowboy hat."

Takota loves his rodeo friends, and Demo enjoys him. "If he's willing to learn and be a part of rodeo, we'll give him all the attention in the world," Demo said. "We'll let him see all the fun parts of rodeo." Takota loves the sport so much, he doesn't enjoy sitting with the spectators anymore. "He always tells me he doesn't want to sit in the stands," Demo said. "He wants to be in the back, where everything's going on."

Demo has learned life lessons from the boy. Being around Takota "has really humbled me up about a lot of stuff," he said. "There are things I'd be stressed out about that I had no control over. There's no sense to stress out about it because things can always be worse."

The boy has also caused Demo to change his perspective on life. "If he's smiling then I should be smiling because there's nobody going through what he's gone through."

And when Demo rides in Red Bluff, his friend Takota will be in the stands, cheering him on.

The Round-Up will be held this Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Tehama District Fairgrounds. Performances begin at 7 pm on April 19, at 2:30 pm on April 20 and at 1:30 pm on April 21. Tickets range in price from \$14 to \$30, with a handling fee, and can be purchased online at www.RedBluffRoundup.com or at the gate. For more information, visit the website or call the Round-Up office at 530.527.1000.

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Cutline:

Takota McAllister stands ready with a can of silly string, to spray during the Wild Ride at the 2018 Red Bluff Round-Up, as his friend, Colby Demo, a bull rider, kneels. The two have become good friends, and Takota dreams of being a cowboy when he grows up.

Bull rider Colby Demo gave one of his winning rodeo buckles to his friend Takota McAllister. Takota, who lives in Weed, Calif., has an immune deficiency and is on oxygen, due to complications from birth.