



Chowchilla Rotary Kids Day at the Fair

~by Jerry T. Belton —Approximately 22,000 hamburgers and 41 years later the Chowchilla Rotary Club is still entertaining the very special children of Madera County and part of Merced County.

In 1965, Bruce Pressley proposed to the Board of Directors that the Club take on the project of getting the Fair to let the “Special Kids” in early on the first day of the Fair and then provide them with a hot lunch. Each year schools in the area are contacted, reminded about this event, and invited to attend. The Kids come by car, van, and busses in the early morning hours on Thursday of the Fair. Rotarians, spouses, and volunteers assist in the job of putting



identifying markers on each of the children, teachers, aids, and parents as they enter the fairgrounds. This is to indicate that they are entitled to all the fair has to offer, for free!

The Kids are shown through the livestock barns, seeing the care and grooming of the various animals and with a chance to possibly touch them. The students showing at the Fair are great at answering all questions raised by the Kids and the people that accompany them. Next it’s carnival time, the games and rides are opened especially for the Kids, **it is their**



day. Then it’s on to the park where they enjoy a barbecued hamburger lunch with all the trimmings. During lunch the Wilson Middle School Spartan Band entertains them and the workers.

This year marks the 41st anniversary of this event. Over the years Bruce Pressly, Ken Perry, Len Brigance, and Jerry Belton have headed the Rotary Kids Days at the Fair. Francis Zwinge has always been the master barbeque chef.

The children, aids, teachers, and parents look forward to this event from year to year. One nine or ten year old remarked, “This is really people helping people”.

Service above self . . .

All Chowchilla Rotarians are very proud of this project. It doesn’t seem like getting the Fair to open and serving a bunch of hamburgers to a “bunch” of Kids is all that much, but don’t tell the Kids, they’ll argue with you.

