## Joining the Ride to Conquer Cancer

By Nelia Raposo Special to The IFP

Michael Joseph rides his bike once a year with one goal in mind: conquer cancer.

I don't train and the bike goes back in the closet when it s done, Joseph, 53, says.

Next month he and his buddies Cameron Johnstone and Tom Steller from the Georgetown Racquet Club, along with his brother-in-law Chris Beveridge of Ottawa, will ride over 200 kilometres from Toronto to Niagara Falls and back again.

They are taking part in the Enbridge Ride to Conquer Cancer, benefitting Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, June 11-12.

It's something they have done for years and it isn t likely they will stop anytime soon.

Originally, Joseph got involved to support a family member who has been cancer-free for a decade. Then the ride became even more personal when Joseph himself received a prostate cancer diagnosis. But he s been in the clear for last couple of years, he says.

Last year a close friend had breast cancer. I gave her my (riding) jersey. She had people write well wishes on it. I rode with it, washed it, framed it and gave it to her, Joseph says. I will be doing the same thing this year for a work colleague living with pancreatic cancer.

Joseph is 95 per cent of the way to reaching his fundraising goal of \$4,000. But he jokes that s a small sum compared to his riding mate Johnstones starting goal of \$25,000.

As part owner of Delta Bingo, Johnstone, 46, has a larger pool of people to tap for fundraising. Last year staff and clients of Delta Bingo halls helped him raise \$45,000.

The customers and staff are phenomenal, Johnstone says. I run a challenge. The hall that raises the most money gets a pizza party spon-



From left, Thomas Steller, Michael Joseph, Cameron Johnstone, Chris Beveridge. This group will be riding in the Enbridge Ride to Conquer Cancer benefiting Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, June 11-12. Submitted Photo

Johnstone lost both his parents to cancer. His mom passed away from stomach cancer when he was 17. Not long after, cancer would take his father s life too.

My mom would have survived if she were diagnosed today with the same illness, he says. She was diagnosed when I was 15. They removed her stomach and built her a new one out of her intestines but it did not work.

She was sick for a very long time without being diagnosed. The cancer spread. By catching it early you can save lives, Johnstone says.

As a father of three children under the age of 12 the last thing he wants is for them to experience being an orphan as he and his siblings did. When his mom died his brother was 18 and his sister was

I think it s important to teach your kids to get involved and help your community. They just think it is fun that they get to come and cheer dad on at the finish line, Johnstone says.

Funds from the Enbridge Ride to Conquer Cancer support personalized cancer medicine including research, treatment advances, education and new standards of care at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, according to a media release.

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