

Fundraiser to take cyclists from Toronto to Niagara Falls Locals Ride to Conquer Cancer

JENNIFER E. LUKAS
Special to The IFP

From downtown Toronto to Niagara Falls is anything but a leisurely bike ride.

But several Georgetown residents are undergoing the colossal journey for a colossal cause: 200 kilometres in two days... The Ride to Conquer Cancer.

Melissa Cheyne, Kim Bottos and her husband, Dave, are no strangers to long bike rides. All three have been involved in full-day races and rides all over Ontario. Most recently, they took part in a 60-kilometre ride from Paris, Ontario, to Ancaster.

But the June 20-22 ride is the first one that has really hit home for the cyclists.

"It's something that everyone I know can relate to, and it's just a really good cause," said Kim Bottos, who takes her two young children along in a side car when she trains for the ride.

And for the Bottos family, the disease hits especially close to home. Dave's mom was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in September, and Dave's boss— who told him about the ride— has been diagnosed with skin and lung cancer.

The Ride to Conquer Cancer aims to do just that: conquer cancer. All proceeds from the ride go toward the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. The facility is the biggest cancer research and treatment centre in Canada, and one of the five biggest, worldwide. Thousands of people are expected to take part in the Ride.

While Cheyne has been lucky enough that no one in her family has been diagnosed with cancer, she's still been touched by the disease.

A teacher at Maple Nursery School in Georgetown, she was most affected by a young child that she met on vacation.

"Just watching their family- they were doing everything they could and enjoying their time together," she said.

Her goal, she said, is to help children like the one she met, through the Princess Margaret Hospital.

"It allows families to use their money to do things as a family instead of spending money on treatment."

In addition to training, the three riders will spend the next couple weeks working to raise their combined goal of \$7,500 in donations. Interested parties can donate online at www.conquercancer.ca.

Other local riders include Justin Warner and Corey Carlton, both of Georgetown.

"In common with probably everyone else taking part in the Ride, my life has been touched by cancer— I had lost both my parents to the disease by the age of 33," said Warner.

"Neither of my two daughters have real memories of their grandparents, but my hope is that with the groundbreaking research going on at the Princess Margaret, funded by events like the Ride To Conquer Cancer, we can make a real difference to cancer sufferers now and in the future."

Normally a mountain biker to be found at weekends on the trails at Milton's Kelso Conservation Area, Warner is swapping his knobby tires for slick road ones.



Dave Bottos, wife Kim and Melissa Cheyne (rear left to right) will be taking part in the June 20-22 Ride to Conquer Cancer event. The Bottos's children, son Sammy, 16 months, and daughter Paige, 4, are lending their support to mom and day.

Photo by Jennifer E. Lukas

"I still have some way to go, both in my fundraising and training for the event, but I'm determined to reach my goals."

Warner has set a personal fundraising goal of \$2,500. To help him reach this goal, visit www.conquercancer.ca/goto/Justin.Warner to make a donation online or call 416-815-RIDE (7433).

Carlton's uncle Chris was diagnosed in February 2007 and moved in with Corey and his family in Georgetown. Over the next couple months Carlton and his family saw first-hand the devastating effects cancer has on the body.

Carlton will be using his uncle's old bike for the ride. He decided to take part in the ride after being shown the website by his sister Ashley who has signed up as a crew member, helping wherever needed on the race weekend. After just graduating from the University of Western Ontario with a Bachelor of Kinesiology Ashley decided to put her degree to use and volunteer for the race.

Carlton has set a personal fundraising goal of \$3,200. To help him reach this goal, visit www.conquercancer.ca to make a donation online or call (416) 815-RIDE (7433).



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