

# Trip raises \$50,000 so far

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
Special to *The Champion*

Mike and Ryan Leworthy are seeing Canada the hard way.

The father and son aren't viewing the nation from the comfort of their car or a tour bus, but from the top of two special hand-cranked bicycles.

Having crossed the Manitoba-Ontario border Saturday morning, the two are on the final leg of their cross-country tour to promote active living for all disabled Canadians.

This summer trek is being held in conjunction with the Leworthy's Link Foundation, now in its fourth year of operation.

"The tour started May 3 in Toronto. We biked our way to Halifax and then flew to Vancouver and made our way east again," said 21-year-old Ryan, during a telephone interview from Kenora Saturday evening. "Things are going great. We've had great weather for the second leg of the tour and have been getting a lot of support from the media."

With the help of two separate two-man crews, as well as Jennifer Leworthy (whose managing the Link Foundation these days) Mike and Ryan have raised more than \$50,000 so far in support of the disabled.

The elder Leworthy said donations are generally made after they leave a community, and that proceeds are still coming in from the Maritime provinces.

He added, "Now that we're back in our home province we're expecting a lot of support."

The duo have covered more than 4,000 kilometres in the past three months. They usually begin at 7 each morning and ride for five to seven hours.

"This works out to about 80 or 90 kilometres, and some days we're surpassing 100," Ryan explained.

The wheelchair bound athlete said he and his father suffered from fatigue during the first leg of the tour, due in part to heavy spring rains on the east coast.

The mountains of British Columbia offered another challenge, although beautiful weather and scenery more than made up for the rough terrain.

Along the way, they have conducted numerous



File photo by GRAHAM PAINE

**Ryan Leworthy underwent the usual vigorous training regimen in preparation for his latest fundraising challenge.**

interviews. They were profiled in the Winnipeg Sun last week and appeared on two Manitoba television talk shows.

Ryan said he's refined his message somewhat during the Link Foundation's latest fund-raising drive. He's not so much encouraging disabled people to become active anymore as he's showing them what sporting outlets are and should be available in their own community.

With the proceeds from the tour, Mike plans to start a non-profit manufacturing company that specializes in disabled athletic equipment.

The Leworthys will wrap up their tour Thursday, August 28 at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE).

They'll arrive in Milton August 27 and bike out of town the following morning with Mayor Gord Krantz and municipal councilors, as part of a special end-of-tour celebration.

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