



Health Awareness

Two Riders Go The Distance To Find The Cure For Diabetes

(NAPSA)—The fight against diabetes means something different for everyone—and for some, it means discovering the joy of cycling.

Often, personal health and family history influence a person's choice to participate in the American Diabetes Association's (ADA) annual Tour de Cure cycling event.

These reasons inspired riders Tom Leonard of Indiana and Eileen Nunley of Maine.

Together, along with 32,000 other cyclists, Leonard and Nunley took part in an event that provides more than a trophy at the finish line. Their finish line has a future goal in finding a cure—a cure for a disease that impacts nearly 21 million children and adults and is the fifth-leading cause of death by disease in the United States.

Leonard nearly became one of those statistics. Because of a condition known as empty sella syndrome, he gained a massive amount of weight. At 581 pounds, he relied on oxygen because of his body mass and was confined to a wheelchair because he was unable to walk far. He developed type 2 diabetes and recalls feeling as if he were “stuck in this body that was more or less dying.” Leonard knew he had to act, and he chose to start living. He underwent bariatric surgery and added exercise to his life.

During his recovery, Leonard rediscovered his joy of cycling, which he credits as helping manage his weight loss and diabetes. His joy of cycling led him to participate in the ADA's Tour de Cure cycling event.

In addition to being an avid cyclist, Leonard is also a Tour de Cure team captain and plans to



Tom Leonard poses during a ride.

ride 62 miles in support of the association. As Tom says, “This is a cause that directly affects my life.”

After losing nearly 350 pounds, Leonard is in control of his diabetes. He no longer requires oxygen or any cardiac or blood pressure medication.

Not all reasons to ride are driven by the health of the individual rider. Eileen Nunley participates in the Tour de Cure, which raises money toward finding a cure for the same disease that took the life of her father.

Nunley's father had been living with type 2 diabetes for 10 years, suffering from complications such as poor eyesight and congestive heart failure.

In 1996, she met a co-worker who was participating in ADA's Tour de Cure in Kennebunk, Maine. She was invited to join her co-worker's team and was happy to ride as a way of honoring the life of her father.

Nunley not only rides in the Kennebunk Tour de Cure, but she has expanded her efforts and travels to participate in the Mount



Eileen Nunley at a Tour de Cure.

Desert Island (Maine) ride as well. She explains that “the ride has become a special, annual connection to my father.” She has recruited other family members to participate in the ride to help find a cure.

In 2006, as team captain for teams in both the Kennebunk and Mount Desert Island rides, Nunley recruited over 30 riders. Together, her teams have raised over \$6,000 for the American Diabetes Association.

The Tour de Cure is a ride, not a race, that welcomes people of all experience levels to participate in a fun event to raise awareness about diabetes. Participants form teams, raise money and ride in an event with distances ranging from a few miles to challenging 100-mile “century” rides.

The 2007 Tour de Cure is sponsored by Gold's Gym, Performance Bicycles, LeMond Fitness, Discovery Health Channel and LeMond Racing Cycles—the official bicycle of the Tour de Cure. To learn more, call the American Diabetes Association at (800) DIABETES (800-342-2383) or register at www.diabetes.org/tour.