

Hello Friends,

On June 11 and 12, 2011, I took an “epic journey” (the Ride to Conquer Cancer’s words). That may sound a bit over the top, but cycling 221 km from Toronto to Niagara Falls over two days really is a voyage. The trip was an excuse to raise money for both the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation and CNETS Canada.

The weather forecast did not look good for Saturday starting around a week prior to the Ride, but I kept announcing to anyone who would listen, “it’s not going to rain!” After the Weather Network forecasted on Friday a “100% chance” of rain on Saturday, including thunderstorms in Hamilton, I conceded that we surely would be riding through various degrees of precipitation all day. I went out Friday to Mountain Co-op to purchase rain booties to go over the shoes for our team of four (plus my husband, who captained a team from work), not to mention several other items of protective gear so that we wouldn’t be soaked to the bone. I had been planning on cycling with just a small bag on my bike, but this meant upgrading to a much larger bag, which I had not trained with at all. Dragging around the extra weight really made a difference, and my legs were much more tired than usual.



However, despite the fact that there was a total downpour in Toronto and that it was seriously threatening rain all day, I only felt three raindrops as we started climbing up Hamilton Mountain and that was the end of it. Every rider among the 4600 of us felt supremely lucky and relieved, as we arrived to Camp and even were able to enjoy relaxing there for a couple of hours without the skies opening

upon us. Spin Cycle (my dad, brother, a friend and I) then decamped for the comparative luxury of the Sheraton Hamilton!

The riding itself was much tougher on Day 1, where there is a big climb up the Niagara Escarpment, than on Day 2, where you are often descending (plus I had ditched the weight of the huge pannier bag). The training can be grueling, but it pays off when you are able to meet a large physical challenge such as this. I was very pleased to have made it up every hill with somewhat less training than in previous years, but I was especially proud of my 67-year old dad for having made it all the way. We were also lucky that we did not experience any technical difficulties such as flat tires along the way, had no major physical problems (although everyone experienced their share of numbness and sore muscles along the way), and no accidents, of which there were unfortunately a few.

But I have to say, the most amazing thing about the Ride to Conquer Cancer is the spirit of the event. It truly brings out the best in people. It starts with the amazing feeling we get when supported by our friends and family prior to the event; both through your sponsorship and your good wishes. We also feel thrilled to be able to raise a substantial amount of money for the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation (and, in my case, CNETS Canada as well). But the part of the Ride that you can't imagine if you haven't done it is the support that comes from all of the other riders, encouraging each other along, and from many complete strangers who spend hours perched along the route to cheer us on. There are also literally hundreds of volunteer Crew members and police officers en route who held up traffic to usher us through intersections, as well as feeding us, giving us medical and technical attention and more. Really, the whole thing is a rush. The endorphins are flowing and you can just see it in the smiles on our faces throughout the weekend – especially at the finish line!



In closing, I would like to share with you the actual amount of money raised. **I personally was able to raise \$2,994 for PMH and another \$6,308 for CNETS Canada, for a total of \$9,302.** Our team of four people raised \$18,103 for PMH. Amazingly, all 4,600 riders – plus Crew members who also fundraise – together raised \$17.5 million dollars towards curing cancer in our lifetime. This is real money with which cancer will be battled, helping to fund many advances that can benefit NET patients. I thank everyone for their support, especially my children for tolerating my training time, and my teammates for coming along for the ride.

Cheers,

Bailey