

Cyclists gear-up for annual Ride for Karen

By Angela Gismondi

Hundreds of cyclists will come together this Sunday (Sept. 8) to raise funds to send children with cancer to camp.

The Ride for Karen, a one-day charity cycling event, is held each year as a tribute to the life and legacy of Karen Tobias. A wife, mother, grandmother and registered nurse, Ms. Tobias passed away at 53 after a battle with breast cancer. As a tribute to her commitment to helping others, her sons Kirk and Kris created this premiere cycling event.

Ms. Tobias passed away July 4, 2002 after a battle with breast cancer. During her five-year battle, her passion for life and fighting spirit never went away. Her family was so important to her, especially her grandchildren. She was blessed with three beautiful grandchildren during the last two-and-a-half years of her life.

"My mom's eyes would light up when the grandkids were around," said Kirk.

The Ride for Karen is a way for Ms. Tobias's family and friends to keep her dream alive, to continue her mission of building hope for cancer patients and their families.

"My mom was very, very sick," Kirk explained. "We couldn't imagine how hard it would be for a child. We decided to start a charity to help people. We thought it would be a wonderful tribute, a wonderful opportunity to improve the quality of life for kids who are actively battling this disease."

Now in its 12th year, the Ride for Karen has raised more than \$1.8 million, with 100 per cent of the proceeds donated to help send children with cancer to Camp Trillium, Camp Quality and Camp Oochigeas.

The ride will begin and end in Vaughan at St. Joan of Arc High School located at 1 St. Joan of Arc Ave. in Maple.

Originally a century (160-kilometre) ride for advanced riders exclusively, the event now includes a 100-kilometre ride for intermediate riders, as well as a 25-kilometre route for recreational riders and a kids ride, giving cyclists of all skill levels the opportunity to participate.

"The event has really grown over the years," said Kirk. "There are options for the whole family to participate."

The fun ride is for children aged two to 12 years old and allows children to ride laps on their bike in a safe, enclosed area while raising money for a good cause.

"There is no registration fee but we ask the children fund-raise to help other children battling cancer," Kirk commented, adding the event also includes other fun activities for families.

"It's a great time to come out and raise money to help children in need," said Kirk. "It's going to be a great day."

For more information or to register online, visit the website at www.rideforkaren.com