

Tour de Headwaters brings 350 cyclists out in support of local hospital foundation

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

About 350 cyclists turned out for the fifth annual Tour de Headwaters ride in support of the Headwaters Health Care Foundation last Saturday, September 14.

The starting point was Lloyd Wilson Arena in Inglewood.

Riders started out in groups for safety reasons then hit the open road on planned routes. They cycled routes that covered 135 km, 100 km, 50 km, and a 25 km family trail ride that went off road on the Caledon Trailway.

While many of the long distance cyclists could be placed in the 'hardcore' category, it wasn't considered a race. Those who did the long distances were experienced riders who had the stamina and experience to complete a distance route and for them, it was just a good workout and a good day for a long ride.

The shorter 25 km trail route featured a ride along the Trailway, a former rail line between Hamilton and Barrie, on mountain bikes.

"This is our fifth annual ride," explained Headwaters Health Care Foundation executive director Dora Boylen-Pabst. "A group of volunteer started this event. Tim Peters (current chair, board of directors) and a group of people put it together. It's grown over the years and we're hoping this will be the biggest considering it's our fifth anniversary."

The first batch of riders left the starting post at 8:20 a.m. with others following at intervals. The last group left at 9:30 a.m.

"We know we have exceed last year's ride which had 320 riders," Ms. Boylen-Pabst said. "The 25 k is a family trail run while the others are all road races. The 135 k ride was met with a lot of enthusiasm so it definitely was the right thing to introduce that route this year. It's a family friendly, all skill level event. A lot of the participants use the app, STRAVA, which they can use to time themselves. All the routes are mapped on the app so they can use it for navigation and they can also use it to time their routes."

The event is the third largest fundraiser for the Foundation following the annual Gala and golf tournament.

"The Gala is very specific and so is the golf tournament. This is an event which allows us to engage the whole community and all age groups. This is a great day weather-wise and you're outdoors."

Some people simply pay a registration fee to take part while others get sponsors for the event. The Foundation has extended the donation deadline until September 24, so people can continue to submit donations on-line or at the Foundation office until then.

The Inglewood location was selected for the ride so the Foundation can engage all areas within the community that would need Headwaters services.

"Inglewood has been very generous to us," Ms. Boylen-Pabst explained. "The local cycling shop hosts the post-event barbecue. They donate the use of the area and space for us so we're able to keep our costs down and more of the donations go directly to the hospital."

The goal of the event was to raise \$65,000.