

Upcoming Ride for Karen in Maple will help those fighting cancer

By Bill Rea

Cyclists will be hitting the streets of Maple Sept. 8 to help raise money to help those who are fighting cancer.

The Ride for Karen started in 2002, as a tribute to the life and legacy of Karen Tobias and to raise money for charities that help people living with cancer, and those who care for them. In 11 years, the event has raised more than \$1.8 million, which has been used to help build and furnish new cancer care facilities, provide much needed resources for cancer support centres and send kids with cancer to camp.

The 53-year-old wife, mother, grandmother and registered nurse died July 4, 2002 after a five-year battle with breast cancer. The ride was started by her sons Kirk and Kris Tobias shortly after her death. The idea started when the brothers got a few friends together for a long bike ride to clear their heads after they lost their mother.

The event will include rides over four different routes: A 160-kilometre Century Ride, 100-kilometre Metric Century Ride; 25-kilometre Challenge; and a Kids' Fun Ride.

Mark Duncan, a native of Cedar Mills who lives in Toronto while he attends the University of Toronto, will be taking part in the 100-km event for the second time.

Duncan said he got involved last year after taking up road riding that summer.

"I just wanted something that would push me a new distance and a new challenge," he said.

Duncan said his father worked with Ms. Tobias's son Kris at one time, but he didn't learn of that until after he had signed up for last year's event. "It was kind of a good coincidence," he reflected.

There are a couple of factors that Duncan said attracted him to this event.

"It's not just focused on developing medical treatment or finding a cure," he said, noting the aim is to improve quality of life for those fighting cancer. "You want to make sure these people are psychologically well."

He added that's an important part of overall well-being.

"That's a big part of coping with a chronic illness," he said.

Duncan said he anticipates few problems completing the 100-km route. He said he started having doubts last year when he was about two-thirds of the way through it.

"You push through," he said. "As long as you're fuelled well, it's very doable."

The Sept. 8 event will start with registration, which opens at 7:30 a.m. The 160-km ride will start at 9 a.m. and there will be a barbecue from 2 to 5 p.m. The entry fee is \$100 per rider for registration, but those who raise at least \$250 in pledges will find their entry fees waived.

It starts at St. Joan of Arc High School, 1 St. Joan of Arc Ave. in Maple

For more information, visit the website at www.rideforkaren.com