

## Calgary man cycles across Canada for childhood cancer research

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**Fredericton** - Tim Harriman's fight with cancer hasn't weakened him. If anything, it made him stronger.

And now he's biking across Canada to give a voice to children with cancer.

The 19-year-old Calgary native was diagnosed with leukemia when he was 14.

His doctor didn't give him much hope but, after three years of intense chemotherapy and radiation, he recovered.

"With the help of my friends and family, and their support, I managed to fight my cancer," he said.

"During my treatments, I became aware of the impact that cancer has on young people, and that's when I decided to do this, to give kids with cancer a voice."

He decided to start training to be able to bike across the country with the Spokeman Tour to raise money for the Childhood Cancer Foundation of Canada and raise awareness about the illness.

During his coast-to-coast bike ride, Harriman will have biked for 412 hours and 7,738 km.

Harriman's tour began June 3 in Victoria and will end Aug. 24. He was in Fredericton on Sunday.

He also wants to give a voice to children who are fighting cancer.

Through his journey, he will visit as many children with cancer as he can. He will pick up their letters, messages and artwork and present them to the prime minister in order for him to recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

"I go in and visit with the patients," he said. "Sometimes they ask me questions about my cancer experience. To give them hope and to help them out, I try my best to answer those questions.

"And sometimes we don't even talk about the cancer story. We try to take the focus off of that. Or at least I try and take the focus off of them, and focus on other things and ask them what kind of sport they're into, or what they're favourite subject is at school. Because I know when I was a cancer patient, the last thing I wanted to talk about was my illness."

He said he tries to act their age, joke and have fun.

"When I go to the hospitals to visit the kids, it brings back memories of when I was sick," he said. "But when I see them, I realize it doesn't make sense to have children and cancer in the same sentence.

"It's hard to see. I cope with it while I'm there, and try to support them, and afterwards, I think wow. You can't go to a hospital and visit the kids and just get on your bike and go. You're definitely moved by it."

He said many children he visits tell him that he inspires them, but he said they inspire him 10 times more.

Whenever it gets tough on the bike, he said he remembers the cause and then he keeps on pedalling.

Luckily, his parents are following him in an RV, so he has shelter in case of bad weather and a warm place to sleep at night.

Heather Harriman, Tim's mother, said the tour has been overwhelming.

"At first, we were more concerned that he focus on his health first," she said. "But I'd do it all over again."

She said being the parent of a child with cancer is difficult, and she can identify with the parents they meet along the way.

"I feel their pain," she said. "I try to encourage them. I can't promise them that it's not a difficult journey. I'd encourage them to take it one day at a time."