

# News

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## Cyclist comes full circle

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Communications

It was a much-awaited homecoming.

Cancer survivor Tim Harriman, 19, wheeled his way back to the Alberta Children's Hospital last week and was greeted with fanfare from staff, family and friends.

The visit was one stop on his cross-country bike tour starting in Victoria, B.C. and ending in St. John's, Nfld., in an effort to raise money for the Childhood Cancer Foundation of Canada.

Harriman couldn't help smiling when thinking about the role the Alberta Children's Hospital had in helping him beat cancer.

To him, it was more than a hospital.

It was home.

"You become friends and family to the staff. They were very supportive and encouraging," said Harriman, an Airdrie resident, who had two-and-a-half years of chemotherapy and radiation at the old Alberta Children's Hospital.

"When you're diagnosed with cancer, it's tough. But in a place like this, you get a lot of support. It's perfect. You couldn't ask for anything better."

Harriman was accompanied by friends and family members as he returned to the hospital to visit children in the oncology unit.

The dramatic differences between the new and old hospital, such as equipment, patient rooms, colour and atmosphere, were not lost on Harriman.

"The joke I have is that I wish I was diagnosed now so I could get treated here. It's so comfortable and such a welcoming place," said Harriman.

"I love it! The building, the staff, it's all amazing. It feels like a shopping mall," he said.

Harriman's time at the Alberta Children's Hospital began when he was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) at age 14. The hospital was important not just for his treatment but for opening his eyes to the plight of children with cancer.



Airdrie's Tim Harriman, 19, visits the Alberta Children's Hospital on a recent stop during his cross-Canada, fundraising cycling tour. Harriman was treated for cancer at the old ACH facility.

After successfully completing treatment and being cancer free, Harriman decided to bike across Canada to raise funds, create awareness and give something back to the children he met and shared time with at the hospital.

“During my treatment, I became aware of the impacts and effects that cancer had on young people. It’s unfortunate that kids are affected by cancer...it’s a tough battle.”

Since Harriman enjoyed bike riding at a young age, it was the ideal gesture of support.

“I’m biking across Canada on behalf of kids with cancer,” said Harriman.

Nearly 1,300 Canadians, 19 years old and younger, are diagnosed with cancer every year, according to Canadian Cancer Society statistics.

Harriman started a website ([www.spokemantour.com](http://www.spokemantour.com)) to chronicle his journey across Canada and to allow supporters an opportunity to pledge funds.

With a goal of raising \$100,000 by the end of trip, Harriman has so far raised more than \$30,000 since starting out in early June. He is also collecting artwork, letters and pictures in the hopes of presenting them to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and asking for September to be named Childhood Cancer Awareness month.

In the end, the support and care provided by the Alberta Children’s Hospital is reflected in Harriman’s continued optimism towards the goal of increasing awareness of childhood cancer.

“During my down days, there was always light at the end of the tunnel,” he said.

Ending on Aug. 24, the Spokeman Tour will take approximately 83 days, 7738 km and 412 hours of riding to complete. Harriman couldn’t be happier, though, despite being pelted with rain since the start of his journey.

“The tour has gone well,” he said. “You remember the cause and what it’s all worth. It’s such a wicked way to see the country.”

Please e-mail your comments or questions to [webcommunications@calgaryhealthregion.ca](mailto:webcommunications@calgaryhealthregion.ca).

[http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/newslink/region\\_news/2007/2007-06-18\\_cyclist\\_comes\\_full\\_circle.htm](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/newslink/region_news/2007/2007-06-18_cyclist_comes_full_circle.htm)