

Cancer

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Riding for a cure

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Alberta cancer survivor on a cross-country ride for kids

A month after finishing his last chemotherapy and radiation treatment, Tim Harriman started training for the bike ride of his life.

The 19-year-old Airdrie, Alta. teen was diagnosed in September 2002 with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and had 97% cancer cells in his blood. Harriman underwent high-dose chemotherapy and radiation for three years and has been in remission for two years.

"I always wanted to do a cross-country ride. It really hit home for me when I got cancer. I'm riding to give kids with cancer a voice," Harriman said yesterday, when he stopped in Toronto.

"Battling with cancer was a very long experience and I missed out on life. To be a kid fighting cancer is very lonely. The kids with cancer that I'm meeting on this ride has inspired me to keep going," said Harriman, who met with patients at the Hospital for Sick Children yesterday.

When Harriman was diagnosed, he made a pledge to cycle across Canada to raise awareness and funds to find a cure.

He will visit kids at paediatric cancer hospitals to collect cards, momentos and works of arts to give to Prime Minister Stephen Harper in hopes he will declare September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

Harriman started his Spokeman Tour for Childhood Cancer on June 3 in Victoria, B.C., and he will finish his ride in St. John's, Nfld. on Aug. 25. Harriman rides an average of 130 km a day. He will have completed riding for 84 days, over 412 hours, and 7,738 km.

"Tim's ride is something we're incredibly proud of and the fact a young person who battled cancer has regained his strength and determination to let the voice of children be heard is wonderful," said Mary Lye of the Childhood Cancer Foundation of Canada.