

## Teen pedalling to battle cancer Wants September to be named Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

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By Keith Gilligan



photo by Keith Gilligan/ News Advertiser

Tim Harriman is cycling across Canada to raise awareness of childhood cancer affecting children. He spent time last week with relatives in Ajax. He survived a three-year bout with leukemia that began when he was 14.

AJAX -- Tim Harriman is living proof of the adage about life handing you lemons, you make lemonade. The 19-year-old Alberta resident has turned his experience as a cancer survivor into a public awareness and fundraising campaign.

He's cycling across Canada to raise awareness of the affects of cancer on children. His two big aims are to have September recognized as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and to raise \$100,000 for the Childhood Cancer Foundation. To date, he's raised about \$55,000.

The ride is being done to bring "awareness of the impacts cancer has on young people. I decided to bike across Canada," he says, noting about 10,000 children in Canada are fighting cancer.

Mr. Harriman made a stopover in Ajax last week, spending time with family. Travelling with him on his trek are parents Jerry and Heather.

He was 14 when diagnosed with a form of leukemia. Over the next three years, he underwent chemotherapy and radiation. At the time he was diagnosed, doctors said 97 per cent of his blood cells were cancerous.

His treatment ended in May of 2005. He spent two years planning the tour, beginning three weeks after his treatment ended.

During the tour, he's met with children with cancer, collecting messages and artwork they've done, which he wants to present to the Prime Minister.

"I spend a lot of time with kids and collect their messages and art. I spend a lot of time one-on-one," Mr. Harriman says.

The children are "impressed with how I coped. How I coped with it, I was able to keep in touch with friends," he notes.

Children ask "very mature questions. We don't even talk about the cancer treatment. We try to take the focus off that. We try to maintain a normal live," he states.

The reception he's received "has been getting better and better" as he's moved across the country.

"There was a lot of support in the west, in London and now here, in Toronto," Mr. Harriman says. "We get a lot of support in small towns. The police offer an escort and people come out and donate."

He rides about 175 kilometres a day and the tour is on about day 50 of the 84-day ride. It began on June 3 in Victoria and will go until Aug. 24, when they reach St. John's, Newfoundland. The entire trip is 7,738 kilometres.

He's taken a year off from college, where he's studying youth counselling. "It's a passion of mine."

When diagnosed, "there were a lot of questions that go through your mind, especially someone so young. Why me, I'm so young?" he says. "I was a hockey player at the time. I couldn't play hockey again. That was a hard hit. It affects the family."

For more information or to donate, visit [www.spokemantour.com](http://www.spokemantour.com).