9-1-2006

Med students decide to ride coast to coast for a cure

Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol49/iss3/25

This Article is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines. For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.
MED STUDENTS DECIDE TO RIDE COAST TO COAST FOR A CURE

An off-hand remark from one medical student to another led to their decision to take a cross-country bicycle ride to support cancer research.

Ben Ristau, a 2004 Furman graduate, and Jeremiah Tracy, his first-year classmate at the University of Connecticut medical school in Farmington, were chatting last December about their summer plans. If they were going to do something “different,” the summer of 2006 was the time to do it, they reasoned, since there would be no more summer breaks until they completed their medical studies. Ristau (blue shirt) tossed out a suggestion: a bicycle trip across the United States.

The idea quickly morphed from a casual “what if?” to a plan, as they decided to use the trip to raise money for a cause that was close to both their hearts. They selected Lea’s Foundation for Leukemia Research, a non-profit organization in nearby Hartford, and the University of Connecticut Health Center as the beneficiaries of their fund-raising effort.

Tracy’s mother, Elizabeth, had died of cancer when he was 18, a factor that had led him to pursue a career in medicine. Ristau, who majored in psychology at Furman, had spent 2004-05 conducting research on myeloma at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md.

Despite the demands of medical school they were able to train throughout the spring and early summer. On July 1 they embarked from San Francisco. Traveling through the heartland of America and stopping along the way to visit friends and acquaintances — and to absorb the sights — they made excellent time, averaging 95 to 100 miles per day.

On August 17, they rolled triumphantly into Farmington to the rousing cheers of friends and family. They brought a celebratory end to the trip on September 2 with a ride from Farmington to Milford, Conn., where they rolled to a stop in the shallow waters of the Atlantic.

The results? They raised more than $25,000 (so far) toward leukemia and lymphoma research. They experienced the trip of a lifetime. And they earned the satisfaction of knowing that they had done something tangible for the greater good.

To read their account of their journey (with photos), visit http://coasttocoastforacure.blogspot.com.