



Kathleen Richardson's 2004 Cross FL Bike Ride for Pulmonary Hypertension

What would you do if you got out of breath when you stood up and walked across a room? Perhaps you would think you're out of shape or maybe you were developing asthma. Most people would not think that they had a life-threatening illness. But that's what Pulmonary Hypertension (also known as PH) is like.

PH is a rare, often misdiagnosed, disease which creates an abnormally high blood pressure in the artery going to the lungs. As a result not enough oxygen gets where it needs to be. The heart then tries to work harder which increases the blood pressure even more. The stress on the heart can eventually lead to heart failure. It is a dangerous, progressive disease for which there is no known cure. Early diagnosis is very important to treatment. Unfortunately, many doctors are not yet aware of this disease and that delays diagnosis and treatment.

PH patients often require oxygen just for daily activity. Advanced stages of the disease require the patient to use a 24 hour/day IV drug pump. And in some cases, lung transplantation is used.

Kathleen Richardson lives in Ocoee, FL and was diagnosed with PH in 2001. With her current treatments, she is doing extremely well. To help increase awareness of this disease and raise money for research, she and her husband are going to ride their bikes across Florida from the Atlantic to the Gulf Coast.

The ride will be four days long starting in Daytona Beach on Nov. 26. The tentative route goes through Deland, Sanford, Mt. Dora, Howey-in-the-Hills and Brooksville ending at Bayport on the Gulf Coast. The total distance for the ride will be about 160 miles.

If you are in the area, Kathleen and her husband would love to meet you for breakfast, lunch or dinner at any of the points along the way. Or if you want to ride part of the way with them, even for a few miles, they'd love that, too. Please contact them so they can let you know where they will be at various times along the route.

Research on PH has been encouraging but there is still work to be done. Your financial support would be greatly appreciated.

For more information about PH or to make a donation, please visit the Pulmonary Hypertension Association website at www.phassociation.org or call them at 301-565-3004.

Whether you send a check or donate online, please be sure to mention that your donation is in honor of "Kathleen Richardson's Cross FL Bike Ride".

Kathleen also has a CD available which she made to raise money for PHA. All the songs on the CD except one are written and performed by her. It is available by simply requesting it. Just call or write her and she will be happy to send one to you.

You can reach Kathleen at 407-656-9279 or 407-340-7113.

This event is sponsored by The Original Sign Factory in Ocoee, FL.

