



PAUL GORZKOWSKI | SENTINEL

From left, Chris Nelson, Stephen Trull, Brian Callanan, Kevin Lane and Will Callanan, visit the Wright Brothers National Memorial on Aug. 15 while biking through Dare County during their 2,500-mile journey from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Cyclists pedaling for funds

Cystic Fibrosis victim makes 2500-mile ride

BY PAUL J. GORZKOWSKI
SENTINEL STAFF

Cyclists raising money for Cystic Fibrosis (CF) visited Dare County last week during their journey from Maine to Florida.

After proper training and the release from his doctor, Brian Callanan along with three other bicyclists, set out on July 30 — throwing caution to the wind — on their fundraising mission from Calais, Maine to Key West, Fla.

Diagnosed with CF at birth, Callanan, 30, of Burlington, Vermont, decided to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation during a bike ride through a park in his home town.

"I do a lot of organizational work," said Callanan. "I am targeting to raise \$60,000 for this run."

Callanan is assisted by his 18-year-old nephew, Will Callanan, of Long Beach, New Jersey; and two friends, Stephen Trull, 29, and Chris Nelson, 28, both of Burlington. With three members riding bikes and the other driving a support vehicle pulling a trailer filled with supplies and clothing, Brian Callanan said all four of them share the three bikes, taking turns along their 2,572-mile journey to Key West.

Brian Callanan, the youngest of five siblings, said one of his older brothers, Michael Callanan, 32, also was diagnosed with the disease at birth.

According to a Cystic Fibrosis Foundation press release, the disease is a fatal genetic disorder that affects more than 30,000 Americans, usually the most vulnerable being children. This disease is marked by chronic infections, clogged airways and reproductive problems. Thirty years ago, children struck by the disease were not expected to reach their eighth birthday. Today, thanks to developments in treatments and medicine, many now live into their 30's and beyond, enjoying fuller more comfortable lives. Transitioning from childhood care to self-care is a critical stage of development for the growing adult CF population. Social and emo-

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tional challenges for this age group can be compounded by effects of isolation, mortality, anger, denial, depression and resentment.

Effective management of CF requires treatment of the whole person through creating responsibility and a healthy life style of an individual. Although scientists are beginning to explore various avenues for a cure, the quality of life for individuals at this crucial stage of transition from childhood to adulthood must not be neglected.

"I started the Cystic Fibrosis Lifestyle Foundation (CFLF) in 2003 with the intent of providing CF patients ages 13 to 24 with recreational programs," said Brian Callanan.

Brian Callanan said the difficult challenge with this condition is that patients are not allowed to come in contact with each other because of infection control. He said a patient's condition could get worse just by sneezing or coughing near each other.

This airborne contact has caused camps for children to be closed, and thus it became the national Cystic Fibrosis Foundation policy to isolate the spread of bacteria in the lungs of people with CF. The lack of direct peer support is a unique limitation for people with cystic fibrosis in com-

parison with other chronic and terminal conditions.

Brian Callanan said he has been getting numerous emails from people with CF and from others who are touched about what they are doing for the CF Foundation.

During their visit to the Outer Banks, the bicyclists visited the Wright Brothers Memorial and other tourist attractions along NC 12 including lighthouses.

After they had spent the night at the Outer Banks Hostel, Kevin Lane, 21 of Asheville, joined the bike team from Kitty Hawk to Nags Head where he then headed on his own bicycle journey back home to Asheville.

Will Callanan said a lot of the costs for the ride came from donations from camp grounds and other lodging areas for a night's stay.

"This is also a capital campaign we are working on to raise \$100,000," said Brian Callanan.

Brian Callanan said they have a few media contacts waiting for them once they arrive in Key West on Sept. 6. The bike crew plans to take three days to relax and will be flying back home. Will Callanan said besides the other media contacts, his mother is trying to contact the Oprah Winfrey Show in hopes gaining publicity for the CF Foundation.

CFLF is working to start providing access to activities promoting fun, success, self-esteem and peer advocacy for this population in January 2007.

For more information on Cystic Fibrosis or to make a donation, visit CFLF.org

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