

The Farmington Observer

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On the road Athlete to ride for lung cancer research

By TRACEY BIRKENHAUER
STAFF WRITER

Most people dream. Few people actually do.

Christie Ploski does. The Farmington athlete plans to bike across America to raise money for lung cancer research June 19-Aug. 5. As part of the American Lung Association's Big Ride Across America, she'll ride from Seattle to Washington, D.C. That's an estimated 3,250 miles.

"I fulfill my dreams," said the 19-year-old Oakland Community College student. "I don't know why I do. It's just something inside me."

She's participating in the second annual fund-raising event for the love of outdoors and the love of an uncle who was diagnosed with lung cancer. After 40 years of smoking, Ploski's uncle "miraculously" beat cancer.

"The lung association sure had something to do with that," Ploski said.

To prepare for her adventure, Ploski rides about 60 miles a day, unless it's precipitating. She sometimes gets bored on these treks, until she remembers why she's doing it.

"Cancer can affect you, your whole family," Ploski said. "If my uncle had died, I think this would be more emotional."

What does get Ploski emotional is apathy.

"Sometimes I get mad when people don't care," she said. "Doing this makes me feel good, but it makes me want others to be supportive."

One way she'd like her community to show support is through donations. Ploski must raise \$7,000 to participate. Her contribution will benefit the local lung association.

So far, she has \$20.

Her uncle gave it to her.

"I'm a college student, so it's not like I have any money or my friends have any money," Ploski said. "I really want to participate in this event, but I need help to do it."

Donation forms are available at the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River Ave. in downtown Farmington. For more information, e-mail Ploski at cploski-1998@hotmail.com or call the American Lung Association at (877) BIG-RIDE.



On her way: Christie Ploski plans to ride across the country to raise money for lung cancer research.

High school junior heads to leadership program

Northville High School junior Alison Richards has been selected to participate in the National Student Leadership Conference on Law & Advocacy, an extraordinary leadership development program for outstanding high school students.

Alison is the daughter of Bill

and Carolyn Richards. Bill Richards is assistant city manager in Farmington.

While attending the late June-to-early July conference at Stanford University, Alison will have the opportunity to study, experience and develop the skills and traits that define and identify a

leader.

She will be among about 200 high school students from across the United States and from 35 countries around the world.

During the conference, students attend special workshops and participate in a mock trial where they take on the roles of

attorneys. Special guest speakers add a sense of reality and bring current national and international issues to life.

For additional program information, interested students can visit www.nslcinfo.org or contact the NSLC at 1-800-994-NSLC.

Michelle Richards, MD, PC
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