

Pedalling the Cycle Tour News

2023 – EDITION 5

Monday, September 11



Amidst cheers and clapping, smiles and tears of joy, we brought it home!

Yesterday at 3:00 p.m. we were back where we started four weeks ago at Mile 0 in Victoria. Four weeks of riding, with something offered almost every day of the week, optional group rides as well as regular Monday, Wednesday and Friday rides. In addition, there were those that chose to ride on their own counting their kilometres and adding to the total.

And...**DRUM ROLL**...our total of reported kilometres over four weeks stands at **30087**, exceeding the pledged amount by just over 7000 kilometres. Congratulations to all!

And, as of publishing this news, our fundraising total stands at **\$125,122.00**. \$5000.00 above our goal of \$120,000.00! Your pages will stay open so it is not too late for family and friends to donate when they hear your stories about your experiences with this year's tour.



Photo by Jane Player, our VG4A Photographer

See more of Jane's photos on page 4

To view a full set of Jane's pictures, capturing the excitement of the event yesterday go to

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/WkbnrNBWua4VZFTw6>

We were delighted too that Chek News sent a reporter:

<https://www.cheknews.ca/grandmothers-complete-275-km-fundraising-bike-ride-in-victoria-1168321/>

At the end of year 17 of our VG4A Cycle Tour, the story below captures the reason that we continue to do this. Take a little break, but remember **"We will not rest until they can rest"**. Keep those biking legs tuned up. There will most certainly be a year 18.

Etabezahu from Developing Families Together, Debre Sina, Ethiopia



Developing Families Together (DFT), centred in Addis Adaba, started a small satellite office in Debre Sina. Until now, DFT's local staff had only worked one-on-one with the most vulnerable grandmothers, providing food and supplies, school support, income generation training and safe housing. But when the grandmothers came together, there was magic in the room.

Grandmother Etabezahu spoke first: "I have survived an avalanche of days. I have buried three of my children due to HIV. My daughter left a grandchild that I raised as my own. She, too, died of HIV. Now I am raising her daughter, my great-grandchild. My sister died and I took in

her child, too. I could not have escaped these hardships without DFT. Story after story followed, the grandmothers listening as if spellbound, shouldering each other's load while making room for their own surfacing grief. One woman sang a verse composed in the moment:

I am a cotton spinner
When I spin my thread, I sing my hymns of sadness.
I sing the loss of my sons and daughters into my cotton
And I wrap my pain upon the spool.
My song is long and so is my thread.
I sing and spin away my tragedies.
This is how I go on.

Etabezahu stepped in to change the mood. Jumping to her feet, she rallied the women to participate in a mini-drama to illustrate how women help comfort and distract each other during times of grief. She led them in games, challenging a grandmother who had broken down while telling her story: "You must laugh without stopping until everyone else laughs." When the din had settled, Etabezahu voiced one final thought, "We try to create fun and laughter even in the most oppressive situations. It helps us to bear, because you cannot return the people who have been stolen. You know, these are not things you can forget. How can I forget my daughter? So, it's not about forgetting, it is about bearing the pain with the help of others."

This one meeting epitomizes the Grandmothers Movement across the continent – the same impetus, the same explosive energy, the same magnetic pull towards each other. Bearing the pain with the help of others.

Powered by Love: A Grandmothers Movement to Ends AIDS in Africa pp 283 – 287 by Joanna Henry with Ilana Landsberg-Lewis. Extract by Lisbie Rae Photo by Alexis MacDonald

A story and pictures from the road:



Top left: Galiano Gogos meet up with Victoria riders on September 5. Top right: Victoria to Centennial Park Riders on September 10. Bottom: Grandparents, parents and children wait on Dallas Road to join the ride into the Finale.

Photos by Laurie Wilson, Lynn Kobierski and a willing passerby.

To see a large selection of photos from the long ride September 8-10 (Campbell River to Victoria) contributed by Laurie, Joanne, Deb and Laurie's friend Kathleen go to: <https://share.icloud.com/photos/0cadNVDWb8TXcY8w1kxcoc72Q>

Caring for one another – submitted by
Peggy Frank

I have a story from the trip home from the gathering with the Galiano riders. As I headed south on Lochside, I stopped when I saw a cyclist down on the ground. The incident was terrible for the man involved. He had hit the curb and fallen onto his head, legs and arm.

There were two people there already but I could offer Therapeutic Touch which I did. It seemed to help as his arm looked and felt broken.

The fellow who saw it happen and stopped was a doctor and he held the man's helmet/head on the ground steady so his head didn't move too much. A woman stopped and called 911 and then stood to

provide shade to the man on the ground and to discourage others from stopping unless they were doctors.

Things happen so fast. It is important to stop someone from trying to get up right away and to have them as comfortable as possible without movement. It is also important to keep a crowd from gathering and increasing the shock for the person on the ground.

It reminded me of safety and caring for one another on the road, both in our own group and others out there on bikes.

Below, a selection of Jane's fabulous pictures of the ride in to the Finale.



We hope that the next edition of Pedalling the Cycle Tour News will be published in August 2024
Till then we encourage you to check www.vg4a.ca often for current news and information