



From the Desk of Jim Thaxton

Where is my desk?

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Re: Ride for Aids Chicago

Some of you may already know this, but in early June (the week after my birthday), I will be participating in a fundraising bike ride to help fight the battle against AIDS.

On June 5 and 6, I will bike 200 miles to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and back in an event called the Ride for AIDS Chicago (www.rideforaids.org). The proceeds from the event support two local organizations that provide much needed AIDS support services: Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) and Better Existence with HIV (BEHIV), you may have heard of them.

I am taking on this challenge for a number of reasons. Evidently, I want to see how saddle-sore my butt can get in a mere two days and I have an obsession with the word "hotpants". (Just a note, those bike riding "hotpants" you see people wear have special padding to reduce sore goinsies, taints or, medically speaking, perineums.) Okay okay, more legitimately, the AIDS epidemic is far from over, and this is something I can do to help in the fight against AIDS. In the US, there are over 400,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. This year alone, 25,000 people will become infected with HIV and 25% of them will be among teenagers. This year 15,000 people will die. I think it is very important to note that HIV/AIDS has spread far beyond the LGBT community. As long as kids in school are not taught sex education including safer sex practices, their infection rates with HIV and other STDs will continue to rise.

The ride's beneficiaries are exemplary AIDS service organizations that provide a host of education, outreach, and support services. You can find out more about both TPAN and BEHIV by visiting their web sites: www.tpan.com and www.behiv.org. The Ride for AIDS Chicago was created by volunteers and is different from some other fundraisers in that it is committed to returning 100% of the pledges I raise to the beneficiaries. Now that I have mentioned the pledge part, I should tell you that to participate in the ride, I have agreed to raise \$1,000 in pledges, and I need your help. Would you please make a pledge using the enclosed pledge form to help me meet my goal? Look the form over and designate an amount that is right for you. Please keep in mind how far I'm riding, the commitment I've made, and how long I'll have to train for the event.

If you would like to know more about the ride itself, they have put together an informative web site at www.rideforaids.org. Thank you in advance for your generosity. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Again, I thank you for reading through to the end of this letter. If you find that you want to support me on this bicycle ride, please return included pledge form (also available from my Web site: www.machobeagle.com) to me or to Ride for Aids.

--Jim!

