

Cyclists, runners and walkers raise awareness for diabetes at 2017 Tour De Cure

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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ALTON - Over 600 participants made their way to the Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater at as early as 6 a.m. Saturday to ride, run or walk in support of the American Diabetes Association.

The 2017 St. Louis Tour de Cure is a collaborative event, proudly sponsored by the American Diabetes Association, Simmons Hanly Conroy, Alton Memorial Hospital, JM Family Enterprises, Inc. and Alton Steel, Inc. The event is also sponsored by national brands Lilly Diabetes and Primal.

"Tour de Cure is one of biggest fundraising events and it's our chance to showcase our red riders, red striders and red runners." Brooke Underwood, development manager at the American Diabetes Association, said. "Our number one goal is not only to cure diabetes, but also raise awareness."



Red riders, striders or runners are children and adults who personally live with any type of diabetes, including type 1, type 2 or gestational. These special participants are given distinct uniforms and are recognized first and foremost before each event began.

Riders taking on the challenge of the massive 100-mile ride began checking in at about 6 a.m. on Saturday, and took off on their journey at around 7 a.m. 62-mile and 50 mile-riders started their trips at 8:30 a.m. and the 30-mile riders started at 10 a.m. After the cyclists made it out on the open road, families who wanted to take the less strenuous route around the amphitheater course were invited to do as many laps as they wished in the family ride. At around 11 a.m., walkers and runners for the newly-combined 5K event took off on-foot in their events.



Eleven-year-old Noah Barnes and his father, Robert, mother Joanne, and his siblings, Angela and Jon, along with their pet bull terrier, Rex, made a stop at the Tour de Cure as part of their cross-country road trip to march for raise awareness and funds for Type I diabetes research. Their journey began in January 2017 in Key West, Fla. The family is a little less than halfway finished with their trip and hope to end the trip in Blaine, Wash.

The family lived in West Palm Beach, Fla., and had taken their children out of public school after their district refused to accommodate Noah's monitoring and treatment regiment. As part of his home school activities, his parents suggested that he do his research on how people begin fundraising.

Noah, inspired by the Canadian cancer research activists Terry Fox's cross-Canada run, known as the Marathon of Hope, decided he wanted to go on a march of his own to raise awareness for the disease he didn't have.

"I didn't want to be a diabetic, and after I saw a Terry Cox documentary, I wanted to do what he did and try to eliminate diabetes," Noah Barnes said.

From there, the Noah's March Foundation was born. So far, Noah has walked about 1,675 miles. By the end of their trip, the family will have traveled over 4,000 miles, stopping along the way for meet-ups, community events and 5K fundraisers.

"We've had donations from small corporations and private people, but all of the support we get goes directly to raise awareness and funds for type 1 diabetes research," he said.

What has been the 11-year-old's favorite sights so far on his cross-country road trip?

"I love seeing the tanks!" Noah said.

"We've made it along to a lot of the armories and depots, and they have large World War II and Vietnam-era tanks posted outside," Robert We actually got to go on in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He's really into military stuff."



Joined by Ryan Brennell, the co-founder and CEO of Gladitood, a crowdfunding site specifically designed for nonprofit organizations, the family embarked on their 5K walk with the rest of the event participants. Noah's journey can be followed at www.noahsmarchfoundation.org and donations can be made by visiting the [Gladitood fundraising page](#).

After everyone finished their trips around the Riverbend, a catered lunch was provided by Noodles and Company. A beer garden, selfie station and photo booth, activity zone

provided by Woodard Restoration, and other post-event activities kept the event going after the race had been completed. A live performance by the band Superjam kept the party going well into the evening.

