

# **Ride to Conquer Cancer**

**By Michael Georgopoulos, MHA Director**

People have described cancer as "the bus". It comes out of nowhere, when you least expect it, can strike anyone, has devastating consequences and like being hit by a bus you never appreciate the true horror of it until it strikes you, a family member or a friend. In Aug of 2000 I lost my cousin Daniel to cancer at the young age of 20. Last year when I heard about the Ride to Conquer I thought what a great opportunity to raise some serious funds to battle this disease instead of just the usual annual donations to the various cancer organizations that most of us make. I did not get an opportunity to participate in it but made a promise to myself that one day I would. This past year the President of the company I work for and my friend Andy was diagnosed with cancer. When I visited him at Princess Margaret in the Palliative Care area I was so devastated by what I saw that at one point I had to look out the window of his room. You hear people talk about omens in life but don't usually don't pay much attention to it. On the wall of a building outside his window was a large mural promoting the Ride. It was at that moment that I made a decision that no matter what was happening in my life in 2009 I would make time to participate in this event and fulfill the promise I made to myself. In Dec 2008 Andy lost his battle with cancer and passed away at the age of 56 so this event has now become even more important to me.

The Ride to Conquer Cancer benefiting The Princess Margaret is a cycling journey from Toronto to Niagara Falls - a distance of over 200 km that I'm embarking on to fight cancer. It will be a challenge in a number of ways since I am a Type 1 Diabetic and have never ridden such a distance before but these challenges pale in comparison to the challenges faced by many individuals that are diagnosed with cancer on a daily basis. The inaugural 2008 version of this ambitious venture involved over 2,800 riders who collectively raised \$14 million for critical cancer research at Princess Margaret Hospital ranked as one of the top 5 cancer research hospitals in the world.

I have already made one major accomplishment by convincing my wife Vanda to participate in the ride as a crew member which will require her to be on her feet for many long hours and then sleep with me in a tent. Anyone that knows Vanda also knows that this is a major accomplishment that is worthy of many very generous contributions to my ride!

All kidding aside though even in these tough economic times please support me generously as it is not often that one event can raise such a large sum of money for a great and much needed cause that affects many lives on a daily basis. This will be a journey to fight cancer, and the cause is worth every minute of the training that I need to invest to prepare for the Ride, and worth every dollar that you can spare to support me.

Thank you in advance for your help and also for supporting this great cause!

Please go to <http://to09.conquercancer.ca> - Click on "SPONSER A PARTICIPANT" in the top menu bar and then type in my name – Michael Georgopoulos

Also please forward this link to my personal page to anyone who you think would also be interested in supporting my ride to conquer cancer.