

Minneapolis cyclist in town yesterday

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A Minneapolis man’s cross-country cycling crusade against Huntington’s disease reached Oakville Tuesday, as his effort continues to raise \$30,000 for his cause.

Cyclist Kevin Glenney, 36, who was raised in Dunnville, Ont., began his fundraiser by departing Vancouver, British Columbia on June 4.

He intends to cycle 8,300 kilometres ending his journey at Cape Spear, Newfoundland, the eastern most point of North America.

When Glenney passed through Oakville he had completed approximately 5,150 kilometres of his excursion and raised about \$14,217.

He was late in arriving as apparently the hot, humid weather was not enough challenge to lay at his feet — he had to stop and repair a flat tire just outside Oakville, setting him back nearly an hour on his schedule for the day.

On his website, Glenney stated he was driven to undertake this challenge by the impact Huntington’s disease has had on his own family.

“Huntington’s disease is something that has profoundly touched my family and had an immense impact on the way our family has been able to communicate,” he said.

“My father’s grandfather and father were both stricken with the disease and suffered early death. My father’s sister and one of his brothers have also been diagnosed with the disease.

“In January 2010, my dad shared with us, for the first time, the fear he’s had of passing it on to me and my sisters. Though we have not been tested, the disease typically appears in the late 20s to early 30s. My dad will be 60 this year and has shown no signs. When I told him I was going to ride my bike across the continent he asked if Huntington’s disease would be something I’d like to ride for — and I said ‘That’s a great idea.’”

While in the area, Glenney has made tentative plans to visit North York General Hospital to meet some of the head doctors conducting Huntington’s disease research and DNA testing.

Huntington’s disease is an inherited brain disorder that causes cells in specific parts of the brain to die, leading to complete incapacitation and, eventually, death.

At this time, there is no cure for Huntington’s disease and no treatments that can even slow its progress.

While about one in every 10,000 people are affected by Huntington’s disease, Glenney said, far more are touched by it whether they are at risk, a caregiver, a family member or a friend.

Research into the disease is continuing and treatment strategies are being put together, which is why, Glenney says, now more than ever it is important for people to help fund the drive for a cure.

Glenney, an aerodynamics and systems engineer with the Goodrich Corporation, is carrying a GPS (Global Positioning System) with him so his progress can be checked anytime on his website at www.kevinglenney.com.

The website contains lots of information and statistics about his journey thus far, from the most kilometres he has travelled in a day (226 km) to the number of flat tires he’s had (four) to the number of bugs he has inhaled (six).

Anyone interested can donate to the Huntington Society through the website or through www.huntingtonsociety.ca.