

## Cycling for a Huntington's Disease cure

### TO DONATE

To donate money toward family services and research for a cure of Huntington's Disease please make checks out to "Huntington's Disease Society of America" and send to Venture to Vegas, c/o Marie Nemec, 3087 - A 1/2 Road, Grand Junction, CO 81503-9678. Commemorative T-shirts, designed by Western Colorado Community College graphic design students are also for sale for \$15-\$20. For more information contact Nemec at 970-250-5997 or [rmnemec@gmail.com](mailto:rmnemec@gmail.com), or visit [www.bikeforthe.cure.org](http://www.bikeforthe.cure.org).

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Charlotte Reicks, 76, will ride her bike across country like she's done for the past 13 years on her quest to find a cure for Huntington's Disease.

Her friend, Marie Nemec, 68, who was the first to begin the tradition, will also go but will drive the support vehicle more than in years past due to aching knees, she said.

The women will leave Grand Junction May 27, ride through southern Utah's redrock country and end in Las Vegas where they will attend the 27th annual convention of the Huntington's Disease Society of America. Their purpose is to raise awareness and funds for family services and research toward a cure of the disease.

This year's bike ride is dedicated to their friend Scott Lampton — a Grand Junction man who died of Huntington's Disease in January.

Huntington's Disease is a neurological, genetic disease, passed from parent to child through a mutation on the fourth chromosome. Each child of a parent with Huntington's Disease has a 50-50 chance of inheriting the gene which causes degeneration of brain cells, resulting in the loss of ability to walk, think, talk, reason and swallow.

"It was a painful experience to watch his suffering, and that of his family," Reicks said of Lampton.

Shortly after his diagnosis, the Free Press featured Lampton's struggles with the disease in the April 29, 2009, edition, and again June 3, 2011, after the diseased had progressed.

Huntington's Disease killed legendary folksinger Woody Guthrie, the father of Arlo Guthrie.

No one knows how many people in the Grand Valley have the disease — some people keep it a secret, Nemec said, and early symptoms are often mistaken for other ailments. Huntington's Disease occurs in about one in 10,000 people.

Grand Valley residents diagnosed with Huntington's Disease often go to Denver for special care at the Huntington's Disease Center and "that travel money comes partially from the money we raise," Reicks said.

"We always said as long as we can, we will keep bicycling, because families need financial help and there are families here who have Huntington's Disease."

The bike ride "is getting (physically) harder," said Nemec. "But our commitment is still there. There are people who endure the slow demise of their loved ones and we want to help."

Churches of all denominations provide overnight accommodations along the way for Nemec and Reicks.

The women will receive free bicycle tune-ups from The Bike Shop, 950 North Ave., before embarking on their trip.

The day before their departure, the public is invited to a send-off breakfast at Sherwood Park, at the north pavilion, 8:30-10 a.m. Saturday, May 26. Homestyle Bakery, City Market and Safeway stores have donated coffee, juice, yogurt, pastries, bagels, etc.

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