COVID-19 Puts the Brakes on a Major HIV Fundraiser—but Not Completely

Meanwhile, two similar bike rides on the East Coast are still gearing up to go!

April 24, 2020 By Trent Straube

This year's annual AIDS/LifeCycle bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles has been canceled due to the new coronavirus, but the fundraising efforts are rolling ahead. In fact, participants have already raised nearly $6.7 million of the $13 million goal.

Funds benefit the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the HIV/AIDS-related services of the Los Angeles LGBT Center. In the video below, watch Joe Hollendoner of SFAC and Lorri Jean of the Center join ride director Tracy Evans to announce the cancellation and speak about their organizations' needs and services curing COVID-19.

The 545-mile AIDS/LifeCycle had been slated for early summer. This year marks the first time the event has been canceled since it began in 1994. The 2021 ride is already on the calendar for June 6 to 12.

Across the country on the East Coast, two other HIV fundraising bike rides traditionally take place in the fall. Organizers from both told POZ the rides are moving forward as planned, though that could change as the COVID-19 situation develops.

One of those fundraisers is the Braking AIDS Ride, a 300-mile route from Cooperstown, New York, to Manhattan that raises money for Housing Works, the nonprofit that fights the dual epidemics of homelessness and HIV. It is currently scheduled for September 11 to 13.

Also taking place September 11 to 13 is Cycle for the Cause, a 275-mile ride from Boston to New York City that helps support HIV-related services at Manhattan's LGBT Community Center.

"Cycle for the Cause is, as of now, still scheduled to take place September 11 to 13, 2020," said event manager David Hovey. "While we hope to proceed with the Ride as scheduled, our highest priority is the health and safety of all participants, and we will continue to explore contingency plans, should the event not be able to take place in person."

Similarly, a statement from Housing Works to POZ noted that the Braking AIDS Ride "is currently scheduled for September 11 to 13, 2020. We are monitoring evolving health guidelines from state and local authorities and will proceed accordingly. What we do know is that the need for these critical funds raised has never been greater. The clients Housing Works serves are among the most marginalized New Yorkers and therefore at high risk for COVID-19. Housing Works is on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19, keeping its much-needed health care facilities operational to meet the needs of vulnerable populations and opening shelters specifically for homeless New Yorkers to help them regain their health after testing positive for coronavirus. We will keep people updated about any changes to our plan."

To learn more about the Braking AIDS Ride, see last year's POZ article "300 Miles, 3 Days and 1 Goal: End the HIV Epidemic in New York" and visit BrakingAIDSRide.org.

To learn more about Cycle for the Cause, see the 2019 POZ article "400 Cyclists Ride From Boston to NYC, Breaking Records and Fighting HIV" and visit CycleForTheCause.org.

To learn more about the California event, see last year's POZ writeup "AIDS/LifeCycle Bike Ride Raises Record-Breaking $16.7M" and visit AIDSLifeCycle.org.

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