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Bike4Alz riders host silent auction fundraiser

By Nathan Havenner Messenger-Inquirer
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David Weafer, left, talks with Ben Howard during the Bike4Alz silent auction fundraiser Wednesday evening at Feta Pizza in Owensboro.

Nathan Havenner | Messenger-Inquirer

Pens were clicking as bidders lined up to participate in the Bike4Alz silent auction fundraiser Wednesday evening at Feta Pizza in Owensboro.

The event was in conjunction with a group of 13 students from Western Kentucky University passing through the city while bicycling from San Francisco to Virginia Beach, Virginia, to raise money and awareness for Alzheimer's Disease research.

Event organizer David Weafer said Wednesday that it is great to see so how many local businesses contributed to the fundraiser. Auction items ranged from 24 cupcakes donated by Doozie Doez to an at home skincare kit donated by The Skin Therapist to a round of golf for four at Ben Hawes Golf Course donated by Owensboro Parks and Recreation.

"If you look through, there is definitely less than five items that are not from a local business," Weafer said. "Overall, just an awesome outpouring of support from the community."



The riders are Phi Gamma Delta fraternity members at WKU. The cross-country ride started in 2010, when a fraternity member wanted to honor the memory of his late grandfather, who had died from Alzheimers.

The goal is to raise \$150,000 during the 3,600-mile journey.

Owensboro native Andrew Birkhead said he has enjoyed the experience so far.

“Meeting guys like David and the other people that have completed the ride in the past really inspired me to do the same for a great cause,” he said. “It is just a really impactful way to spend your summer.”

Birkhead said he thinks perhaps the most important thing the riders can do is raise awareness, as seeing a group of people bicycling across the country tends to stick in the mind a little more than seeing a caravan of automobiles.

“If we just drive in cars around the country people would wonder what we were doing and really wouldn’t be interested,” he said. “It really makes you feel like you have accomplished something.”

Birkhead said he is riding a 2021 Trek Domane SL5 endurance road bike.

Ben Howard said his son Will Howard is the second of his sons to participate in the Bike4Alz cross-country ride.

“His older brother did it in 2019, and his younger brother is going to do it next year,” Howard said while looking over the auction items.

Rider Adam Burns of Bowling Green said it felt good to be back in his home state.

“It has been really fun,” he said. “I am glad to be back in Kentucky for sure; the last few states have been long.”

Burns said he wanted to participate in the Bike4Alz ride because its mission touches on a personal note.

“My grandma has Alzheimers, so it hits home for me,” he said. “Getting on the bike everyday, I am doing it for a reason and thinking about her and all the other people. A lot more people have it than you think.”

The riders are expected to complete the 70-day trek on July 28 in Virginia Beach, averaging about 70 miles per day.

Those wishing to donate or learn more about Bike4Alz can visit www.bike4alz.org.

 havenner@messenger

