

Sara saddles up for cancer kids in Great Cycle Challenge

Roxanne McCarty-O'Kane | 18th Sep 2015 5:00 AM



CHALLENGE ACCEPTED: Sara Petrou is training for the Great Cycle Challenge raising money to fight cancer.
Warren Lynam

SARA Petrou has seen several people close to her battle against cancer, but the thought of children facing a similar battle is almost too much to bear.

That is why the Caloundra physiotherapist is preparing to put her body on the line for the Children's Medical Research Institute's Great Cycle Challenge.

The 49-year-old has pledged to ride 1000km on a static bike next month to raise awareness and funds for the world-leading cancer research at CMRI.

Ms Petrou will need to clock up an average of 32.25km each day to reach her target.

Practice runs on the bike at the Goodlife Gym in Caloundra, where she will do the majority of her riding, have seen her reach as much as 26km in an hour.

But with a full time job to consider, she is already preparing to pull a few all-nighters to make it happen.

"I lost my mum to cancer and one of my sisters also had cancer, I have a close friend going through it herself at the moment and have a number of close friends who have had cancer so it's very close to home," she said.

"I can't imagine what it would be like to have a child going through that. They accept it and keep smiling, so if they can put themselves through that challenge of facing awful treatments, then I can put myself through a bit of pain.

"These poor little souls are battling away when they deserve to be out there living a full life and not dealing with those horrible things."

Ms Petrou has recruited 10 other riders for her team, the Centaur Champions.

Even though the challenge does not kick off until next month, they have already reached their \$1000 fundraising target and have upped it to \$1500.

With September being Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, event manager Greg Johnson said now was a great time to sign up for the challenge, which kicks off on October 1.

"Great Cycle Challenge is a fantastic way for everyday Australians to undertake a fun personal challenge, while raising funds that are urgently needed for research on all types of cancers in children," he said.

CMRI director Professor Roger Reddel said funds raised from initiatives like the cycle challenge had enabled their researchers to make a number of vital discoveries, including a test that will help identify some of the most aggressive types of cancers.

Visit <http://www.greatcyclechallenge.com.au> to sign up or you can search for the Centaur Champions team to support their efforts with a donation.