

A 500-MILE BIKE RIDE FOR CANCER

*Breast Health
Services Director
Gears up for the
Challenge*



Summer vacation is typically a time to kick back on the beach and forget about the grind for awhile. But not for Elisabeth Ladd, director of BHS.

Her holiday? A 500-mile, six-day bike ride from Montreal to Palmerton.

"Yes, it sounds a bit crazy," Ladd said. "Five years ago, I hadn't been on a bicycle since I was 13. But it'll be a pretty special experience."

Special because the ride will benefit cancer, a cause dear to her heart as director of Breast Health Services. Ladd and her husband, Barrett, are striving to raise \$2,000 for the Pennsylvania Perimeter Ride IX Against Cancer (PPRAC), which they will take on from Aug. 8 to 14 with about 40 other local cyclists.

With the money raised, PPRAC will purchase a new van for the American Cancer Society and fund wishes for two terminally ill children through Dream Come True. Bob Freed of Allentown organized the first PPRAC in 1983 in memory of his father and two friends who died from cancer. Collectively, the event has generated more than \$320,000 to benefit the American Cancer Society and Dream Come True.

"When cancer patients go through their initial diagnosis, they feel overwhelmed, scared and alone," Ladd said. "Working in this field reminds me not to take things for granted. I feel privileged that I can help make a difference in people's lives both through my work and this bike ride."

The group will trek 80 to 110 miles a day, beginning in Montreal and traversing through the Adirondack, Berkshire, Catskill and Pocono mountains. Although this is Ladd's first trip with PPRAC, she has biked up to 123 miles in a day and 450 in five days.

"It's a lot of hard work and it's physically uncomfortable, but you have to put your mind in the right place," Ladd said. "I enjoy the physical and mental challenge, and I can focus on the scenery in a way you just can't in a car."

As if biking long miles isn't enough, Ladd and the others will stay overnight at churches and shower at YMCAs and schools to reduce overhead costs. "Sleeping on hard floors, eating mass produced food — it's all part of the experience," Ladd said. "Riders from previous years have told us it's a pretty fantastic trip."

Anybody interested in sponsoring Ladd can write a check to the American Cancer Society and send it to her at Suite 203 in the John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center by July 23. ■