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Ferguson holds fundraising yellow jersey in Give To Live bike tour

CORNER BROOK
CLIFF WELLS
 The Western Star

Meghan Ferguson is hoping to wear the yellow fundraising jersey when she rides from Vancouver to Austin, Texas in October.

The former Corner Brook resident is a genetic counsellor at the IWK Health Centre in Halifax. She's taking part in the Give to Live Relay which starts Oct. 12 and winds up Oct. 23.

With the help of friends, family and sponsors, Ferguson has raised in the area of \$15,000 for Craig's Cause for Pancreatic Cancer which gives her the fundraising lead in the relay.

"If I stay the lead fundraiser for the next month, I get to meet Lance Armstrong and ride with him," Ferguson said. "I can't even believe it.

"It's called the Yellow Jersey Incentive Package, like the yellow jersey from the Tour de France. I have the yellow jersey for fundraising."

Part of the package is the lead fundraisers get to start a bike ride with Armstrong, a seven-time Tour de France winner and cancer survivor, at the front of the pack at the Livestrong Weekend in Austin.

There's also a leadership luncheon with Armstrong.

And that's getting Ferguson hoping to stay atop the fundraising leader board.

Ferguson is riding in memory of her father, Dr. Duncan Ferguson, who died in May 2006 of pancreatic cancer. He was a popular professor of psychology at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College.

She expects riding for her father and the support she's received will help her on the 4,700-kilometre journey.

"I'm getting quite strong, so it's really nice," Ferguson told The Western Star this week. "I've been getting in some 100 kilometre-plus rides. It's the end of July and August where I really picked up the kilometres for single rides and going four days a week. It's a lot of kilometres in the saddle, that's for sure. "It's going really well and I feel like I'm ready to go now, which is a nice feeling."

That's not to say the training has all gone well.

She remembers her first few sessions with her new bike in April, touring the Atlantic Superstore parking lot to get used to clip-less pedals. She didn't want to fall down with her feet attached to the bike when she was in traffic in Halifax.

"The first 100-kilometre ride, I really thought I was going to die," she said. "I hit 'The Wall' at 70 kilometres. I was like 'I'm not going to be able to do this.'

"I had to stop, regroup and I really felt unwell. My last 30 kilometres went really slowly."

The following week she did two 82-kilometre rides back-to-back with the Multiple Sclerosis Bike Tour. Since then it's been getting easier.

"I'm ready to go," she said.

Weblink: www.givetolive.ca



Meghan Ferguson and her bike are in the lead to win the "Yellow Jersey Incentive Package" for the Give to Live ride from Vancouver to Austin, Texas. If she raises the most money she gets to ride with professional road racing cyclist and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong. — Submitted photo