

News Release

CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health

For immediate release

Cyclists visit Vancouver Island to raise awareness and funds for kids' mental health

June 9, 2022 - Cyclists and supporters of CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health are cycling Vancouver Island from June 11 to 19 to raise awareness and support for kids' mental health. This cycle tour for CASA kids is one of two western Canadian cycle tours to support the cause this month.

"Vancouver Island is special to CASA and its supporters," says Nadine Samycia, CASA's Chief Donor Love Officer. "In 2014, a group of cyclists rode nearly 2,000 km from Masset to Edmonton, raising funds for a children's hospital and delivering a totem pole carved by acclaimed Haida artist Ben Davidson. The cyclists formed a friendship with Davidson, also a cyclist, and started an annual trip to support CASA and children's mental health. Davidson designed a modern totem pole for CASA in 2019 and planned an epic 2020 Vancouver Island adventure, ultimately postponed due to the pandemic. Davidson passed away suddenly on August 15, 2020 at his home in Haida Gwaii. Two years later, this group of cyclists are finally cycling the route and will pedal every kilometre in memory of their dear friend Ben."

This year, cyclists are on the road for a week of inspired riding throughout Vancouver Island and the supernatural landscapes of the Discovery Islands in the northern Gulf of the Strait of Georgia. From the beautiful town of Cumberland in the Comox Valley, to the islands of Quadra and Cortes in the Salish Sea, to the southeast coast of Port Renfrew, to the vibrant British Columbian capital city of Victoria – they ride to support the invaluable services CASA provides for children, adolescents and their families with mental health and addiction concerns.

Event co-sponsor and cyclist Chad Stewart of Edmonton's Concrete Blonde Hair and Body is headed on the Van Isle tour.

"This means everything not just to myself, but to the teams at Concrete Blonde and co-sponsor JDK Heating/Cooling," says Stewart. "We started this journey together to help an organization that was in need that truly made us feel amazing from the very beginning. As a person who has struggled with depression, and kids who have had issues in their past, doing this truly fills our hearts."

Cyclist Peter O'Brien is another picture of dedication. He is cycling both the Van Isle and Southern Alberta legs of the Cycle Tour this year in memory of his late wife, Rachel.

"Rachel's journey with melanoma and immune therapy gave us seven years after her diagnosis," says O'Brien. "That is the difference between our youngest child having been 14 when she lost her mom, versus 21. When I think of what that would have been like for my 14-year-old, I can't help but feel like we would have needed to lean hard on CASA for support. I will continue to help in any way I can to support the cause."

News Release

CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health

About CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health

CASA's new vision is a community where all kids and their families are provided with timely mental health care and empowered to thrive.

CASA provides mental health treatment and services to families with children and youth aged three to 18, in a variety of therapy programs, support groups and school-based facilities in Alberta. CASA has an ambitious plan to level up its services and double the number of kids helped over the next few years. This includes expanding existing services, exploring online service, and bringing services closer to where kids need it, such as classrooms.

How to Donate

Community generosity is important to CASA, because it allows the organization to keep leveling up for more families in more communities, with services and programs that wrap around an entire family of caregivers in addition to the services for each child and youth.

Support kids' mental health; learn more and donate today at casaservices.org.

Routes and Availabilities

- Sunday, June 12: Cycle from Cumberland to Denman and Hornby Islands, then Courtenay (96 to 122 km)
- Monday, June 13: Cycle from Courtenay to Heriot Bay, Quadra Island (107 km)
- Tuesday, June 14: Cycle Tour de Cortes Island (52 km)
- Wednesday, June 15: Cycle Quadra Island to Nanaimo (165 km)
- Thursday, June 16: Cycle Nanaimo to Lake Cowichan to Port Renfrew (144 km)
- Friday, June 17: Cycle Port Renfrew to Bear Mountain (107 km)
- Saturday, June 18: Cycle Tour de Victoria (118 km)

For more information or to arrange media interviews, please contact:

Darby Semeniuk
Director, Communications
CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health
780-619-5332 (cell) or dsemeniuk@casaservices.org