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### Harriman ideal spokesman for Spokeman Tour

Barb Pacholik, Leader-Post

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Asked about his biggest challenge peddling 1,850 kilometres with about 5,900 more on the horizon, a sunburned Tim Harriman muses about the relentless rain in B.C. before settling on the stifling heat on the Prairies.

"You're gasping for air," he said. "But you keep on going. You know what's at stake."

At 19 years of age, Harriman already knows a fair bit about life's challenges and perseverance. Diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia - a form of cancer in the blood - at age 14, he spent nearly the next three years in chemotherapy.

Three weeks after his last treatment in May 2005, Harriman began training to cycle across Canada. An athletic youth, Harriman first thought about such a trip after losing his grandfather to cancer. Four years later when Harriman himself was diagnosed, the idea became a plan.

The young Airdrie, Alta., man hopes spending his summer on the seat of a bicycle on his "Spokeman Tour" will raise the profile of childhood cancer and money for the Childhood Cancer Foundation. To date, the tour, which left Victoria, B.C., on June 3, has collected about \$45,000, but Harriman has set the goal at \$100,000.

Covering about 120 to 150 kilometres a day, he plans to reach St. John's, Nfld., on Aug. 24.

But there's plenty of stops for visiting with children battling cancer. "A lot of the kids are really young. It's about giving them hope," said Harriman during a stop in Regina on Saturday.

Sometimes he shares his story and offers words of encouragement, but often the questions he fields from the children have less to do with cancer and more about

childhood curiosity, like where he went to school and what he likes to do. "Sometimes, it's about taking the focus off cancer and being kids again."

Dwayne Bender, who was among those who came out to the Regina Visitor Centre to meet Harriman, understands that sentiment perfectly. His eight-year-old son Leelen, a cancer survivor, is busy making up for lost time.

"He's fought it all his life. He's just starting to do things," said Bender. His sons recently asked about going fishing - a trip that simply wouldn't have been possible a few years ago between medical appointments, treatments, and illness.

First diagnosed with leukemia when he was 11 months old, Leelen received a bone marrow transplant from his brother three years ago. "It was a life saver for him," said his father.

Lynn Fiorante and her daughter Resa, 7, also came to urge Harriman on. Fiorante's nine-year-old son Caleb, who was in hospital and couldn't attend, recently completed treatments for a rare form of bone marrow cancer.

"It's good to have people bringing attention (to childhood cancer)," said Fiorante.

"There's a lot of kids getting leukemia."

Harriman is collecting signatures on a petition urging the federal government to declare September Childhood Cancer Awareness month.

"I think it's really great - getting more people to know about cancer," said 15-year-old Natasha Achter, who underwent years of treatment for a brain tumor. Her mother Tangy Achter, provincial co-ordinator for the cancer support group Saskatchewan Candlelighters, noted people often don't think about kids getting cancer.

According to the Childhood Cancer Foundation, some 10,000 infants, children and adolescents in Canada are currently in treatment for cancer.

For more information on the Spokeman Tour, check out [www.spokemantour.com](http://www.spokemantour.com).