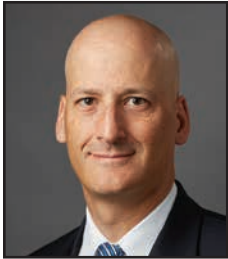


Cyclotherapy: Riding Coast-to-Coast for AACAP



■ Andrés Martin, MD, MPH

Later this summer I will embark on a long journey – a bike ride – beginning in Seattle, Washington, and ending in Washington, DC. I selected both points deliberately, as the cities that will host AACAP’s 65th and 64th Annual Meetings. That a 51-year-old husband and father of four would decide to go off the grid and ride his bicycle across these United States smacks of midlife crisis, but that is only one of the driving forces behind this adventure. Crisis-driven though it may be, I assure you that



Home Base: at the Yale Bowl, with Handsome Dan.



this is no mere impulsive and escapist wanderlust.

So Why Ride?

I ride to fulfill a big dream, one that has been long in the making. The planning process for checking this box on my bucket-list began well over three years ago. Having first begun cycling seriously only seven years ago, I am a late arrival to the sport. As a relative newcomer, I am eager to test my mettle, to plumb the depths of my own grit, and to deepen the ‘meditation in movement’ with which long-distance cycling has acquainted me. And there are external motivations, as well. In fact, getting out of one’s head (or one’s peripheral head, i.e. preferred mobile device) is a prime motivator to get out and on the saddle in the first place. Across 5,000 miles of terrain, I will experience the grandeur of our land and get to know—quite literally at street level—the country that embraced me as an immigrant from Mexico and that I now love as a proud citizen.

That midlife crisis? ... May have been a euphemism for what truly afflicted me: an episode of debilitating major depression, the fourth in my lifetime.

This healer was slow to heal himself, and even as the help of caring professionals and a dash of apt chemicals were critical, it was the bike that did much of the trick and that has kept the monster at bay. And so, I have welcomed and embraced a midlife crisis—and decided to let no crisis, personal or otherwise, go to waste. Ride on!

The “Eureka!” moment came when I realized that this big ride need not be exclusively my own—that I could make it part of something larger and more than just personally meaningful. And so, coast-to-coast evolved into Break the Cycle (BtC). BtC has become a way to give back to an Academy that has been my professional home for over two decades; to raise awareness, fight stigma, and further the Academy’s passionate message that children’s mental illnesses are real, common, and treatable; and to drive home that these conditions are also preventable, that exercise is perhaps the best ‘prescription’ we have in our toolkit.

Beyond these lofty, shared, and enduring goals, BtC has a concrete purpose: to raise funds to support the Academy’s mission. Stigma and the shortage of providers means many children are currently unable to access mental health care. Funds raised will support innovative research initiatives and help launch research careers that promote quality mental health services and treatment for children; help increase the number of child and adolescent psychiatrists by educating, encouraging, and providing the tools for students to join the field; and help ensure that children suffering in silence get the treatment they need. Finally, and perhaps closest to my heart,

Funds raised as this issue goes to print:
\$135,185
– join us!

funds raised will help give others early and transformative educational and mentorship opportunities like those I have been fortunate to receive through the Academy.

How Can You Get Involved (Yes, You!)

I began with some of the personal reasons, moved on to the professional ones, and conclude now by inviting you, dear

reader and fellow child and adolescent psychiatrist, to become involved, to help not only to Break the Cycle of mental illnesses, but to CAPture opportunities ‘By Building...’ Stronger Brains, Healthier Kids, Tighter Families, and so much more.

As a field dedicated to supporting children and their mental health, our struggle for adequate financial support is real. Whether seeking grants to fund our services and research endeavors, or negotiating contracts and reimbursement rates with insurance providers, much of what we do is fight for resources. I close by encouraging us all to apply that tenet so useful in our clinical lines of work: turning passive into active. And so, I ask of you to please consider giving generously to your Academy through this flagship initiative. Let’s go from being nickel and dimes to developing a real March of Pennies, Nickels, and Dimes in support

of children’s mental health. I hope you will join me and so many others already working to Break the Cycle! ■

Dr. Martin is editor-in-chief of the Journal of the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. His ten-year term will end on December 31, 2017. He is Secretary-Elect of the Academy, and Riva Ariella Ritvo Professor at the Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine.

Break the Cycle at a Glance

- Starts: August 17, 2017 – Seattle, WA
- Ends: October 22, 2017 – Washington, DC
- Days: 60
- States crossed: 21 + DC
- Local events: 9*
- Estimates [and daily averages]:
 - Distance: 5,067 [82] miles
 - Ascent: 196,114 [3,163] feet
 - Time on saddle: 496 [8] hours
 - Burn: 279,000 [4,500] calories

*Interested in learning how your regional organization can sponsor a local event? Visit breakthecycle.aacap.org/tools/#event.

Mission and Impact

- Your donation directly supports AACAP’s Campaign for America’s Kids (CFAK).
- CFAK’s mission is to support innovative initiatives in advocacy, education, and research that improve access to mental health treatments for all children.
- A small donation-per-mile can go a long way!
- Please consider giving:
 - \$50 (2¢ per mile)
 - \$100 (a nickel per mile)
 - \$250 (an average hourly clinical fee, or a dime per mile)
- Giving and fundraising is easy and secure through the BtC website: breakthecycle.aacap.org/donate/.
- Our peer-to-peer platform can help you raise funds by reaching out via email or social media to others who support your commitment to children and families.
- Funds raised as this issue goes to print: \$119,185 (or \$23.50 per mile) – join us!

