

Welcome to the 2024 Bike Rally!



Hello! We are Robb Walker and Ariel Benibgui, the volunteer Co-Chairs of the Friends For Life Bike Rally. This will be Robb's 18th year participating, and Ariel's 7th. Along with a Steering Committee of 34 dedicated volunteers and PWA staff members, who make up the Bike Rally leadership, **we're thrilled to officially welcome you to the 26th Annual Friends for Life Bike Rally!** Can you feel the momentum??

This year's team is hard at work organizing this outstanding event to ensure you have a fantastic, meaningful, and rewarding experience. **YOU are important and we will work hard to create a safe and welcoming environment**, a diverse and embracing community, and support you on your Bike Rally journey. Together we will celebrate the resilience, dedication, and passion of our community.

Living with HIV is certainly different today from the early days of the AIDS crisis, **but people are still living with it.** We still see new infections in Canada every day. HIV does not discriminate; it affects everyone.

People living with HIV/AIDS still require our support, whether it's helping with financial burdens, facilitating access to treatment and other holistic care, or supplying staple food and other household items, among many other services.

Many experience social isolation and mental health issues because of the ongoing stigma of HIV and AIDS; **eliminating that stigma is one of our core goals.** PWA, TRELIS & ACCM continue to do amazing and necessary work and we are proud to be aligned with these agencies to support our resilient community.

We are so excited by the **incredible momentum we already have - 273 registered Riders and 28 Crew** as of early November – the most we've ever had so early in the season! This is shaping up to be one of the biggest Bike Rallies yet thanks to your enthusiasm and dedication.

Early in the new year you will be placed on a team and your Team Captains will be your main point of contact for everything you'll need to make this year successful. They'll help with your training, fundraising, and guide you along to have a meaningful participant experience. In the meantime, if you have any questions, you can reach out to us at cochairs@bikerally.org.



Ariel Benibgui & Robb Walker, 2024 Co-Chairs



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To get your 2024 Bike Rally journey started, a few helpful notes:

- **Fundraising!** The sooner you begin, the easier it will be to surpass your goal, so take advantage of Giving Tuesday (Nov 28th), World AIDS Day (Dec 1st) and the Holidays to ask your friends, family and personal network. We have a compelling story of need to tell, so let's tell it together!
- If you're looking for any information, **visit bikerally.org** - it's a great place to start learning. You'll hear from leadership regularly through our eNews, our Facebook page @BikeRally, and our Instagram account @F4LBR. Our social media accounts are invaluable sources of information should you want to stay up to date in between newsletters.
- The annual **Bike Rally Holiday Party!** The Toronto edition will take place Friday December 1st (World AIDS Day) from 6:30pm-10:30pm. It will be held at PWA's new building at 163 Queen Street East. Take the elevator to the fourth floor event space. We're thrilled to welcome all of you to PWA's new home!
- **Training:** Our Toronto indoor training program has begun at the Central YMCA on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings for those who want to get a head start before outdoor training starts mid April. Watch the eNews and social media for updated info.
- **Fundraising Goals:** Returning 6-Day Riders have a fundraising minimum of \$3,000, while for 3-Day Riders it's \$2,500. For new 3-Day and 6-Day Riders it's \$1,950. For all 1-Day Riders it's \$950, and there is no minimum for Crew. Remember, these are simply minimums and we hope you'll set your goal higher! The more we raise the greater our reach will be.

Thank you for dedicating your time and energy to the Bike Rally. We're going to do amazing things this year!

With heartfelt thanks, Robb Walker & Ariel Benibgui



Giving Tuesday & World AIDS Day

NOVEMBER 28TH & DECEMBER 1ST



Coming up is **Giving Tuesday**, a global day for giving and volunteering that takes place after Black Friday and is **"the opening day of giving season."**

This year, **World AIDS Day** *lands three days later!* This is an opportunity for people worldwide to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness.

As social media and the news turn their attention to our cause, **it's a great time to reach out to your network** and ask them to support your fundraising efforts. Combined with the generosity of the Holiday season, you're set up for success! **(Did you know 1/3 of all donations are given in December?)**

Tips for Successful Fundraising:

1. **Update your fundraising profile** with pictures and your personal story.
2. Check out the **year-end thank-you gifts** on following page. Hotel rooms, gift cards, t-shirts, caps and more!
3. Post our Giving Tuesday/World AIDS Day **social media graphic** (Go to bikerally.org/fundraising) to Facebook or Instagram along with a personal message.
4. Visit GivingTuesday.ca to **learn more** about the day, and find language you might want to use to communicate to your donors.
5. **Learn more** about World AIDS Day by visiting UNAIDS.org/World_AIDS_Day

Key Messages

- There are still thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs) who rely on PWA, Trellis and ACCM.
- Refugees are currently in crisis in Canada's cities, and a disproportionate number of them are living with HIV. They are in desperate need of food, housing and medication.
- High inflation has led to increased demand for income supports and food bank services.

Need help making a personal fundraising plan? Want tips on how to talk to your friends and family about the cause? Have anxiety about asking for money?

Talk to our Fundraising Co-Leads, Trevor Hopman, Seamus Butterly & Peter Goulos. Email them at fundraising@bikerally.org



Thank-You Gifts & Contests



Win ONE OF TWO 2-night stays at the Marriott Residence Inn upon our arrival into Montreal!

If you're Crew, a Montreal 600KM or Montreal 300KM Rider, **every \$100 you raise between November 15th and December 31st 2023 will enter your name into a draw** to win *ONE OF TWO* 2-night stays at the Marriott Residence Inn upon our arrival into Montreal. 2nd and 3rd place each receive a \$50 VISA gift card. (1-Day Riders qualify for gift card prizes. Draw will be held the first week of January. Participants from Montreal or Kingston 300KM Riders have the option of staying at a Marriott hotel in Toronto for Departure weekend).

There will also be 6 WEEKLY draws between Nov 15th and Dec 31st, with each winner receiving a \$50 VISA gift card. The earlier you fundraise, the more chances to win!

First-Year Riders: Earn a Vintage Jersey

If you're a first-year rider and **you raise more than \$500**, you'll also receive a classic Bike Rally jersey of your choice from a previous year - Perfect for outdoor training in the Spring.



Earn brand NEW Bike Rally T-Shirt, Cap, Hoodie and Bike Shorts!

All participants **who raise \$1,500** by January 1st, 2024 will receive the official **Bike Rally T-Shirt and Cap** as a thank-you gift (see pics below).

All participants **who raise \$2,250** by February 14th, 2024 will receive the official 2024 Bike Rally Hoodie.

All participants **who raise \$3,000** by March 31st 2024 will receive the official 2024 Bike Rally Bike Shorts as a thank-you gift.

