

Local cyclists enter two-country marathon to help end poverty

By **PETER CLARK**
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Two local residents are preparing for what will be no easy feat.

Dora VanderWoude and Frank Folkema are set to join a field of 211 cyclists in the Christian Reformed Church's Sea to Sea Ending the Cycle of Poverty Tour, the largest cross-continental bike tour ever.

The bi-national cross-continental event runs in the United States and Canada in hopes of raising \$1.5 million to aid in ending the cycle of poverty for individuals, families and communities throughout the world.

The tour takes God's message to the streets, raising awareness and funds to help break the cycles that keep people poor.

Most of the cyclists are affiliated with a congregation in the Christian Reformed Church.

Locally, VanderWoude and Folkema of the Hebron Christian Reformed Church have set their own combined personal goal of \$15,000 raised. They already have over \$1,000 in donations.

The bike tour leaves Seattle, Wash., on June 28 and ends in Jersey City, N.J. Aug. 30.

Along the way, Canadian stops include Chatham, London, Hamilton and St. Catharines. The marathon covers 6,228

kilometres (3,868 miles).

"Frank will be biking four weeks, and I'm doing the nine weeks," VanderWoude said.

People looking to donate can do so online at www.seatosea.org.

"We really do want the community to support us to end the cycle of poverty," Folkema says.

"People will say, 'how can we end poverty?' But we can end it for some," Folkema stresses.

VanderWoude notes they'll be sending out donation letters to the businesses of Renfrew asking for their support in this endeavour.

VanderWoude rode a Sea to Sea Vancouver to Halifax Tour in 2005, and cycled from Ottawa to Newfoundland and Labrador the next year. She has also cycled across New Zealand.

Folkema has cycled the road terrain of France.

"I did the tour de France, but not thee Tour de France," he quipped.

"We decided to do the cycle this past fall, in September or October," Folkema adds.

"We cycle six days in a row, and have a celebration service on Sunday," VanderWoude says of the upcoming nine-week event.

Plenty of training goes into participating in such an event. "It's a lot of sweat and tears, but in the end, we believe in the



Frank Folkema and Dora VanderWoude would appreciate your support in the Cycle of Poverty which starts in Seattle and ends in Jersey City over a nine-week period this summer. Mercury photo by PETER CLARK

cause," notes Folkema.

"A lot of people involved are a bit nervous. They don't know if they can do it."

VanderWoude says it is about how you look at it.

"It's 90 per cent mental and 10 per cent physical. A lot of it is a positive outlook," VanderWoude adds, and she needs

look no further than one cyclist. "The oldest competitor turns 81 years old during the tour, and the youngest is about 18."

Folkema says, seeing the work VanderWoude has put into her cycling inspired him to get involved in the Sea to Sea tour. "I was impressed with Dora in 2005."

"You do get some injuries, but you work your way through," Folkema adds of these cycling marathon events. "You take it one day at a time."

For additional information or to make a donation, go to the www.seatosea.org website, or call Dora VanderWoude 613-432-7906.