



PRESS RELEASE

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Local Cyclist with Rare Neuromuscular Disorder invites all to join in Cycling Journey

February 15, 2010 - Kyle Bryant and Team Ride Ataxia are inviting all cyclists to join them for another multi-day cycling journey to raise awareness and research funds for the rare neuromuscular disorder Friedrich's ataxia (FA) with which Bryant and other teammates are affected.

Ride Ataxia Nor Cal will travel 100 miles through the scenic foothills of Northern California from Folsom, CA to Grass Valley, CA and back on May 15 and 16, 2010. The ride will also include 10 and 25 mile route options, inviting all levels of riders.

Ride Ataxia Nor Cal starts on Friedrich's ataxia awareness day and benefits the Friedrich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA). Throughout that weekend, fundraisers will take place all over the country in support of FA research and awareness.

Locally the event falls on the same weekend as the start of the Amgen Tour of California; one of the country's most popular professional bicycle races which will bring Lance Armstrong and Levi Leipheimer as well as many other pros to the area. Ride Ataxia will provide the opportunity to ride some of the same roads as the Amgen Tour of California the day before the pros race.

Kyle Bryant, who was diagnosed with FA in 1998, founded Ride Ataxia in 2007 with a 2,500 mile ride from San Diego, CA to Memphis, TN. Since then, Ride Ataxia has become a national powerhouse travelling 3,500 miles in the past three years, raising invaluable awareness and over \$830,000 in research funds.

Bryant states, "As Ride Ataxia has grown by leaps and bounds over the past three years, we have addressed the need to share the adventure with people of all abilities by changing the format of the Ride to include shorter weekend rides in which all can participate. There is something for everyone with shorter options to include the whole family. Additionally, the Nor Cal ride will challenge even seasoned riders with over 7,000 feet of climbing in a two-day 100-mile ride."

FARA President Ron Bartek added, "Kyle Bryant, his family and his Ride Ataxia teammates are real difference makers. These courageous, resourceful and dedicated people have made their cycles into vehicles of change that have vastly expanded awareness of

Friedreich's ataxia and have significantly increased financial support for Friedreich's ataxia research. With Kyle as program director and Ride Ataxia as FARA's marquis fundraising event, we look forward to the 2010 Ride Ataxia effort that will help propel our research closer to treatments and a cure."

The funds raised by team Ride Ataxia have gone directly to the annual Kyle Bryant Research Award for translational research in FA. Dr. Gino Cortopassi, an FA researcher at the UC Davis School of Medicine, is a recent recipient of a 2009 Kyle Bryant Research award to support his work in Friedreich's ataxia therapeutics. Dr. Cortopassi has been working on FA research for several years and met Bryant while Bryant was completing his undergraduate civil engineering degree at UC Davis. Cortopassi states, "It is an honor to receive the 2009 Kyle Bryant Translational Research Award. Our lab is highly motivated by the fact that this award was made possible by sweat, tears and many pedal strokes for the cause."

Team Ride Ataxia has set a goal of raising \$170,000 towards research for Friedreich's ataxia with Ride Ataxia Nor Cal, which will bring the total raised to \$1 Million in just over three years. The team is seeking participants to join them on their journey as well as sponsors. For more information or to make a donation please visit <http://www.rideataxia.org/norcal>. Sponsorships are available now. Registration starts February 15.

In 2010, FARA will host Ride Ataxia events in the following locations:

- Tampa Bay- April 13, 2010
- Northern California- May 15-16, 2010
- Philadelphia- October 2010
- Southern California- December 4-5, 2010

About Friedreich's ataxia

Friedreich's ataxia (FA) is a debilitating, life-shortening, degenerative neuro-muscular disorder. Onset of symptoms can vary from childhood to adulthood and can include muscle weakness and loss of coordination in the arms and legs; impairment of vision, hearing and speech; aggressive scoliosis (curvature of the spine); diabetes, and a serious heart condition. The progressive loss of coordination and muscle strength leads to motor incapacitation and the full-time use of a wheelchair. Childhood onset of FA is usually between the ages of 5 and 15 and tends to be associated with a more rapid progression. There is currently no treatment or cure.

About FARA

The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to accelerating research leading to treatments and a cure for Friedreich's ataxia. <http://www.curefa.org>

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