

Relentless for a Cure: an Italian Man Pedals Across the US Against Leukemia

Francesca Giuliani (August 03, 2012)



Luigi Laraia, a cancer patient, is riding his bicycle from Washington DC to Canada in 35 days to raise awareness and funds for leukemia research. His journey started on July 26 in front of the Embassy of Italy to the United States and it will end on September 3.

Luigi Laraia is a 37-years old Italian economist at the World Bank Group in Washington DC. Four months ago, Laraia was diagnosed with leukemia. Last week he started a 4,000 mile bicycle journey across America to raise awareness of the illness that struck him and to fundraise for the [Leukemia and Lymphoma Society](#) [2].

Laraia set off for his adventure alone on July 26, in front of the [Italian Embassy to the United States](#) [3]. His journey will last 35 days and cover 12 states and important cities such as Pittsburg and Chicago, to then end in Vancouver, Canada, on September 3. To succeed, he will attempt to ride 125 miles a day: "The first cycle of chemotherapy gave me the strength and the determination to set



such an ambitious goal,” Laraia said.

“Research on cancer progresses especially thanks to the efforts of single individuals,” he explained. Laraia is currently on his 9th day of cycling and he finally arrived in Chicago. Traveling with just a change of clothes and a laptop computer, Laraia posts daily updates on his trip on his blog “[Relentless for a Cure](#) [4].” On it, Laraia tells the readers that he decided to ride his bicycle because he wants to send “a message of hope to all those who are sick.”

In 2010, Laraia had already pedaled [from Washington DC to the Grand Canyon](#) [5], but his physical condition then was very different. Laraia decided to embark on this journey right after losing 20 lbs and suffering weeks of illness due to chemotherapy’s side effects. In May, when his doctor deemed it safe for him to start exercising again, he started planning his itinerary.

“My family thought I was crazy,” Laraia said in an interview with the British newspaper [The Guardian](#) [6], “It took me some time to explain to them what I wanted to do, but now they understand the passion and the motivation, so they are all behind it.”

On his dedicated page on the LLS’ fundraising website [Light the Night](#) [7], Luigi explains that “Cancer research, coupled with self-belief and determination, helps millions of patients to live. This is what I believe in, this is the real miracle: the power of research to find the right medication and the power of the mind to stay focused.”

As Luigi stays focused on his itinerary, you can follow his journey on his [blog](#) [4] and donate to his cause through it.

Source URL: <http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/facts-stories/article/relentless-cure-italian-man-pedals-across-us-against-leukemia>

Links

- [1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/laraia1344026613jpg>
- [2] <http://www.lls.org/#/>
- [3] <http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it>
- [4] <http://luigilaraia.blogspot.com/>
- [5] http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/?o=1&doc_id=8626&v=Y0
- [6] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-news-blog/2012/jul/09/leukemia-diagnosis-bike-trek>
- [7] <http://pages.lightthenight.org/nca/washDC12/LLaraia>