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IWU Students to Bike Across the Country for FACE AIDS

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – As the school year draws to a close, some Illinois Wesleyan University students are pondering what to do with their summer. Many will choose a summer job or internship, while others will elect to take summer classes. But junior biology majors Michael Henry and Vadim Kogan have chosen to bike over 4,000 miles across the United States to raise money and awareness for the FACE AIDS organization.

This is the fourth year of the FACE AIDS campaign, a not-for-profit student organization whose mission is to mobilize and inspire students to fight HIV/AIDS across the globe. The organization, which works in collaboration with Partner's in Health, has raised over $2,000,000 since its inception. The money raised provides education, employment and comprehensive healthcare to those affected by HIV/AIDS in Rwanda.

Henry and Kogan were selected along with four other college and graduate students from across the country to complete the ride, which will begin on June 13, in Half Moon Bay, Ca. and end in Boston in August. By the end of the ride, Henry and Kogan have each pledged to raise $5,000 for FACE AIDS.

"I felt this ride would be the best way to make an impact in the fight against HIV/AIDS," said Henry, the founder of the FACE AIDS organization at IWU. Kogan, who was introduced to the cross-country ride by Henry, felt this experience would combine three of his interests, cycling, seeing the country and talking to people about HIV/AIDS.

Currently, the duo is juggling a variety of preparatory tasks, including raising money for the campaign, arranging places for speaking engagements, planning places to stay and getting to know the other riders via skype.

"We decided that we're going to be unprepared physically, because we don't have time to bike for eight hours a day," said Henry who explains that they have started doing P90X, a high intensity workout for an hour and a half, six days a week to prepare.

Kogan, a fitness enthusiast, said that "one way or another, we're going to hobble our way across the miles." Some days will be longer than others. Through the flatlands of the Midwest, the team will be biking between 80-100 miles a day, but through the steep incline of the Rocky Mountains, they will average 35 miles.

Once the team reaches a destination, they will give presentations to spread awareness about the impacts of AIDS and the FACE AIDS mission. Although Henry and Kogan are aware of the physical and mental demands of the ride, they are excited for the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead.

If you would like to learn more about the ride or donate money to the cause, visit **www.faceaids.org/raa**.

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