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March 27, 1995

Contact: Bob Aaron, 309/556-3181

"Bike for Homes," April 22

IWU Students Organize Bike Race To Raise Funds for Habitat for Humanity

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Bicyclists will be zipping around the streets of Bloomington on April 22, competing in a 50-mile relay race aimed at raising funds for the McLean County Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, a volunteer group that builds homes for low-income families.

The race--dubbed "Bike for Homes"--will begin at 9 a.m. in Miller Park.

Bob Johnson, an Illinois Wesleyan University senior majoring in sociology and English, is director of the bike race. He has guided the project through 18 months of planning.

Johnson is extending an invitation to the event to Habitat's most famous volunteer: former President Jimmy Carter.

"We're shooting for 10-15 four-person teams," Johnson said. "Teams can choose how many laps each racer can ride before another teammate takes off. The race is 50 miles long--each lap is about 1.85 miles. It's a timed race--the best time wins."

There is a \$500 entry fee for each team. Proceeds are earmarked for McLean County's Habitat for Humanity Chapter.

"If we get 10 teams," Johnson explained, "we can raise \$5,000 for Habitat and lay a solid foundation for next year. Our goal is for the bike race to become a Bloomington-Normal community event each year.

"Habitat has built over 20 houses in McLean County and a 27-lot subdivision is planned," Johnson added. "Between 15,000 and 16,000 people in McLean County live under the poverty level and we wanted to do something that would help them. We want to be a source of funds for McLean County Habitat, since it does a lot of good for people in the area."

Relay teams are raising their \$500 entry fees in various ways. Two IWU residence halls--Munsell and Ferguson--are splitting the fee and entering a combined team. The Kappa Delta sorority at IWU is funding the entire \$500 fee. Additional participants are asking parents, grandparents,

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different family members, and others to sponsor their teams. A letter campaign also is being employed to raise funds.

Race Coordinator Todd Carlisle, a sophomore majoring in psychology, said the race course will involve these Bloomington streets and areas: Miller St., Summit St., Lake Dr., Tanner St., Forest Park, and Miller Park.

The idea for the race came from a similar successful effort organized by the University of Richmond in Virginia.

The race will end at Miller Park, where the winners will be announced and proceeds will be turned over to McLean County's Habitat Chapter. Among those expected to participate in the ceremony is Judy Stone, founder and board chair of the local Habitat affiliate. After-race events also will include carnival-like activities, including two or three bands, and food will be sold by the Miller Park vendor.

A 13-member committee of IWU students is administering the bike race in cooperation with the Illinois State University Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, headed by Dave Mystic.

The bike race rain date is April 29.

McLean County Habitat for Humanity was founded in April, 1985. It has sold 28 homes to families and employs about 700 volunteers a year to build houses. Construction work is done on Saturdays, so it takes about 9-10 months to complete a home. Families receiving Habitat homes contribute about 500 hours of work to the project. Four-bedroom homes sell for about \$35,000 and carry interest-free mortgages. Recipients of Habitat homes must meet three criteria: they must have a housing need, they must be able to pay the mortgage, and they must be willing to be a partner in building their home.

Habitat for Humanity has almost 1,200 affiliates nationwide.

Those interested in sponsoring a team, making a donation, or obtaining additional information should contact: Bob Johnson, bike race director, at 309/556-2706 or Todd Carlisle, bike race coordinator, at 309/556-2194.