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March 6, 1996

**Contact:** Bob Aaron, 309/556-3181

*Habitat for Humanity Fund Raiser Set for April 14*

### **BIKE RACE AIMS AT RAISING \$10,000 FOR FAMILY HOME UNDER CONSTRUCTION BY IWU-ISU STUDENT VOLUNTEERS**

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*Raffle to Support Bike Race;  
Prizes include Bulls' Tickets, Gift Certificates for Golf, Restaurants*

**Editor's Note:** *Galena resident, Mary Kern, an Illinois Wesleyan University junior majoring in business and psychology, is co-director of a bike race fund raiser for Habitat for Humanity, slated for April 14 in Bloomington-Normal. Her family resides at 909 Third St., Galena. She also is among a team of undergraduate student researchers conducting experiments into Alzheimer's disease in cooperation with Abbott Laboratories and Chicago's Loyola University, Stritch School of Medicine.*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--When scores of bicyclists cross the finish line after racing around downtown Normal on April 14, a local family will be closer to the American dream--a home of their own.

Pedal power is the driving force behind the Second Annual Bike For Homes, a 50-mile relay race aimed at raising a least \$10,000 to cover building costs for a Habitat for Humanity home under construction in west Bloomington's Wohjan Subdivision.

The home is being built by more than 100 students from Illinois Wesleyan University and Illinois State University. The bike race is sponsored by the student chapters of Habitat for Humanity at the two universities. Habitat is a not-for-profit organization, based in Americus, Ga., with about 1,200 chapters worldwide whose goal is to eliminate substandard housing.

Mary Kern, an IWU business and psychology major from Galena, Ill., and bike race co-director, said: "The bike race is organized around competing relay teams with four or five members each. Each team must raise a minimum of \$500 to enter the race."

Diana Imaka, an IWU senior majoring in economics from Jurmala, Latvia, will be among the racers.

"I've biked since I was a child," said Imaka, who joined Habitat for Humanity in September, 1994. "It's a neat idea to help raise funds for a house through a bike race. America has accepted me and this is a way I can pay that back. The bike race will be fun and we'll be able to help someone."

A \$100 non-refundable deposit and registration materials, due by March 15, should be mailed to: Keeley Cultra, Illinois Wesleyan University, Blackstock Hall, 1102 N. East St., Bloomington, Ill. 61701.

### **Raffle Prizes**

To help teams raise their entry fees, bike race organizers are sponsoring a raffle. Prizes include tickets to a Chicago Bulls' basketball game; free passes to the Par-A-Dice riverboat casino in Peoria; complimentary hotel accommodations (Ramada and Fairfield Inn), a bicycle, passes to local golf courses including cart rental, and gift certificates from local restaurants, including Central Station, Ned Kelly's, Damon's, and Bennigan's. The Health Massage Center, located on East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington, is donating a gift certificate to the raffle and will be at the race to assist bikers. Progressive Impressions of Illinois, a Bloomington-based business, donated printing services for bike race advertising including posters and pamphlets.

Raffle tickets, priced at \$2 each, will be sold by the racing teams. For more information about how to purchase raffle tickets, call: Bryan Kidd, 309/862-1666.

"We're building a house for fellow members of our community--the Caldwell family, a single mom with three sons," Kern said. "So, we hope that many people in the community will become involved in the bike race as contestants or by buying raffle tickets or donating raffle prizes. We hope the bike race raises community awareness about housing needs."

### **Bike Race**

The starting and finish line for the bike race is the parking lot at the Alamo II bookstore adjacent to the ISU campus in Normal. Registration begins at 12:30 p.m. Racers will be given complimentary T-shirts and refreshments at registration. The starter's gun will fire at 1 p.m. Race organizers estimate it will take three hours for relay riders to complete 50 laps around the mile-long course skirting downtown Normal.

Raffle prize winners will be announced throughout the race at the Alamo II parking lot. Winners do not have to be present to secure their prizes.

An awards ceremony will take place at 4 p.m. at the Alamo II parking lot.

Riders must provide their own bikes and helmets. However, due to the race's relay format, teams only need two bikes and helmets. Bike organizers will have a limited number of extra helmets available for contestants.

### **Habitat for Humanity Home**

Construction began last August on the 1,272-square-foot, three bedroom, 1 1/2 bath Caldwell family home, which is slated for completion this summer. The cost of the home is \$36,000; \$20,000 remains to be raised.

Habitat for Humanity is planning to construct 27 homes during the next five years in the Wohjan Subdivision.

"Habitat families," Kern explained, "go through a rigorous selection process. They must have stable incomes and a good employment history so that they can pay off the loan. Habitat families must put in 500 hours of sweat equity to help construct their home and they must repay its interest free construction loan cost over 20 years."

IWU and ISU students typically spend Saturday morning working on the Caldwell family home. Generally, the work involves roofing, siding, dry walling, framing, painting, and other basic finishing work.

Last year, Kern, Imaka and 27 other IWU students spent spring break working on Habitat for Humanity homes in Conway, S.C. This year, IWU students will be heading for Texas to work on Habitat projects over IWU's spring break, March 15-25.

The idea of sponsoring a bike race to raise funds for Habitat for Humanity, Kern said, surfaced during a spring break trip her freshman year to New Iberia, La., where IWU students helped out on Habitat projects. A Richmond, Va., campus was the first to sponsor a Habitat bike race.

Last year's bike race raised more than \$5,000.

Kern is attracted to Habitat, she said, because "it's an active service organization--you're not just raising money for a national organization to divvy up. You go out and accomplish much yourself and that is satisfying."

Habitat founder Millard Fuller has written: "The philosophy of Habitat for Humanity is to build simple, decent houses with people who are living in substandard housing and who are too poor to receive conventional funding for adequate housing."

Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, are among Habitat's most visible volunteers. Carter, a Habitat volunteer since 1984, has said: "After serving as president of the United States, Rosalynn and I believed it was important for us to continue to make a meaningful contribution to people's lives. And we have, with Habitat for Humanity. We believe in Habitat's integrity, effectiveness and tremendous vision. With Habitat, we build more than houses. We build families, communities and hope."

For more information about Bike for Homes '96, call: 309/556-2334, or 309/862-1666.

### **Alzheimer's Research**

Kern also is involved in a pioneering undergraduate research project at IWU investigating the cause and nature of Alzheimer's Disease, the memory-robbing malady affecting four million Americans including former President Ronald Reagan.

She is among 10 IWU students working with IWU faculty and Abbott Laboratories, the pharmaceutical firm, and Chicago's Loyola University, Stritch School of Medicine on a project aimed at constructing an animal model of how Alzheimer's cripples the brain. The project is directed by Wayne Dornan, associate professor of psychology.

"We're contributing to research into this horrible, horrible disease," Kern said, "and perhaps we'll contribute in a small way to finding a cure. It's fulfilling and mentally challenging work."

IWU's research into Alzheimer's is focusing on testing of two neurotoxins--AF64A and Saporin--to examine their affects on learning and memory in laboratory rats. The goal is to develop an animal model of Alzheimer's, a key step in understanding the disease's cause and possible treatment. Dornan and his team of IWU students have published papers on their work in scientific journals and have presented their findings at conferences of the Society for Neuroscience.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,860 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. The university's endowment is valued at more than \$100 million. A \$25 million Center for Natural Science Learning and Research opened Aug. 28 and will be dedicated Oct. 7. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 161 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition. *101 of the Best Values in America's Colleges and Universities* calls IWU "undoubtedly one of the finest small colleges in the country," adding, "Illinois Wesleyan has surged to national prominence on the basis of its reputation as a school with a rock-solid academic program."

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