



Going the Distance with RIDERS FOR STRIDERS

**By John Perkinson
Staff Writer**

Editor's note: Do you know a pilot we should highlight in "Our Stories"? Please contact us at Magazine@alpa.org.

Seeing Presley, a young chemotherapy patient, who was featured in a bicycle promotion on Facebook, had a profound effect on F/O Tyler Klassen (Spirit). What caught Klassen's attention—in addition to Presley's beaming smile—was that she was sitting on a Strider brand bike.

"As a parent, the thought of your child having a serious illness or disease is terrifying," said Klassen. "However, seeing Presley on that bike really made me smile. I could just imagine her having a great time riding up and down the halls of the hospital."

"My son learned to ride using a Strider bike before he was three," said Klassen, adding that he never had to use training wheels. Strider uses an alternative approach to help kids learn to ride a bicycle. Instead of teaching a child to pedal with training wheels before moving on to balance, Strider bikes focus on balancing first.

The Chicago-based A320 pilot remarked that Presley's ad was so compelling that he contacted the company to find out more about its program with hospitals. Klassen, in his free time, is an avid motorcyclist. Impressed with what he learned, he decided to organize a charity motorcy-

cle run, *Riders for Striders*, in the Indianapolis area where he lives. He called the company last October, organized a team of volunteers, and began asking local businesses for help. The group worked with Strider's Art Department to develop promotional mate-

Riders for Striders will organize bikers in groups of eight and send them off in five-minute intervals versus a traditional parade approach. "We'll consider rider experience levels and bike styles as we match up groups. If you want to ride with your friends

a captain who had recently become interested in motorcycles and had recommended a bike course to him. Klassen completed the class and soon acquired his license.

Proceeds from *Riders for Striders* will go to purchase Strider bikes for Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St.Vincent in Indianapolis. Klassen selected the hospital because two family friends who are area nurses strongly recommended the facility for the donations.

So far, *Riders for Striders* has nearly 50 cyclists registered, and the event is abuzz on Indy bike blogs and chat rooms. Riders are coming from as far away as Ohio, and Klassen is counting on a huge turnout. And someday soon he hopes that young bikers will be "cruising" the halls at Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St.Vincent, like the *Riders for Striders*, taking time to have some fun while temporarily setting aside their worries. 🍀



Like father like son: Klassen and his son on their bikes.

rials for the ride. In fact, some of Klassen's first contributors were Strider employees who were obviously impressed with his initiative.

Riders for Striders is scheduled for Saturday, May 17. Motorcyclists will start and finish at a local restaurant in south Indianapolis. They'll ride on back country lanes like Goat Hollow Road to Bloomington, Ind., where they'll have lunch courtesy of a local motorcycle shop before turning around and heading back. The ride covers approximately 160 miles, and the entry fee is \$15 per bike.

or meet new people, we'll accommodate you," he said, adding, "The bottom line is that we want to make this a fun ride."

Klassen will be riding his 2012 Ural T, a Russian motorcycle with a sidecar. "Some families have a minivan; we have a sidecar," he joked. Richard Klassen, Tyler's dad, is also supporting the cause and will fly in from Tucson, Ariz., and occupy the second seat.

A former Piedmont and Republic pilot, Klassen has been riding motorbikes for 7 years. During his Republic days, Klassen flew a trip with

Join the Cause!

If you have a motorcycle and would like to participate in the May 17 Indianapolis-area *Riders for Striders* charity event, visit www.youcaring.com/ridersforstriders to register. You can also purchase t-shirts and stickers to help support the ride. All proceeds go to purchase Striders bicycles for Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St.Vincent in Indianapolis. Be sure to follow *Riders for Striders* on both Facebook and Twitter.