

Cycling for a close-to-home cause

Golden family rides to raise money for Children's Hospital

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For two decades Golden resident Roy Masters has dedicated his time to working with handicapped children and cycling to raise money for them.

This weekend, he'll pedal another 157 mountain miles in the annual Courage Classic.

Masters will be joined by 1,999 other riders for the Classic, which will begin Saturday in Leadville and finish there on Monday. Participating riders are raising money for The Children's Hospital. A portion of the funds goes to the Hospital Sports Program that Masters has been a part of for 22 years.

"One of the things that keeps bringing me back is that I teach handicap skiing for Children's Hospital," Masters said. "I'm really committed to that sports program."

Masters, 50, teaches children with a variety of disabilities how to ski at Winter Park. Many of his students are in a wheelchair or have trouble balancing, so they learn how to sit ski.

"A lot of them, because they're in wheelchairs or walkers, don't really have the ability to create speed on their own, and it's sort of a real adrenaline rush for them to be able to move fast under their own power," he said.

The National Sports Center for the Disabled is also located at Winter Park and has a similar mission to the hospital. The two programs work together all winter to help these children experience some-

thing new for the first time.

"A lot of these kids really love it. They get a big kick out of it, and many go on to be very good skiers," Masters said.

His 21-year-old daughter Gina, who is also doing the ride, has been teaching handicap skiing for three years, and he said it's neat to see her following in his footsteps.

This will not be Gina's first ride in the Classic. When Gina was younger, her dad pulled her and her sister in a bike trailer, while their mom, Roseanne, drove alongside with supplies.

As their children got older, Roseanne started riding too and is now participating in her 10th year.

"Children's goes out of their way to make it have a family feel," Masters said. "Most big rides are not family oriented."

Another reason the Masters

family continues doing the ride each year is because 17-year-old Lucy has some nerve damage from a snowboarding accident. Lucy has spent the past couple years visiting Children's Hospital, and her condition has greatly improved, Masters said.

"She's going to be sore for a long time, but she certainly is better," he said.

The Classic takes riders through Leadville to Copper Mountain, over Vail Pass and around some of the Summit County ski areas.

Riders have the option of joining a team or riding solo. In addition to paying a registration fee, many riders fundraise on their own.

Masters and his wife have raised nearly \$3,000 this year. Last year's ride yielded a total of more than \$2.2 million in funds.

Seventeen teams have Golden residents on them this year. Other Colorado teams that have some Golden riders, such as The Gene Team, have raised \$66,000.

"In general, Golden is really sort of a bike-riding Mecca. There are so many good rides from Golden that you can do heading to mountains or on the Clear Creek trails," Masters said.

A team of former and current patients, and their family members, called Team Courage, also rides.

"They are an inspiration to all of us," said Carrie Olinger, event manager at The Children's Hospital Foundation.

Olinger said the event could not take place without the 400 volunteers and 2,000 riders who dedicate their time and have kept the event running for so many years.

For families like the Masters, the event will continue to be put on the calendar at the start of each year.

"We always look forward to it. It's just become a family weekend up in the mountains every year," he said.

For more information about the Courage Classic or to donate, visit couragetours.com.