



Blind cyclist starts cross-country tour in St. John's Raises awareness and funds for three major Canadian charities

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(ST JOHN'S, N.L.) - The *Craig Gives Back-to-Back Cross Canada Bicycle Tour* launches in St. John's, N.L. on Aug. 4. Blind sports enthusiast, Craig Aucoin of Pictou, N.S. and his cycling friend Lloyd McLean will begin an 85-day cross Canada ride with an official send-off celebration hosted by CNIB and the Y at the YMCA at 35 Ridge Rd., St. John's, starting at 9 a.m. The national ride is raising awareness and funds for three major Canadian charities that Aucoin credits for changing his life: Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, CNIB and YMCAs in Canada. Money raised in each province will stay in that province.

"We are proud to be hosting the Craig Gives Back launch at the Ches Penney Family Y. The tour will help raise awareness of the YMCAs dedication to building healthy communities. We wish Craig and Lloyd a safe journey across Canada," says Chris Roos, Chief Executive Officer, YMCA of Northeast Avalon.

Aucoin was born with the incurable eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa. He was able to live a normal, active childhood until age 15 when his condition worsened leaving him completely blind. This affected Aucoin both physically and emotionally.

"Craig's story embodies what we do with each of our clients at CNIB; provide training that builds confidence leading to independent living," said Deborah Wearn, Provincial Director, CNIB. "His commitment to changing his life and improving his health is such an encouragement to everyone to set your goals and work to achieve them. We wish Craig and Lloyd all the best with their monumental journey ahead."

Aucoin and Lloyd McLean plan to travel 8,260 km cross-country on the Altona Janus, a back-to-back recumbent tandem bicycle. The tour's goal is to raise \$300,000 for Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, CNIB and YMCA Canada.

For more information or to donate, please visit craiggivesback.ca and 'like' Craig Gives Back on Facebook at [facebook.com/craiggivesback](https://www.facebook.com/craiggivesback).

To donate \$5 on your mobile phone, text 45678 with keyword CRAIG.



About the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind (CGDB) is a national, non-profit, registered, charitable organization that assists visually-impaired Canadians with their mobility by providing and training them in the use of professionally trained Guide Dogs.

About CNIB

CNIB is a registered charity, passionately providing community-based support, knowledge and a national voice to ensure Canadians who are blind or partially sighted have the confidence, skills and opportunities to fully participate in life.

About the YMCA

YMCA Canada is a registered charity dedicated to building healthy communities by nurturing the potential of children, teens and young adults, promoting healthy living, fostering social responsibility in order to create lasting personal and social change.

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To arrange an interview with Craig please contact:

Debbie Ryan
CNIB Communications
Newfoundland and Labrador
P. 709.754.1180 x 5811
C. 709.685.7263
E. Debbie.Ryan@cnib.ca

Kelly Picco
Assistant, Community Giving
CNIB Newfoundland and Labrador
P. 709-754-1180 x 5809
E. kelly.picco@cnib.ca