

Group hits road in effort to stop human trafficking

A group of bicycle riders from Mt. Juliet's Global Vision Bible Church will leave Sunday to ride 800 to 1,000 miles across three states in less than a week to raise money and awareness to stop human trafficking.

Greg Locke, the church's pastor, will lead a group that will leave around 12:30 p.m., with a scheduled return of Oct. 19. The goal is to raise \$30,000 that will go to End Slavery Tennessee, a faith-based nonprofit in Nashville.

"The more I studied it, I realized how we are completely ignorant of what is happening in our own backyard," Locke said. "This is a Christian organization, but it's also something that isn't so churchy."

Will Benson, Anthony Hicks, Chris Lamberth and Blake Nelson will join Locke on the trip that will likely be about 120 miles a day. The pastor's 9-year-old son, Hudson-Taylor Lock, also is going, and will ride "as much as he can," during his fall break from school. Chad Hungerford, who attends a sponsoring church in Alabama, also will ride.

The cyclists will be supported by a recreational vehicle driven by an assistant pastor along the way for the riders to sleep and shower in. The first four nights, Locke has a church lined up to speak at in the evening and was looking for a church or organization to speak at Thursday and Friday.

Locke never cycled extensively before, but he has trained since July, riding 30 to 130 miles daily. Locke also has gone up in a scissors lift for four days and three nights to solicit donations for the homeless in downtown Nashville and annually takes a group from the church to live on the streets as homeless individuals for a weekend.

"I've probably lost 30 pounds since I started training, and I wasn't a big guy, but I love it," Locke said.

Helping victims

End Slavery Tennessee provides training for people to identify victims of human trafficking and work with youth who are potentially vulnerable to trafficking as well providing long-term care to victims who are referred to the nonprofit.

"What we do is expensive, under-resourced and understaffed," said Derri Smith, director of End Slavery Tennessee. "Because of the money they are raising, victims will be identified, survivors will be supported in rebuilding their lives and vulnerable young people will be empowered to avoid this tragedy."

Many from Global Vision will be on bikes after church Sunday to help the team start the ride as they leave from the church on Old Lebanon Dirt Road and head down Chandler Radford Road. The team will go to Shelbyville, where it will speak at Cornerstone Baptist Church Sunday night.

The ride will go into Alabama and Georgia and come back through Monteagle Mountain, which Locke expects to be the toughest part of the trip.

Offerings will be taken at churches Locke will speak at and at Global Vision when the team returns. People also can sponsor and donate online at www.gvtourdehope.com.