



Jan Gierlach

PHOTO: SUSAN MCCONNELL



Ride For 3 Reasons founder Bob Lee, JourneyCare COO Kelly Fischer, Jan Gierlach, Leonidas C. Platanius, MD, PhD, Director, Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, and Les Turner ALS Foundation Executive Director Andrea Pauls Backman.



Jan Gierlach and Bob Lee

# Jan Solo

JAN GIERLACH IS THE SECOND GENERATION TO BIKE FOR RIDE FOR 3 REASONS—THE BARRINGTON FOUNDED FUNDRAISER THAT BENEFITS THREE SPECIFIC CAUSES. AND ON THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND CYCLING ADVENTURE ACROSS THE COUNTRY, HE IS GOING IT ALONE.

ON FEBRUARY 7, 2017 in San Diego, Jan Gierlach will wave goodbye to his dad, who will be at the starting point to see him off on his singular journey. Gierlach's interest in this larger-than-life adventure started years ago when Bob Lee, founder of the Ride For 3 Reasons, spoke to students about the Ride. Lee, a Barrington, Ill. resident, founded the Ride to raise funds for three specific causes—ones that he felt strongly about and wanted to support. Lee rode on two different occasions in two different parts of the country. Now, it's Jan's turn. And he is going it totally alone.

"People always ask me where the money is going" Gierlach says. "I explain that 100 percent of the dollars that the Ride For 3 Reasons receives is split evenly between the three charities, or 'reasons,' for the Ride."

Gierlach is funding all costs out of his own pocket. Sponsors have helped with equipment donations, but the young man is roughing it most of the way, and no donations cover any Ride costs or other administrative expenses. The funds will go to ALS and cancer research (as restricted by the Ride) and to JourneyCare, a hospice and palliative care organization serving the greater Chicago area (see next page to learn more).

"I am self-supporting in every way," Gierlach says. "There is no van to follow me, no team, but just myself. I'm doing this alone." Most nights, Gierlach will be camping in a Big Agnes Fly Creek tent with his sleeping bag and pad. His survival gear includes his iPhone 6 and a Garmin GPS navigator. He'll have water bottles and Ortlieb waterproof storage bags. "It's the bare necessities," he says. He'll stop at restaurants and grocery stores for food.

The Salsa Fargo bike he'll ride on was donated by Salsa Cycles and Wheel Werks in Crystal Lake. Those wheels will carry him over the many miles between San Diego and St. Augustine, Fla. He is planning for a two and a half month ride. Along the way, Gierlach will be stopping to talk with local media about the Ride For 3 Reasons and why it's important to him and the organizations it benefits. Like Lee, Gierlach has his own experiences that connect to the three reasons he will ride for.

Safe travels, Jan.

To learn more about the Ride For 3 Reasons, or to donate, visit [www.ridefor3reasons.org](http://www.ridefor3reasons.org)



Andrea Pauls Backman, Executive Director, Les Turner ALS Research

## LES TURNER ALS FOUNDATION

FUNDS RAISED THROUGH the Ride for 3 Reasons will be allocated to ALS research at the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center at Northwestern Medicine, which brings together three laboratories and a multi-disciplinary patient clinic under one umbrella. The three laboratories' distinctive investigative priorities focus on basic science in the areas of genetics, upper motor neurons and stem cells, as well as ALS drug development. With someone in the U.S. dying from ALS every 90 minutes, it is critical that we remain dedicated to finding a cure for ALS while also providing comprehensive treatment and care for those who are living with the disease today.

There have been several encouraging strides in ALS research that are providing hope for a future without ALS. For example, a Northwestern Medicine study led by Dr. Teepu Siddique identified a common cause of all forms of ALS, which provides a common target for drug therapy and shows that all types of ALS are, indeed, tributaries, pouring into a common river of cellular incompetence. It's exciting, as this opens up a whole new field for finding an effective treatment for ALS.

Other recent examples of progress include, in July 2016, Dr. Siddique's laboratory discovered of a third gene mutation shown to cause Parkinson's disease. This research has strong implications for ALS as the gene mutation protein is also present in motor neurons. Also in 2016, an international team of researchers identified another gene responsible for ALS, which has been found in 3 percent of cases sampled in North America and Europe. Just late in 2016, five new ALS genes were discovered via a large genetic data program using IBM's Watson computer. These discoveries will allow scientists to further research the disease as well as develop new therapies.

100 percent of funds raised through the Ride for 3 Reasons will help support our local ALS research programs at Northwestern Medicine. The Les Turner ALS Foundation is dependent on individual, corporate, and foundation funds. In our 40 year history, we have raised more than \$67 million for research, patient services, and educational programs, and are proud that, in 2015, 88 percent of all expenditures were allocated toward programming. Although the cure for ALS is elusive, it is out there. We simply need more funding to better understand this complicated disease and ultimately discover a cure. We don't want to let another 90 minutes go by.



Leonidas C. Platanius, MD, PhD, Dir., Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University

## ROBERT H. LURIE COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

PROCEEDS FROM the Ride For 3 Reasons will support the Lurie Cancer Center OncoSET Program for Precision Medicine, as well as translational research efforts that include clinical trials and other initiatives to translate laboratory research into novel clinical approaches.

Lurie Cancer Center OncoSET's precision medicine approach to cancer care combines genomic sequencing and sophisticated molecular analysis to identify new, individually tailored treatments and novel clinical trials for patients whose cancers are resistant to traditional therapies. This breakthrough program enables OncoSET's treatment team to make personalized treatment decisions for each patient based on their unique genetic profile, and to develop and deliver precisely targeted therapies to patients who currently have very limited options.

OncoSET's ability to leverage advances in bioinformatics, next-generation sequencing, and minimally-invasive technology offers exciting new opportunities to inform and individualize treatment decisions for our patients—now and in the future. By fostering collaboration between basic scientists and physicians, our translational efforts are bridging the gap between the laboratory and the clinic.

Our philanthropic partners have a powerful impact on our efforts to provide never-before-realized personalized cancer treatment. 100 percent of the funds from the Ride will go directly to our research. We are deeply grateful for their support.



JourneyCare COO Kelly Fischer

## JOURNEYCARE

THE RIDE FOR 3 REASONS proceeds benefiting hospice will be shared by JourneyCare and the National Hospice and Palliative Care's (NHP-CO) National Hospice Foundation (NHF). NHF will use the funds for advance care planning education and implementation. JourneyCare will use the funds to develop and implement advance care planning and

education for the communities the agency serves. Efforts will focus on community outreach that highlights the importance of education and building awareness about advance care planning, living with serious illness, and death and dying.

Talking about dying, and how you would like to be cared for in the event you cannot speak for yourself, is not an easy thing to do. Through educational programs that build awareness about the importance of having the conversation

with your loved ones about how you would like to be cared for at end-of-life and knowing what options are available, our goal is that the more people know about understanding their options, communicating their preferences, and making sure these wishes are recorded, the less daunting it will be to have these conversations with loved ones.

JourneyCare's community outreach initiatives will increase the number of programs we present in the expanded geographic area that JourneyCare now serves that raise community awareness and education about hospice. JourneyCare provides care and support in 10 counties in the Chicago area and Northern Illinois, and this will help expand the distribution of informational materials across the 10 counties.

Ninety percent of people say that talking with their loved ones about end-of-life care is important; 27 percent have actually done it. One of the greatest gifts a person can give to their family is providing guidance on treatments that want to receive, and would not want to receive, at end of life. Sharing this information with family members will provide them with peace of mind, while assuring the patient that his/her wishes will be honored if they are unable to speak for themselves. 