



Walter Ostrinski
Volunteer 2014

A long time runner, Walter Ostrinski's first exposure to the Ride came from seeing the riders come by his street near Sleeping Giant State Park. And then, his running group was saddened to hear that one of their own had been diagnosed with cancer and was beginning the treatment process at Smilow. The running group soon became a cycling team and Walter found himself a part of the Closer to Free Family as a volunteer.

While the team mobilized and helped the family as much as they could, a couple of runners decided to show their support and enthusiasm by signing up for the 100 mile Closer to Free Ride. The donations poured in as did the motivational dialogue during their weekly emails and group runs. At that point, Walter decided to volunteer and became the captain the Wallingford rest stop for the metric and regular century riders. The running group mobilized yet again and volunteered as well, as did Walter's wife Gwen on the Medical Crew.

Their margarita-themed rest stop was a huge hit. "The support from the Closer to Free Ride was incredible, with supplies being perfect, and all the volunteers having so much enthusiasm that we had to be the best site of them all," remembers Walter. "We were an oasis and we like to think that our ice, Gatorade, water, sandwiches, and Jimmy Buffet music helped to motivate, refuel, and give everybody additional strength to endure and complete their arduous and righteous journey to the finish line!"

Walter lost his mom to ovarian cancer over 20 years ago and many other friends and acquaintances of his have been touched by or lost to the disease. "Having Smilow right in our backyard has been a blessing," he says. "Hearing the stories from so many people of the incredible work done to fight and beat this affliction has brought new hope to our friends and family, and as long as I am able, I will support and contribute to this wonderful facility, its staff, and the thousands of people that it has and will continue to help through their battles!" And every rider thanks Walter and his dedicated team for providing nourishment, energy and hope at the Wallingford rest stop each year.

