



David Gewirtz
Cyclist 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

Veteran CTF Rider David Gewirtz provides us with a heartfelt account of his 2015 Ride:

Saturday at 5 am my alarm clock rung like an old telephone and I sprung out of bed to shut the alarm off on my iPhone. The night before, I had prepared so I could quickly ready myself to ride in the Closer to Free Ride. When I arrived at the Yale Bowl at 6:00am it was cloudy and I thought I would be riding 100 miles in the rain.

My brain was filled with a word cloud of thoughts and emotions that was amplified while on stage during the opening ceremony. I was now five for five for riding in the Closer to Free Ride with the number "5" attached to my jersey. I was honored and blessed to help lift the iconic CTF Bike down the lane for the assembled community of Closer To Free.

In the lane the biked was signed and kissed to honor the MEMORY of a loved one, to celebrate a person who was CANCER FREE and in appreciation for the state of the art TREATMENT and CARE that are offered to patients and families at Smilow. As I rode through my 100 miles I experienced many other words in my imaginary word cloud. On the flats, I REFLECTED on my 30 year friendship with Paul Hudak, the founder of Saybrook Riders and the amazing experiences our families shared together. Paul lost his battle with cancer in late April.

I felt HOPE for Paul's wife Cathy and daughter Jenny who flew from Utah to ride the 25-mile loop in his memory. When climbing hills and digging deep for energy I thought about two words in my cloud: INSPIRATION and THANKFULNESS. I breezed up those hills knowing I was riding to inspire my fellow patients in the lung cancer support group and thanking my donors who gave generously to support research at Smilow to help vanquish cancer. The down hills were easy since I was propelled by Paul's spirit.

As I finished my Closer to Free Ride, I gently pedaled across the finish line and the words COMMUNITY and PROMISE arose from my cloud. I had just completed a ride not only for people I know, but for all the other families that are touched by this vicious disease. When I unclipped my pedals and dismounted from my bike, I was tired but upbeat. In some small way, I gave promise that year after year new targeted and immune therapies would extend the quality of life of all cancer patients. I'm helping bring us all Closer to Free.

