



Christen Nelson
Volunteer 2016
Cyclist 2015

I have had the privilege to participate in the Closer to Free Ride for the last 2 years. I am a registered nurse specializing in orthopedics at Yale New Haven Hospital. In my years of experience, I have seen my patients as well as family and friends struggle with the burden that cancer brings with it.

In 2015, I decided to do something I never thought was possible. I signed up for the 62.5-mile Close to Free Ride. When I arrived, I was overwhelmed with the amount of participants riding! Everyone was beyond excited to participate regardless if they were riding or volunteering. The ride was not an easy task but I proudly came through the finish line with my very close friend Dannielle Stone, who was riding in honor of her late father that had passed away from cancer.

In 2016, I was expecting my second child. I knew that I would not be able to ride, but was determined to not let this stand in my way from participating. I knew I had to be a volunteer if I could not ride. I was at Yale Bowl at 4am volunteering at the food and beverage station. To me, it wasn't how I participated; the purpose remained the same for me, which was to raise as much money as possible for cancer research and patient care at Smilow Cancer Hospital.

I am a proud captain of Team Skeleton Crew. As a team, we raised over \$10,000 in 2016. I look forward to riding again in 2017 year and continuing to do the best I can do to raise as much money as possible!

