



## Posted Comments:

### Monster Graphics said...

Good Luck guys, Be safe for your adventure. Thanks again for the opportunity to help with the cause.

Monster Graphics

June 2, 2008 6:08 PM

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### Holly said...

Go! Go! Go! Best of luck and strong bottoms to John and Jamaal! You can do this! You have supporters that you never even knew were watching. Lots of love and luck from Colorado -Holly (mom to a child who also tests positive for HepB)

June 2, 2008 8:45 PM

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### Mrs. Maness said...

John,

I am so proud of you and Jamaal! I am glad I was able to come to your send off this morning. I will be checking each day for updates. This website has been shared with many of my friends and family members and they plan to keep up with your trek as well. Take care and God Bless! I love you both!!

Mrs. Maness

June 2, 2008 10:15 PM

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### Samantha Stevens said...

Guys, yall should try and look into setting up a podcast!! That'd be super cool!! =) I MISS YALL!! AND LOVE YALL!!!

-Samantha

June 3, 2008 12:01 AM

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**Monday, June 2, 2008**

## Day 01- Closer to the Clouds.

Last night, I didn't sleep much. Nervous excitement and last minute packing didn't allow for sleep. Nevertheless, I awoke up at 6AM to double check everything I packed and make sure nothing was forgotten. After debating the necessities with myself (Will I REALLY be able to play a gameboy while riding ?), I was satisfied and took my baggage to be loaded in the van. My grandmother and I left at 8:15AM to then pick up Jamaal and meet at the Gindl Stadium at Tate for the kick-off. (Consequently, we were late because Jamaal was still sleeping.)

The kick-off was everything I had hoped it would be and more. Friends, family, and total strangers came out to see Jamaal and I off for the beginning of the cycling tour. It meant a lot to me to see so many people who cared enough to come out. Even our sponsors took time out of their busy work schedules to attend. All in all, I am incredibly thankful for everyone who took part today. It was a great moment for Jamaal and I, and a wonderful way to begin the tour.

But now, the part that I have been so excited to share. After getting hung up at the stadium waiting on the police escort, (He informed us that he had to shave before he came, so it was completely understandable.) we turned on to Hwy. 29 at 11:19AM to begin our 78 mile trip from Pensacola to De FUNiak Springs. The escorted ride down Nine Mile Rd. was almost eerie having a whole lane to ourselves all the way to the Escambia River. I imagine the only thing cooler than this is probably riding shotgun with the sheriff, but this is a bike ride, so I digress...

Riding through Pace we ran into some road work, but it wasn't much, so we weren't slowed down by it. The extreme heat of the afternoon, however, did. Riding in 96 degrees of heat wears on you after a while, but Jamaal and I made the best of it. We tried to see who could come up with the strangest road artifact spotted from the bikes and we have compiled a list of assorted oddities that we encountered.

- A lone, metal spoon.
- Numerous crushed, trampled, cell phones.
- "Extra" nuts and bolts that separate themselves from cars.
- A stuffed chew toy for a dog.
- A Cyndi Lauper cassette tape.

We shall keep a running list of any other road artifacts we spot as we continue our travels.

After riding for about three and a half hours with numerous stops to hydrate, Jamaal was badly attacked by cramps. They were relentless, and soon spread to my legs as well. So between the heat and the cramps our progress was most definitely hindered, but we pressed on slowly, but surely. At one point, perhaps due to the dizzying deliriousness brought on by the cramps or maybe the effect of the heat on one's mind, I began to feel closer to my surroundings. I felt closer to the trees and the grass, and I felt closer to the clouds. Riding my bike almost seemed to heighten my senses, strengthening my awareness of the world around me. It is this feeling that pushes the pedals on long after my legs have become sore and my butt has become numb, and it is this feeling that I would like to convey to you. This feeling that you are a part of the world around you, and that you should know everything you can about this beautiful thing you are a part of.

That is the goal of this bike ride. To inform people of a single, yet hurtful, aspect of the human life. Despite all my heady ideas and dreams of the amount of money I hope to raise for the Hepatitis B Foundation and hepatitis research, I must keep reminding myself that the greatest thing I could accomplish with this cycling tour for the Hepatitis B Foundation and for myself is the awareness that this ride could potentially raise. Tonight we rode until just before night fall. We did not quite reach our destination by bike, having to travel the last 14 miles by van, but we still had a very productive day riding 64 miles by bike despite having a late start. Today helped me realize that what I am doing is real, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

I must end it here for it is much too late, but I would like to thank everyone who is following along and for everyone's prayers. Take care everyone, and I will be back in touch soon.

Love,  
John Ellis

P.S. PICTURES WILL BE FOLLOWING TOMORROW !  
**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 11:55 PM 11 COMMENTS**

## **Posted Comments:**

### **Anonymous said...**

Hey John,

Saw you in the paper this morning. I will be following your blog. I was honored to have met you the other day when your mom introduced us. I wear the t-shirt proudly.

-Dr Cameron Lueck

June 3, 2008 8:23 AM

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### **Anonymous said...**

John - what an amazing first day. We are so proud of what you are doing, and can't wait to join you as you near Phila! Keep it up!

-Chari, HBF

June 3, 2008 9:22 AM

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### **Gina Rubel said...**

Dear John,

You are such an amazing role model for people - young and old. After reading your post, I am amazed at your wisdom and fortitude. Your experience of feeling closer to your surroundings - the trees, the grass, and the clouds - is a gift. One of my favorite quotes is by Buddha: "If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change." You are that single flower.

I look forward to cheering you on at the finish line in Philadelphia and pray for a safe and healthy journey for you and Jamaal.

Sincerely,

Gina F. Rubel, Esq.

June 3, 2008 9:26 AM

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### **Anonymous said...**

JOHN>>>>I am so excited!!!! i loved your blog...especially the artifact part!!!! that was awesome, i expect to see more on your list okay? haha!!!! i know everything is going well, but just hang in there, youll be there before you know it!!! ill talk to ya later john!!!! good luck to you and jamal!!!! love, Rachel Chandler-----muah!!!!

June 3, 2008 10:28 AM

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### **Anonymous said...**

John and Jamal--I am so proud of you both! You are amazing. I prayed for you two knowing the heat had to make the ride harder. Just thought you would like to know I was approached at Hobby Lobby yesterday by a woman wearing one of your bracelets. She saw mine so we chatted about you and your cause for a few. You are raising awareness! I love you. Take care.

-Aunt Nancy

June 3, 2008 10:50 AM

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### **cyregray said...**

Jamaal & John - Rock On!

I'm impressed with your determination, vitality and selflessness. Giving the gift of knowledge & awareness is one of the ultimate acts of service to others. By performing it, you demonstrate to the universe your ability to express some of the highest human traits, and quite literally magic can result.

I wish you the best and will be following your journey with interest! Stay Safe!

-CG

June 3, 2008 1:52 PM

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### **Bahrtender said...**

John Jealous & MASTA JAYMALL!!!!

OMGOSH BOYS!!! Wow you have no idea how proud I am of you two!! I'm really sorry I missed the start of this tour, but I'll be waiting for you guys when you get home!!! In the words of John Jealous "BOOM BABY" ALL THE WAY!! I LOVE YOU GUYS!!!

-Bri Bri =]

p.s. my mom says "HI"

June 3, 2008 9:35 PM

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### **Anonymous said...**

appnoHi John:

I wish I could have seen your honorable celebration as you started on your journey. My family and I will be praying for you and Jamall on this admirable sacrifice to bring an awareness of this diagnosis to many people....many that even do not they even KNOW THEY have it YET. We will be following you as you travel up OUR beautiful country.

Your Mom is so proud of you and so am I....for I have known you all my life and have always thought you were awesome and especially gifted.

Hang on to this BIBLE verse: I have to claim it every day in my own life.

HE GIVETH POWER TO THE FAINT, & TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO MIGHT, HE INCREASETH STRENGTH. EVEN THE YOUTH SHALL FAINT & BE WEARY, & THE YOUNG MEN SHALL UTTERLY FALL.

BUT THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS LIKE EAGLES, THEY SHALL RUN & NOT FAINT. ISAIAH 40:29-30

MUCH LOVE, SHARON

June 3, 2008 10:39 PM

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### **Anonymous said...**

Hey John....It's Sharon (from the beach) your 4th or 5th Mom). You and Jamaal are so awesome, and I am so excited about this. I think I will be off from work when you guys get back ....and I will be there. I am following each day, but please remind your Mom to call me COLLECT if she has to if she is in an no tower area.

I KNOW WITHIN MY HEART YOU AND JAMALL ARE GOING TO MAKE THE TRIP WITHOUT A DOUBT....I HAVE NO QUESTION ABOUT IT!!!!!!!.

YOU BOTH WILL HAVE A POWERFUL STORY TO TELL FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

I am so excited!!!!!! When you read this, tell your MOM I washed my cell phone in the washer Monday night. I will get a cell phone in the morning (Friday).

Love you sweetie: and you and Jamaal take care of yourselves. love you, sharon

June 5, 2008 11:09 PM

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### **Betsy said...**

Hey guys, my name is Betsy and I work at Sacred with John's mom. I just wanted to tell you how amazed I am with how far you've come. She is so proud of you! She's kept us up to date and I wanted you to know that the Sacred Heart ER is watching and praying for your safe journey, and of course we're cheering you on! I'm just so touched by what you've done and how far you've come. You're an inspiration, I wish that more people could be like you two.

June 6, 2008 1:52 PM

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**Tuesday, June 3, 2008**

## **Day 02- "If it looks like a hill, It is a hill."**

Today began with my beloved grandmother attempting to awake me and Jamaal from our sound slumber, but to no avail. Besides, it was 6AM and we had no intentions of waking up before 7AM anyways. So after getting another hour of sleep, we dragged ourselves to the free continental breakfast offered by our lodgings.

With food in our stomachs, Jamaal and I, along with my aunt and grandma, loaded the van and drove back into town to begin today's ride. The drive was relatively quiet. Yesterday's ride weighed heavy on our minds, but the anticipation of the new adventures and experiences set before us helped subside our negative thoughts. We turned on to 90 East and pulled over to unload the bikes and start the ride.

The first ten miles of today flew by. We cruised through, finishing the first stretch in a half hour. However, our confidence after this first stretch was certainly challenged during the second stretch for we began to encounter tremendous hills. (As a side note, don't let anyone tell you that there are no hills in Florida, and if you happen to be one of these people...Try riding a bike.) To give you an idea of the size of these hills, it was possible traveling down these hills to approach speeds of 30+ MPH, but on the flip side, we slowed down to nearly 8 MPH climbing them. Jamaal and I pedaled on, though and finished the second ten mile stretch in an hour. Winded and slightly disappointed in our pace, we took a break to refresh ourselves and to prepare for the next 40 miles of the day.

Knowing all too well that the afternoon heat would be arriving soon, we consciously stepped up our pace, but only within our agreeable comfort levels. The hills began to work more in our favor as the climbs seemed much shorter than the descents. We cruised through small cities, 3 in a ten mile stretch. Traffic wasn't an issue, and most drivers were courteous enough to pass in the opposite lane.

As a matter of fact, everything went very smoothly UNTIL we passed through a rural area outside of Westville, Florida in Holmes County. Jamaal and I were pedaling along when the all too familiar sound of a barking dog averted our attention. In most cases, this sound is nothing to worry about because the dog is usually behind a fence or on a leash, but it just so happens that in this particular instance the dog was given free reign. I, of course, being the cautious person that I am told Jamaal, riding slightly ahead of me, to "Book it!" but Jamaal felt that it wasn't necessary and continued at his normal pace saying, " Nah man. It won't keep up." Having said this, the only thing I can imagine is that the dog felt as if this were a challenge, and sped past me on my bike, headed straight for Jamaal. It was only then, and no sooner, that Jamaal decided to pedal faster. Needless to say, we were traveling at speeds of 21+ MPH and the dog was still running right beside us. However, the dog could not keep this up and went back to his yard to await another brave cyclist's attempt to pass.

Perhaps it was events like this that helped us move so quickly, but by 11:38AM we saw a sign informing us that we were only 9 miles outside of Chipley, our destination for the day. This sent our spirits soaring and after navigating through Chipley, we arrived at the hotel by 12:30PM. (Not sure if this was planned, but our room number the past two nights has been 108.)

Since then, Jamaal and I have showered and taken naps. We also drove in to town for dinner at a local place called Bailey's. (If anyone is curious as to who has the best Philly Cheesesteak sandwich in Florida, Jamaal's your man. He's eaten them the past two nights. Stay tuned for his Philly Cheesesteak reviews.) To top off the night we treated ourselves to ice cream, and turned in for an early night. Oh, and I almost forgot. Here is the second edition of...

### **The Lost, Road Artifacts of the Day**

- \* Two pairs of underwear, one boxer briefs, the other whitey tighties, both Hanes.
  - \* Alone, metal fork. ( I guess to go with our spoon ?)
  - \* A empty gallon jug of bleach
- \* Road kill that appeared to be a Bald Eagle, but upon further inspection turned out to be vulture of sorts.
  - \* The Ninja Turtle cast, too slow to make the journey across the highway.
  - \* Banana peel death traps left for cyclists going on grand ventures.

All in all, today was a great day. It is days like today that will spoil me and Jamaal because we have tougher days that loom ahead. Well, like I promised you, I leave you with a video that includes pictures of the past two days.

Thank you for your prayers, and your support.

Take care, John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 11:23 PM 14 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Anonymous said...

What's up guys it's Jamie. Been checkin everything out and I think the artifact list is awesome. Hope you guys are having fun and keep up the good work. Talk to yall tomorrow.  
June 4, 2008 2:50 AM

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### Anonymous said...

Good morning, you two! So glad you had a good day yesterday. Hope you have another one today. Keep it up and keep the artifact list going...it's very interesting...I'm enjoying your daily loggings..take care...love you both! Mrs. Maness  
June 4, 2008 5:59 AM

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### sweeberluvsyou said...

john and jamaal i love you both. keep pedaling hard and god bless. love sara weber.  
June 4, 2008 9:38 AM

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### Jackson Willis said...

So, I'd be pretty mad if Jamaal was drinking Sprite, too.  
Lol.  
I'm so glad that the two of you decided to take up this task.  
I hope others model off of your courage and selflessness.  
We'll be praying for you here.  
Godspeed, guys.  
-Jackson  
June 4, 2008 11:12 AM

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### Anonymous said...

Hey Guys! Wow what a great day you had yesterday. I pray you have another day like that for the rest of your journey. You guys are so courageous to do what you are doing. Keep up the good work. Godspeed to you both. Love ya lots,  
-Aunt Nancy  
June 4, 2008 12:41 PM

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### Alex May said...

Give a shout out to Alex May in your next blog.  
Love,  
-Alex May  
June 4, 2008 1:19 PM

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### samantha said...

love you boys!!!! =)  
-samantha stevens  
June 4, 2008 1:44 PM

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### Sam Bruce said...

You have no idea how much respect I have for the two of you.  
Thankyou for doing this for me and everyone else who has been affected by this in some way or another.  
I know you know how great this is.. but it doesn't hurt to say it one more time.  
I love the artifact list. This blog is going to be extremely interesting.  
Love you guys - stay hydrated.  
-Sam Bruce  
June 4, 2008 1:51 PM

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**Bahrtender said...**

way to go boys, well the dog was chasing jaymall because well i bet you can guess why. jk i love you jaymall. john you're an amazing kid, don't forget when you get back you've gotta help me pick out my bike.

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 4, 2008 2:12 PM

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**Caroline Merritt said...**

Hey Guys

I never really got to know you before this because I'm an upcoming sophomore at Tate but I think what you are doing is so amazing. I don't think I could ever be that strong or have that much courage. You guys are role models for so many people! I feel really blessed to have met you guys and to have been able to come to the send off a few days ago. God bless you both and be safe!

-Caroline Merritt

June 4, 2008 3:19 PM

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**wavegypsy said...**

You guys are awesome! keep up the good work (: You should totally compile this blog and the pics/video into a doc.

love!

-Amethyst

June 4, 2008 4:41 PM

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**Jenn--the asian one said...**

we all know that dog is racist. they all are. watch out jaymall...they'll come after ya! jamaal, thanks for the 1 minute part of the video of you unsteadily holding the camera, forcing me to fast forward that part.

but i'm glad you guys are doing well. if you go by montgomery stop to see my mommy. =]  
i miss you guys already.

her name was sally louis!!!

even though yall lied about it all!

hah.

look forward to reading more!!

-jenn WINS =]

June 4, 2008 11:39 PM

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**jenn said...**

okay...that was dumb of me...

i know y'all won't be going through montgomery.

June 4, 2008 11:40 PM

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**Wednesday, June 4, 2008**

## Day 03 - "Day three will be the hardest."

In training for this trip, Jamaal and I have been told that the third day would be the hardest of the whole ride. With this in mind, today began normal enough. Well, I suppose "normal" wouldn't be the right word in our case. Nevertheless, we continued our routine of waking up early and eating a good breakfast, and were on the road by 8:15AM. We must have done something right for we completed twenty miles in a little less than an hour. That third day nonsense wasn't bringing us down. We even got chased by a PACK of dogs today, but it was no sweat off of our backs. It wasn't until about 10AM that we discovered what was in store for us.

The treetops grew even in height with each other, and became denser, like meticulously landscaped hedgerows. The road leveled out for a stretch so Jamaal and I took advantage of this opportunity, but my bike felt differently. DISASTER STRUCK ! The rear derailleur snapped completely off of my bike. (Don't worry. It's not important that you know what this means or this part's function. Just know that it keeps the bike from moving forward.) I guess you could say that this was a minor setback. A video of this can be viewed [here](#). No worries, though. I brought a spare bike. My trusty ol' blue, Mike the Bike. He came to the rescue and allowed me and Jamaal to travel 70 miles today to Quincy, Florida. When we arrived at Quincy, we drove to Tallahassee in search of a bike store and we found a place that fixed it. So thank you Sunshine Cycles for staying open later than normal to fix my bike. We finally found a hotel after driving around for nearly an hour, and after such a long day ( We didn't get off the bikes until 6PM.) I must admit that I am pretty tired. So If you would excuse me, I will have a more substantial update tomorrow. (Pictures, video, the like...) But before I do, I'll leave you with this.

The Lost, Road Artifacts: Part 3

- One dirty sock. Perhaps of the gym variety.
- One Nike sneaker. Looked like a Runner or maybe a Cross-Trainer.
  - Female undergarments.
  - A Glove. (Without the hand.)

As you may have noticed, everything we have listed so far has been clothing. I can not think of any explanation for this other than a rare form of Hay Fever that could be wreaking havoc through these rural areas of Florida that causes the ill to remove their clothes and toss them out the window. Luckily, cyclists are immune.

Night folks !  
John and Jamaal.

P.S. Please enjoy Jamaal's beautiful craftsmanship.



POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 11:44 PM 3 COMMENTS

## Posted Comments:

### levesque32 said...

Don't play the pushing game with your pedalling, just spin. If you find yourself pushing just go to the next easier gear. Stay relaxed even when it hurts.

You guys are awesome!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

June 5, 2008 12:11 PM

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### Andrew C. said...

You guys are doing awesome. I wish I could have joined you on your journey. Speaking of Journey, I have have the song "Don't Stop Believin'" stuck in my head. But anyways, I hope you guys are I having fun and be safe. See you in Philly.

From your favorite cuz,

-Andrew

June 5, 2008 2:46 PM

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### Bahrtender said...

I'm so happy to hear that Mike the Bike was there!! That's an AMAZING BIKE!!! Jamaal they do make dog repellent, you might want to get some! Well Day wasn't too bad I guess. KEEP IT UP!!

love ya,

-Bri Bri

June 6, 2008 12:20 AM

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**Thursday, June 5, 2008**

## Day 04- Flinch.

Crossing over the state line, Jamaal and I traveled from Tallahassee to Valdosta, Georgia. The day promised to be another 70+ mile ride bringing our mileage to nearly 150 miles in two days. However, having my bike back in commission gave me high hopes for the day. After checking in with family, and doing the daily task of speaking with media, we got on the road and soon made our way into Georgia.

Once we crossed into Georgia, I almost immediately regretted waking up this morning. The highway had a rumble strip used for keeping drivers that fall asleep from driving off the side of the road. At first, Jamaal and I both thought that maybe this would only keep up for a couple miles or so, but no, it has been this way since we crossed the state line. This caused today not only to be physically exhausting, but mentally as well. Imagine having four or five inches as a margin of error with traffic on one side and miles of dips in the road that can potentially throw you over the handlebars or destroy your bike, whichever comes first. Riding was tense all day.

The one thing that you could possibly say went in our favor was the wind. It provided a constant breeze most of the day, but the only drawback of this is that we had to pedal through it- our first headwind of the trip. The wind was a double-edged sword that, with the passing of speeding vehicles, often felt like it was blowing out of all directions at once, making us feel like we were suspended in motion. It was frustrating to say the least.

Later in the day, traffic picked up. Cars and trucks of all sizes sped past us throwing off our balance to an extent. When you're out on the road, you get used to the sound of cars, and after a while you can use this to judge the location of the vehicle behind you. Using this, we could, at times, shift to the outside of shoulder. Other times all we could do was brace on our bikes and flinch when the semi or speeding car passed. Not to mention the heat. It made the air feel thick, like you had to chew it up before you could swallow it down.

To be honest, I almost felt like giving up on today. I wanted to pack it up and sit in the air-conditioned van. I wanted to lay down and sleep and rest my weary legs. I wanted to get out of the sun and the heat and breathe easy. I stopped and thought about what I was considering. I wasn't just flinching when cars zoomed by. I was flinching at every obstacle placed in my path. I was flinching in the face of a challenge, and it is this same pattern of thought that prevents many of us from doing that which would make us happy in life. Luckily, Jamaal was there to struggle along with me. We channeled our frustration and completed the day by 4:30PM and made our way to the hotel.

Now, to give credit where credit is due. Thank you, Christian of the Courtyard Marriott in Valdosta. He donated two beautiful rooms to me, Jamaal, and my family, and they even had a banner and refreshments waiting for us when we got here. It was very much appreciated after such a long day. I am truly thankful for people who have been so supportive and I just wanted to shed some light on a person who has gone above and beyond to assist us in making the tour possible.

Alright. Tomorrow, Valdosta to Waycross. If all goes well, Jamaal and I will be finished by 4PM. (That's our goal, at least.) Oh, and the lost artifacts segment has been put on a hiatus. There were too many stressors to distract us from interesting road litter. (But I did see a whole carrot.) Sorry folks. Anyways, take care.

Don't flinch,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 11:52 PM 11 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### **Samantha Stevens said...**

miss you and love you boys!!!  
June 6, 2008 2:14 AM

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### **nikki guntner said...**

hi guys..  
im sorry you had a hard day today. zach and i are praying for both of you. you can do it!  
-nikki =]  
June 6, 2008 2:42 AM

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### **Melanie said...**

Hang in there guys. Hopefully today will be better roads then yesterday. Please be safe and take care!  
One state down!  
June 6, 2008 8:01 AM

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### **Sara Weber said...**

just going to say this really quick. your gonna run into hard times where you wanna quit. it happens in every situation..like after my second knee surgery i just wanted to quit therapy and wanted to know what the point was any more. but i pushed through and playing soccer again is the best feeling ever. when you reach philly it'll be the best feeling ever. just keep hanging in there guys. your both in my thoughts and prayers. love sara weber  
June 6, 2008 9:28 AM

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### **Aunt Nancy said...**

Hey Guys--Sorry I didn't get with you yesterday, but I did read your blog this morning and watch the videos. You are both doing a great job. John I am so glad that you have such a great friend like Jamaal to share all these memories you both are making and to keep encouraging one another. That's the best thing about good friends they are always there for each other. Love you both and look forward to celebrating your victories when you get home.  
-Aunt Nancy  
June 6, 2008 11:18 AM

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### **Sami Ball said...**

I'm sorry yesterday was a hard day, but you guys are doing so well. and I'm so proud and love you both. you guys are doing a great thing and i hope that todays ride was beautiful and easy.  
Love  
June 6, 2008 11:34 AM

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### **Tulin Morcol said...**

Dear John and Jamal,  
I read your blog every day and share with my family. I am sorry for the tough day in GA. You are not only champions for millions suffering from HepB infection but inspiration for us scientists working hard to find better treatment options and cure for many such serious diseases...  
...and your friendship on this tour of hope is most admirable and inspiring. Good luck, be safe, and continue to keep us posted as much as you can.  
Take care!  
-Tulin  
June 6, 2008 12:07 PM

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### **alex may said...**

Give me a shout out  
June 6, 2008 2:48 PM

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**levesque32 said...**

Hey guys, you are awesome. Nothing worth achieving is ever easy.

God bless,

-Lyle

June 6, 2008 5:47 PM

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**Jenn Huynh said...**

i think alex really wants that shout out!

yall guys are doing great. and dark as crap. jamaal is even more black (watch out for the dogs).

sorry for all the troubles in GA! looking forward to read more blogs!!

June 6, 2008 5:59 PM

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**Elana said...**

Hey guys,

Hang in there, you are doing fine, I know it is hot, and you are tired. You are both very strong willed individuals and together you are even stronger. Even though you may feel like quitting, you both know you will not. You did not go this far to give up... Hang in there, we are all very proud of you....

June 6, 2008 10:44 PM

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**Friday, June 6, 2008**

## Day 05- Waycross Refuge

I was wrong about you, Georgia. I am sorry I was so quick to judge, but hey, I am only human. You and your lovely farms and shady tree groves. Your wonderfully cooked meals. Will you be as kind to us tomorrow as you were today? We may just fall in love with you yet.

All in all, today was a very good day. One of the best even. We made good time arriving in Homerville by noon leaving us just a 25 mile stretch remaining. It was there in Homerville that we decided to stop for lunch. Walking in we noticed the Valdosta newspaper with our pictures on the front. The article was in the sports section and it was beautifully written. A woman even recognized us in the parking lot and began crying as she hugged us before we left for Waycross. It was quite moving.

Tomorrow we are headed to Hinesville, one day out of Savannah. I know we are getting close to the coast because we saw a fully inflated beach ball on the side of the road today. Anyways, before I leave to go to bed, I have a joke for you. For what is Waycross, Georgia named? You have to go WAYCROSS Georgia to get there!

Forgive me. It sounded funnier in my head. Well folks. Enjoy the weekend.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 9:09 PM 6 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Bahrtender said...

HEY BOYS!!!

WOW, that is really moving about that lady, see you guys are a truly making a big impact with this ride. I'm glad you're loving Georgia, I LOVE GEORGIA TOO!! & UGA!!! Well John I thought it was a funny joke! you guys are making such good time, you'll love Savannah when you get there, SO BEAUTIFUL!! You should find time to bike Savannah Square, beautiful!

LOVE YOU BOYS, KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 7, 2008 1:10 AM

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### PSPam said...

Keep up the good work and all the pedaling! Hepatitis definitely needs some attention paid to it! I wish I had known you were coming through Tallahassee but alas I didn't hear about it until you were already here! Though my organization mostly advocates to Get Tested for Hep C we also remind everyone to Get Vaccinated for Hep A and B! MY HAT IS OFF TO BOTH YOU FINE YOUNG MEN! Keep up the good work!!

Peace

-Pam

June 7, 2008 2:30 AM

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### Jamie said...

you guys have no idea how inspirational this cycling tour is. i'm so proud of you guys! = ] keep up the great work!

-Jamie

Cantonment, Florida

June 7, 2008 3:02 PM

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### ashton said...

I love you guys! I bet your having fun! Stay safe, and keep your heads up! =)

June 7, 2008 7:24 PM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys,

I am so glad that Georgia has finally extended her hand of friendship to you both. I know it must feel great to see firsthand the awareness you are bringing to Hep B. Love you both and praying that you have continued strength, endurance and fun!

Love, Aunt Nancy

June 7, 2008 9:41 PM

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### Anonymous said...

So I definitely loved the Georgia joke, it was pretty funny! But yeah it's great to hear that people are being impacted from all that you are doing. We all miss you here but are so proud for everything that you have done, and it's only been a week! Well good luck tomorrow and keep on pedaling!!

love you guys!

Jaclyn

June 7, 2008 10:45 PM

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**Saturday, June 7, 2008**

## Day 06- Savannah Bound

I had a dream last night that I was bombing down this huge hill going incredibly fast. I fell off the back of my bike while my shoes were still clipped into the pedals and my bike managed to magically stay upright and drag me down the highway. I jerked out of sleep and gasped. It was 6:36AM. I still had another half hour of much needed rest.

I rolled out of bed and trudged to the free breakfast offered to us by our hotel. In front of me, my options were an assortment of danishes, muffins, and other pastries, oatmeal, grits, and waffles. I made myself a bowl of oatmeal and sat down to contemplate the day ahead of me. Jamaal stayed in bed for a while longer, but then joined me for breakfast.

Afterwards, we returned to our rooms to pack up, and soon after, loaded the van to get back to the main highway. Jamaal and I, sitting in the back seat of the van, waited for the van to start, but it never happened. The van wouldn't start. The battery was dead and my family was thrown into a panicked fury. Luckily, we asked someone to jump the van and they were kind enough to oblige. Finally, we were able to get on the road and begin today's journey.

Riding was at a slightly slower pace today than the breakneck pace we kept up yesterday. We still made decent time though reaching Jesup by noon. We stopped to eat at a sub shop, and of course, Jamaal got Philly cheesesteak. We napped until 1:30PM and was back on the road by 1:45PM. Nothing like waking up from a nap and hopping right on a bike.

As usual, the ride after lunch time became really difficult. By then, the rural roads have lost their charm, the legs begin to burn, and the heat beats down on us. It is then that mental toughness supersedes one's physical condition. Distractions to take your mind off of this feeling are few and far between, but Jamaal and I make do. Games, like seeing who can get the most truckers to blow their horn at you, help pass the time and take your mind off the soreness. Pace slowing, we arrived in Hinesville at 4PM.

It wasn't long after that we found our hotel, and checked in to our rooms. Of course, my mother, aunt, and grandmother always inspect the rooms to make sure that the "boys" don't have the better bathrooms, but to our dismay, our room only contained one king sized bed. My family joked about me and Jamaal sharing a bed, but the joke was on them. After speaking with someone at the front desk, they had no other double bed room so we were upgraded to a suite. If you ever get a chance to stay in a suite, even if you have to go to a hotel within your own city, do it. It's nice.

After dinner, there was one more surprise event in store for us. Driving to the hotel, there was an accident that happened right before our eyes. I thought for sure that we were going to get hit as well, but the car swerved and hit the curb in front of us. We waited for the police and ambulance to arrive and gave a statement. Luckily, no one was badly injured.

Tomorrow, we have a short day. Only 30 miles. We should be finished before noon. I am looking forward to going to Savannah. I have heard that it is quite beautiful there, and we will be near the coast! Well, folks. Take care and enjoy the rest of your weekend. You have no idea how much these comments help us through this journey. It allows us to see who this is affecting and gives us support when we feel we are going through the worst.

Peace,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 9:59 PM 10 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Taylor T said...

i love you guys.  
make sure to use plenty of sunscreen!  
and no sprite.  
June 7, 2008 11:29 PM

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### Kenny G said...

What you guys are doing is really impressive. Stay safe and have fun. And a bit of advice, be wary of hotel rooms, you have no idea what's been going on in there, haha.  
June 7, 2008 11:49 PM

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### Sara Weber said...

keep it up boys. can't wait til john gets home so he can sign my yearbook. waiting is so hard! gosh!  
but i love you guys and you should both keep up the good work.  
love sara weber  
June 7, 2008 11:54 PM

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### Bahrtender said...

ok i know this is kinda childish but remember what dory said " just keep...well biking, just keep biking!" you guys are doing so well. love the fact that there are dedicated miles to people, that is amazing! well don't forget only if you boys have the energy, bike Savannah Square, SO BEAUTIFUL!!! and it's by the water, well river. There will def be a party!!! when do you get back?  
LOVE YOU!!! KEEP IT UP!!!  
-Bri Bri  
June 8, 2008 12:47 AM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys! Great riging once again. I am so glad that you have a short day tomorrow. Rest and enjoy Savannah. Your dad, grandmother and I believe Uncle Cary went there. Ask him the story when you have time to listen. Your dad loved it there. This was before Paula Dean was such a hit. Love you both. Keep on biking!  
Love, Aunt Nancy  
June 8, 2008 1:43 AM

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### Jon Morris said...

you guys are awesome. I'm praying for strength and peace for you guys in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Keep it up.  
June 8, 2008 1:55 AM

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### Paul said...

Hey there John and Master Jamaal. You guys are doing an awesome job.  
I hope that you have plenty of time to explore Savannah. It's a beautiful city. Stay focused on being present and what the moment has to offer you. You are overcoming the obstacles placed before you. Use them to strengthen your resolve and remind you just how much you want to achieve your goals. Much peace and continued blessings on your journey.

Much admiration, much respect...Paul  
June 8, 2008 10:57 AM

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### Eric @ Monster said...

John, Jamaal, and support crew,  
One week down now, one third done. You guys give me faith that our future is good hands. Keep up your spirits, enjoy yourselves, be safe, and know this: YOU ARE EFFECTING MORE PEOPLE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE. Thanks for making me a better person by knowing yall.  
June 8, 2008 12:53 PM

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**Caroline Merritt said...**

Hey guys  
You're doing an amazing thing.  
My family and I are praying for you.  
Keep up the good work  
-Caroline  
June 8, 2008 3:08 PM

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**The Russian said...**

My wife told me about what you guys are doing. I wish you the best of luck during this heat wave...mind over matter (except when it come to plenty of H2O). Good luck and God Bless!  
June 9, 2008 4:59 AM

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**Sunday, June 8, 2008**

## **Day 07- Much Needed Rest.**

This morning we said goodbye to part of the support group. My aunt Pam, my cousin's wife, Rachel, and her son Jordan parted ways with the rest of us as they returned home. I am going to miss them, but I will see them again at the end in Philadelphia. So thank you Aunt Pam and Rachel and Jordan for taking care of me and Jamaal and for providing us with laughs along the way. (Especially Rachel. She actually rode with us one day and we have some embarrassing video of her that we will post soon.) Hope you had a safe trip home.

Despite our short ride today, Jamaal and I felt like we were moving incredibly slow. I think the week's worth of consistent riding finally caught up with us. However, we still made good time and arrived just outside of Savannah at 12PM. We had two television interviews to do when we got to town, so before we went to check in the room, we completed both interviews. Afterwards, we attempted to check in, but they informed us that we couldn't until after 3PM, so we cruised around Savannah in the van, and got a little food.

As soon as we got back, our rooms were ready and everyone took a nap. During my nap, I had that dream again. This time it was not as vivid as the first time, but it was still enough to jerk me out of my sleep. I don't know why I keep having this dream, but it's interesting because I never really dream. (Or I don't remember them, at least.)

We ate dinner at Uncle Bubba's Oyster House. My grandmother wanted to eat there because it is Paula Deen's brother's restaurant. It was quite good despite the 45 minute wait. So between the naps and eating at Bubba's, we didn't have a whole lot of time to sight see. Kind of a bummer, but Sunday isn't the best day to sight see anyways.

Well, folks. Tomorrow we ride to Beaufort, SC. We will have crossed an entire state in 4 days. Not bad timing for being on bikes. We are at 450 miles at this point, and will surpass 500 by tomorrow. We love to hear from everyone and truly appreciate everyone's support. Take care, and we hope your weekend was swell. Our weekend was.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 9:53 PM 5 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Bahrtender said...

thats amazing!! you guys are doing great!! my mom says she wishes you the best, she worries but she knows you'll make it!! I LOVE YOU GUYS!!!!

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 8, 2008 11:51 PM

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### Anonymous said...

hey guys!!

I am so glad I could provide yall with so many laughs! Yall kept me much more entertained!! Thanks so much for letting me tag along and be part of you guys support!!! I had so much fun!! (I didnt realize how many things there is to do on the side of the rode...waiting =])Dont forget about the berries I picked for you! And John I want to say how proud I am of you..I was proud when you first left last monday but after joining your journey and seeing it first hand literally, I have to give it up to both of you guys! yall are something else. This experience is moving to so many people, its really unbelievable. This whole experience has taught me things that maybe were not your first intentions, but truly I think your story is hitting many people in lots of different ways. You are showing people that they can do anything they want and to really appreciate the life that they have, no matter what obstacle is set in your path you can do your best to overcome it. I love that John...keep on keepin on.... okay??? I know you will!!!! Hopefully I will get to see you in Philadelphia!!!! and yes we made it back safe!! <3 ya

-Rachel Chandler

p.s. dont embarrass me to bad, okay john? and jamall

June 9, 2008 1:48 AM

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### Jackson Willis said...

It's good that you guys got some good rest in. And it's wonderful that you guys are almost over 500. This entire tour makes me glad to know the two of you.

I'm so blessed to have met two great individuals like yourselves, John and Jamaal.

Keep going, guys. I'm still praying for the two of you.

-Jackson

P.S. Imma need one of those sweet t-shirts. =]

June 9, 2008 6:35 AM

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### Anonymous said...

John and Jamaal! Keep up the good work. We love reading your journals and how you guys are doing. It's nice to know that you guys are out there fighting this disease from another end. We're here in Philly cheering you on!

-Research Assistant at Hep. B. Foundation

June 9, 2008 2:24 PM

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### levesque32 said...

Rest well. God is on your side.

-Lyle

June 9, 2008 6:09 PM

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**Monday, June 9, 2008**

**Day 08- Georgia Recap.**



Georgia had one last surprise for us this morning. We got out to HWY 17, and began pedaling when I remarked to Jamaal, "Hey. Does this look familiar?" Of course Jamaal has a terrible sense of direction and place, so this was the wrong question to ask of him, but even he began to recognize our surroundings. Somehow we managed to double back through Savannah, and we got so turned around that we lost a good half hour or so, but we finally figured it out. HWY17 actually merges with the interstate to cross Savannah's Talmadge Cable Bridge, so we had to load up the bikes to cross this impressive monument.

Afterwards we were on our way, making it into South Carolina soon after. Almost instantly the fauna seemed to change, as tall trees hung over the roads providing consistent shade, but the nice bike lanes of Savannah failed to cross the state lines. The roads were in poor condition with spotty availability of shoulder space, but the further we traveled the better the roads seemed to become. We got here a little after noon, here in Beaufort, and took our daily ritual nap. I woke up to a reporter's phone call, and after answering a couple of his questions, we went to explore Beaufort. So far, I think SC is my favorite. I haven't been here long, but I love the look of the place. Quirky shops and local restaurants line the street we are staying on and we are minutes from the downtown area. Tomorrow we will ride to Charleston stopping just before the Francis Marion National Forest. Before I call it quits though, I'd like to take a moment to remember Georgia in all of its gloriousness.

Georgia.

You are a great state. Thank you for our safe passage. It was incredibly hot, though. In the future, it would be more pleasant for your guests if the weather were cooler. Anyways, thanks for your wonderful bar-b-que and your nice residents. Take care, Georgia. We'll miss you.

#### The Lost, Road Artifacts- Georgia Revived

- What appeared to be a dog, but after passing it, we discovered it was a wild BOAR. (Jamaal argues with me on the initial appearance of this creature, claiming it looked like a "beaver.")
- A dirty magazine that someone only got for the articles and after reading them, tossed it on the side of the road.
- A decapitated baby doll that apparently attempted to cross the road, but forgot to look both ways.

And finally, the best find of Georgia-  
A butter knife to complete our collection of silverware. So thanks once again, Georgia. It's been real.

Love, John and Jamaal.

## Posted Comments:

### Jackson Willis said...

A completed collection of silverware, eh? Excellent finds, guys. XD  
I wish I could be there with you and see the scenery changes. They sound so intriguing. Keep going, guys. You're doing great.

-Jackson

June 9, 2008 11:07 PM

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### Bahrtender said...

i love it! now you need a plate and you can cook up the bo-ever, ya i morphed the animals together kinda like a pokemon, if only jaymall had his amazing belt buckle w/ him, he could have caught it. =] well that HWY 17 got me and my fam mixed up and we're indians. crazy i know. anyhow i love you boys, you're a trooper!!

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 9, 2008 11:14 PM

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### Addison Ward said...

yall are doing great sounds like you guys are having a lot of fun i like all of your finds lol its going to be really cool to see just how many things are on the list at the end. good luck and keep it up we are all rooting for you

-Addison Ward

June 10, 2008 12:11 AM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys! It was so good to read your report tonight. John, you have such a way with words. I really enjoy all of your commentary on the trip and I even sometimes wish I were there(that is until I remember you are biking and the heat wave. Also, I wanted to give you a little family history on the Francis Marion National Forest. Your Granddaddy's father was named after Francis Marion and his great grandfather (William Ellis) fought with Francis Marion at the Cowpens in SC(that would be your great great great grandfather; wow that's a mouthful!). To add further confusion on this bit of history, William Ellis' son Greene Ellis (which is Francis Marion Ellis' father) was named after Francis Marion's General, General Greene. Can you tell that Uncle Cary is here? : )

Well, great job guys. I love you both. Andrew will flying in on the 21st to meet you guys in Philly. Really did enjoy the retrieved articles again.

Keep on biking, Love, Aunt Nancy

June 10, 2008 12:11 AM

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### Anonymous said...

Hi John David you don't know me but I know all about you from your wonderful Aunt Pam. You are truly an inspiration and I am thrilled to learn all about you and your cause. In addition to being a cyclist you definitely have a career in journalism! Your blogs are great and I look forward to reading them daily.

Keep up the good work and I can't wait to finally meet you and Jamal!

Love,

-Hot chick or othewise known as Valencia

June 10, 2008 10:39 AM

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### Anonymous said...

You guys are really amazing for doing this. Love reading the blogs and can't wait to see you two when you get back.

-Tarah

June 10, 2008 11:37 AM

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**Tuesday, June 10, 2008**

## Day 09 - How Lowcountry can you get ?

Blinds drawn, A/C blasting, covers pulled to our chins, Jamaal and I overslept. It was 7:40AM when I was finally aware of the time. I jumped out of bed and slid on my shorts, shirt, and shoes. Tossing a pillow at Jamaal, I attempted to wake him up, but nothing doing. He had formed a cocoon of comfortability out of the bed and its dressings. He rolled over and dribbled some inaudible words out of his mouth as I rushed to pack my bags. Jamaal soon sensed my urgency and jerked out of bed, bedsheets still wrapped around him. Hastily, we both packed our stuff into the van. Somehow, we managed to leave the hotel at 8:05AM.

This is how we began our day. Not long after, we were on the roads riding through beautiful South Carolina. The dense forestry of SC still captivates me and Jamaal. It almost looked as if you would need a flashlight to walk through it even at 10AM. We made excellent time today finishing 62 miles by 12:45PM arriving in Charleston. I could only attribute this to the scenery, the shade, and the relative flatness of the roads we were traveling on. All in all, a very good day.

Once again, we had to wait to check into our rooms, so we went to eat at a local restaurant. As usual, the food was delish. (Honestly though, after riding, you could feed me and Jamaal a boot and we would totally enjoy it and my family will attest to this. When they ask us what we would like to eat after we finish riding, our typical response is simply, "Food.") My mother carried on the tradition of making it aware to everyone in the restaurant that Jamaal and I are riding our bikes clear cross the country. That's what mothers are for though, right ? Embarrassment ?

3PM came around and we checked into our rooms. Retrieving our keys, Jamaal and I were looking forward getting into the A/C and taking our nap. Jamaal beat me to the door, but when I came around the corner he was still waiting outside. He then came out with some story that someone was in our room. I thought he was pulling a prank, so I disregarded it and attempted to open the door. Upon opening it, there was shaving cream on the table, a laptop on the bed, and luggage sitting on the floor. We took the all too familiar trek to the front desk. They apologized and gave us a new room; with a broken air conditioner! Oh well. You win some, you lose some.

Had an interview for the Charleston Post. I enjoyed this interview because the reporter actually allowed me and Jamaal to speak freely about everything, and not just in such a Q and A blunt format. So thank you for that. Can't wait to read the article, Chase.

### Interesting Road Sights in SC. (Had to change the title because of copyright infringement)

- Most interesting roadkill award goes to SC hands down. We saw a horseshoe crab dead on the side of the road.
- A live deer took off into the woods after we road past. The first living animal that didn't chase us.
- This next one is kinda sad. A dog's leash was found in the road. Could only spell out a bad situation.
- A Semi with one large open roofed container that contained two of the largest tires I have ever seen. Larger than the van that we are traveling in.

Tonight, Jamaal and I restocked on Gatorade and got lost through Charleston. Tomorrow we have a 90 mile ride through the Francis Marion National Forest, finally ending in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Hopefully, the ride will be beautiful and the forest will keep us cool. Well, take care folks. Can't wait to hear from you, John and Jamaal.

P.S. We have heard that some of you have expressed concerns over our attire. More specifically, our shorts. Do not worry. We are wearing the proper cycling shorts. They are just under our "normal" shorts. Jamaal and I still have issues over wearing cycling shorts in public. Thus, the shorts over our cycling shorts.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 8:51 PM 5 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Anonymous said...

Hey John and Jamaal

It's Uncle Mike here. Aunt Pam was a tired little lady when she got back to Orlando. She misses being in the Pit Crew and we read your Blogs everyday. Congrats for being in S.C. already and know that you have TONS of FANS in Orlando enjoying your Blogs and Believing in your Mission. Love,  
Uncle Mike

June 10, 2008 10:47 PM

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### Anonymous said...

we love and miss yall!

Sam and Alex

June 11, 2008 2:45 AM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys. It's me again. WOW you guys are making great time! I can't say it enough, I AM PROUD OF YOU BOTH. You two are an inspiration to many people. Have a great day of riding and look forward to your blog tonight.

Love you,

-Aunt Nancy

June 11, 2008 10:42 AM

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### The Russian said...

Keep on truckin'! I've really enjoyed the videos. Please keep them coming.

June 11, 2008 10:50 AM

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### Anonymous said...

You two are far more inspiring that you can imagine. This past weekend I ran a 5K race in that blasted heat. Many times during the race I thought of checking out but I thought of you both on your bikes riding for the cure and it helped keep me motivated to the finish line. It was my worse time ever but that doesn't matter. I didn't quit. Thanks to you both. Good luck with the rest of your race!  
Peggy

June 11, 2008 12:00 PM

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### Anonymous said...

I wish you the best as you make your way up to Philadelphia! Your strength and courage is truly an inspiration to others! I enjoy reading your blog postings everyday and look forward to the list of items seen on your ride! Keep on going!

Best,

-Donna@NutriSystem

June 11, 2008 3:02 PM

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### Bahrtender said...

You're boys are doing so well, I'm proud of you!! Can't wait for you two to come home and John is like SUPER TAN and Jaymall is like Black. going to be really funny, keep putting on sunscreen.

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 11, 2008 4:07 PM

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Wednesday June 11, 2008

## Day 10 - Myrtle Beach Ahoy!



90 miles. Only an hour and a half by car. (Quicker if you've got a lead foot.) By bike, as fast as your legs and your heart can handle. This is what I love about riding my bike. My speed is directly related to how I feel. If I am excited or angry, I ride quick, emotions becoming my fuel. If I am tired or sore, I rode slow, riding myself towards sleep. In a car, things are more robotic. No matter what happens, your car will still go as fast on the day your dog died as it did on the day there were nonstop reruns of **COPS**. (Well, if you are lucky.) I guess what I am trying to say is that riding my bike makes me feel connected. It makes me feel connected to myself and the things around me and I find that to be a very fulfilling feeling.

We left out of Charleston and had better luck leaving there than we did Savannah. Crossed over this beast of a bridge that allowed bikes across but we didn't discover this until it was too late. I tried to make my mom turn around so we could ride back over it, but she pointed out the long day ahead of us, so thoughtful minds prevailed. We pressed on and completed nearly 60 miles to Georgetown before lunch. By this time, Jamaal and I were hot and hungry so we hopped in the van and scouted for a restaurant. We came by a place by the name of **Gator Krawls**, a nice restaurant with a menu that anyone could love. Even those who enjoy eating fried alligator tail. I tried it, and I admit that it was actually quite good. Not your typical meal, but nonetheless good. Jamaal, however, did not. He decided to eat a chicken tenders instead. Full of food and tired, we napped in the van until three as my mother and grandmother did some shopping. As soon as they got back, though, it was back on the road with no time to even rub the sleep from our eyes.

The last stretch to Myrtle Beach proved to be a pleasant ride, encountering the most beautiful bike trails I have ever seen. Paved trails that lead through the forestry of South Carolina ran parallel with HWY17. There were even bridges built over small creeks that crossed the trails. I wish there were more trails like this back home. The only thing I could compare this trail to would be the UWF nature trails, but they cater more to MTB's. I am glad that we were able to ride on these beautiful trails though. It was a good experience.

Upon arriving to Myrtle Beach, Jamaal and I went to **Pirateland Campgrounds**. It only took us an hour or so to set up our over-sized, mansion tent that sleeps eight. (Jamaal and I don't like our feet to touch.) We then blew ten bucks in the arcade, and ended up riding our bikes some more. This was an interesting experience because apparently, at night, all the campers get in their golf carts and just ride the same stretch of the campgrounds' paved roads. To be honest, it was almost majestic seeing the conglomeration of golf carts, bikes, walkers, and runners. Jamaal and I cruised this strip for a while, darting through the aforementioned cluster of vehicles and people. Afterwards, we decided to go to the beach to compare it to the one back home. (The sand was grittier, but the beach itself was still nice.) We turned in after we decided there was no more trouble to be caused and slept well having nothing but the tent bottom and a sleeping bag under our backs.

All in all, a very good day. We would ride to Wilmington the next day, and be a little over halfway done with the trip. It's going by so fast. It seems like yesterday that we were in Pensacola. That's how all things go, it seems. Anticipation makes it feel forever away, and then it arrives and it is over and you have nothing but memories and pictures...I wouldn't trade these memories for anything in the world.

On that note, I close Day 10. After I list the crazy finds of the day, of course.

- A life vest away from any apparent body of water. I can't think of any explanation.
- A brunette wig. Probably one of the most disturbing finds thus far.
- A hockey stick. I imagine this was viewed as disposable because with this heat, why would anyone think about playing hockey ?
- A mutilated teddy bear. I don't quite understand why we keep finding mauled stuffed animals. It must be just as tough for survival in the stuffed animal kingdom as it is in the animal kingdom.
- Typical assorted clothes and roadkill. They have become as common as mile markers to us now.

Take it easy,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 9:28 PM 1 COMMENT**

## **Posted Comments:**

### **Anonymous said...**

hey yall!!! you guys are doing great...i wish i was still there! sounds like yall are hanging in there and having fun!!! best wishes.....love yall.....Rachel\*  
p.s. whats up with the name change in the artifacts list????  
June 12, 2008 11:54 PM

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**Thursday, June 12, 2008**

## **Day 11 - Wake Up Wilmington!**

Two weeks ago, today, I was walking across the stage in the Pensacola Civic Center, shaking my principal's hand, and receiving my diploma. This is unreal for me to think about because here I am, nearly eight hundred miles away, riding my bike across the country. When I think about where I am now, sometimes it is hard for me to see the whole picture, like when I am riding my bike. Sometimes I ride with my attention low to make sure the road just ahead of me is clear. When I ride like this, I get restless and bored with riding. It is not until I look up towards the clouds and sky and the road beyond the horizon that I get the true joy out of riding because it is only then that I am getting the whole picture.

The Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour, itself, began as a ride to raise awareness about Hepatitis B and to raise money for finding a cure for Hepatitis B, and so far, it has been quite successful. This ride, for me, was successful as soon as we left Pensacola, but we have come so much further. From being chased by dogs to dead car batteries, muscle cramps to broken rear derailleurs, we have run the gamut of problems one could encounter, but we have pedaled on. This captures what I have felt "Believe in the Cure" truly means. Like I said before, the money raised is going towards the Hepatitis B Foundation's mission on finding a cure for Hepatitis B, but this takes time. (As all things take time.) Will the cure come in my lifetime? My children's lifetime? How can one be certain?

I feel as if "Believe in the Cure" is a misnomer. I feel as if it should be something more along the lines of "Believe in your heart and mind" because that is, for now, the cure to Chronic Hepatitis B, and many other chronic illnesses that plague us. This is the only thing that I can be certain of; that if I am determined enough to wake up and live each day in ways that would "make the mountains glad"; that if I have the strength to make a difference with each moment; that if I believe in my heart and my mind that I am not broken, but healthy and even cured, who will tell me that I am not? Nothing, now, could tell me otherwise. This is the whole picture. Pedaling on when the air gets thick and the hills get steep, when the temperatures start to rise and your muscles begin to ache. This is what the Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour truly means.

Pedal on.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 11:26 PM 6 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Leah Rice said...

Well said John. You and Jamaal are an inspiration! Your drive and will is setting an example to all those whom you share your story - remember that when your legs get tired and the heat is too much to bear along your journey. Thank you for giving the Foundation and others living with the hepatitis B virus a voice. You are two amazing young men.

Keep on truckin'! You are in our thoughts and prayers.

-Leah

June 13, 2008 8:44 AM

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### Gina Rubel said...

John and Jamaal -

You are amazing young men. We can't wait to greet you in Philadelphia and Doylestown on June 23rd! Just 10 days to go.

Enjoy the ride,

-Gina Rubel

June 13, 2008 8:57 AM

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### Amanda Johnson said...

I'm proud of you guys!! Philly's getting closer every day you speed racers, you. I hope your star wars stickers are keeping you company :)

June 13, 2008 11:03 AM

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### Bahrtender said...

Jaymall you have such a way with words. John you might need to take some lessons from him. =] Well i love you boys, just keep pedaling on. You're my hero!

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 13, 2008 9:10 PM

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### Joan Block said...

John, you truly express such wisdom for being such a young person! The last paragraph in your blog is an eternal truth, and the fact that you recognize this so early in your life is inspiring! Thank you for sharing your deepest thoughts, insights and humor with all of us. I look forward every day to your postings!!! Always, Joan

June 14, 2008 9:37 AM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys,

It's me again. I am so proud of you. John, you're writings are an inspiration to us all. I love you and wish you many blessings along this journey.

Keep on biking,

Love , Aunt Nancy

June 15, 2008 11:01 AM

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## **Friday, June 13, 2008**

### Day 12- Friday the 13th.

I am usually not too superstitious, at least when it comes to Friday the 13th, but today proved to be unique. Whether or not this is because of Friday the 13th, I guess Jamaal and I will never be sure, but consider the following circumstances.

- Jamaal and I met a fellow tourer early this morning during our ride. He was touring fully loaded with nearly forty pounds of gear by my eyes' estimate. We rode along with him and chatted with him a bit, discovering he was riding from Miami to Canada because he felt it was "a good way to spend the summer." Now you might say that this isn't odd, it's just absurd, but there is more to the story. Riding behind him, we clocked our speed at around 12-13MPH, slightly slower than the 16-18MPH that Jamaal and I typically cruise at, but we didn't mind the slower pace and the conversation and company he gave. We stopped at a red light, and he informed us that he was going to part ways with us. It was kind of sad, but to each his own, I suppose. Here's the unnerving part. An hour later, after stepping our pace back up, we were rehydrating at the van when we spotted the man on his bike again as he passed by us. Trust me, there is no mistaking this guy. Honestly, how many people are touring at this moment in time, in the same area that we are traveling in ? Weird.
- Jamaal fell off his bike. Obviously, it wasn't a poltergeist or specter or ghost or anything. He wasn't paying attention and he ran into the back of my tire causing him to fall into the road. Luckily for us, there were no cars coming at the time, but it was the first fall of the trip, and it just so happens that this occurs on Friday the 13th.
- We almost got hit by a car today. The closest we've come to this scary situation in all of our riding adventures. We rode up to a red light at an intersection and right as we pulled up to the light it turned green, so we pedalled through, but as we were, a truck adjacent to us slowly, but deliberately began shifting over to the shoulder. Luckily, Jamaal and I had enough space to stop and avoid an accident as we watched this car drive over numerous cones on the shoulder and then drive away.
- To top this all off, our hotel had rooms donated to us in Jacksonville, NC, but for tomorrow night and they had no available rooms for us tonight.

Today was interesting to say the least. It was a fun, short ride, and we were able to meet up with some friends here in Jacksonville. We will be bunking with them tonight, so thank you Ammons family. Tomorrow we ride to Washington, NC, a 70 mile ride.

Sleep well, folks, and take it easy,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 12:04 AM 7 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Joan Block said...

Hi John, just wanted to let you know that I wrote a comment to your posting yesterday, so please take a look! I've only just realized how easy it is to respond. Anyhow, I feel like we're all truly riding along with you and Jamaal since your descriptions and insights are so vivid. It is so gratifying to know that this tour is fulfilling your dream! Always, Joan

June 14, 2008 9:43 AM

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### Alex said...

Jamaal, I found my Guitar Hero 3 Disc!

-Alex

June 14, 2008 11:35 AM

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### Pam said...

I miss being part of the pit crew hope you are staying hydrated. I am sooo proud of both of you and look forward to reading the blogs everyday. Wish I were there but I look forward to meeting you in Philly where Jamaal can try a real Philly cheesesteak.

Love you,

-Pam

June 14, 2008 12:07 PM

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### Paul said...

Strange day indeed! I hope Jamaal didn't get too much road rash. Good thing that you guys are on the alert for careless drivers and have fast reflexes. I hope that you guys are catching a little more breeze now that you have made it to the coast. Wishing you blue skies, cool breezes at your back, and smooth roads ahead. Blessings...Paul

P.S. John give your mom ( Hi sumomo ) a big hug and warm fuzzies for me :)

June 14, 2008 12:38 PM

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### Bahrtender said...

i'm glad to hear that it wasn't too bad on this curious day. jaymall glad to hear you're alright, but be the big butt that broke your fall. much love boys!!

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 14, 2008 11:51 PM

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### Anonymous said...

You go guys!! Very inspiring! Great at bringing awareness to this disease and raising much needed funds!

-Maria & Lee

June 15, 2008 11:33 AM

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**Sunday June 15, 2008**

## Day 13/14 - Little Washington, Ex-Capital Edenton, and Everything In Between.

Early morning we awoke and left a note, thanking the Ammons family for taking care of us and headed for Washington, North Carolina on Saturday. It began as a typical day of riding. This day, though, we encountered road construction, just before reaching Washington that we haven't quite experienced before. Traffic was cut to one lane for both north and south-bound lanes. A dreadful sight for cyclists, but in our favor, there was a detour that we gladly took. This proved to be a bad move on our part, simply because we assumed a detour would take you back to the road that you were...detouring from, but apparently, this is not always the case. After getting lost and backtracking and getting lost again, we finally swallowed our man pride and asked for help. So this minor incident only set us back forty-five minutes, and we continued on to Washington on the less than comfortable roads.

Upon arriving in Washington, we had a run in with a drawbridge. You see, the portion of the bridge that raises up to allow boats through is actually a mesh weaving of metal that is a poor surface for bike tires to ride over. (DEATHTRAP) We had no choice though but to ride across since there was no shoulder on this bridge or any other way to cross. Jamaal likened this riding experience to drifting in a car. (I seriously doubt he knows first-hand. He probably just saw it on a video game or movie.) Nonetheless, we made it safely to our hotel.

Today, we had our first rain of the entire trip. Two weeks of sunshine before we had any rain at all. Before we began this journey, Jamaal and I considered riding in the rain, barring lightning and tremendous down pours, but after testing the conditions of the roads for ourselves first hand, we decided that the roads were too slick. It would be selfish and stupid to endanger ourselves just so we could ride in the rain. Sunday always serves as a good day to rest and recollect ourselves anyways, so we appreciated the first true break from riding we have had the entire trip.

For dinner, we ate at a buffet that reminded me of the scene from Vegas Vacation. You know that scene I am talking about. The scene with the blue stuff and the yellow stuff? Let's just say I played it safe, and ate only what I could recognize.

Tomorrow we will be in Virginia, only a week from our final destination- Philadelphia! Now that Jamaal and I have rested up we will be riding strong for the last stretch. I can't believe that the ride is almost completed. I won't know what to do with myself after this is over and done with. I'll feel like I should get up every morning and ride for 60 miles or so before I can do anything else. I definitely feel changed for the better by doing this. Well, sorry for the late update folks, but we will have more video coming soon. Take it easy.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 9:58 PM 5 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Anonymous said...

Hey! I am glad that you guys are doing well. Guess what? I went to my orientation at UF and I saw like 3 bike stores. And Gainesville is the "Most Biker Friendly City" in the south. If you pass through Virginia Beach, don't stop at the beaches- they aren't very nice. Good luck with everything. What you guys are doing is unbelievable. I am really proud and can't wait for you to get back.

-Tangela

June 15, 2008 11:53 PM

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### Jenn Huynh said...

hey guys!

it's good to hear that things are going well! it's unbelievable that y'all are almost done! it really does feel like Pensacola was seeing you guys off yesterday! can't wait til yall get back. i can't wait until i get to see the ridiculous tanlines and hear the great stories!

i really am going to try to have the party for you! so far, there isn't anything interfering with it!

June 16, 2008 1:26 AM

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### haydn said...

Hi John and Jammal, excellent example your cycle tour. Here in South Africa hepB is pretty uncommon so they think, as I have had it for over 10yrs now, often taking the doctors my internet research, WOW, Good luck with the rest, cycle safe and hope to chat via email one day, I need to start something similar here in South Africa, Haydn

June 16, 2008 5:04 AM

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### Rachael Fink, Furia Rubel Communications said...

Dear John and Jamaal,

I love reading your posts everyday in the office and won't know what to do when you are finally done. Maybe you both should continue to ride and write just to keep us inspired! Good luck on your last week and thank you for the exciting journey.

June 16, 2008 10:06 AM

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### Jamie said...

you guys really are amazing

June 16, 2008 11:20 PM

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**Monday, June 16, 2008**

## Day 15- Smoked.

Acres of open fields, fields of never ending, sun-kissed plains surrounded us as we rode out of North Carolina into Virginia today. Riding was smooth and easy going. The weather was cooler than it has been and Jamaal and I felt so comfortable that we rode without our normal shorts over our cycling shorts.

We reached a bridge, probably a mile or so long, with decent elevation. The elevation reminded us of the hills we encountered in the first week of riding and allowed us to approach the speeds we topped in the first week too. (I topped out at nearly 28MPH going down this bridge.) After the descent though, as with every hill, I began to slow and I attempted to coast on the speed I reached as far as I could. Jamaal, however, pedaled through and tried to reach the highest speed he could. A well disguised pot hole thwarted this attempt, though, causing Jamaal to slide baseball style while still attached to his bike. His fall looked pretty gnarly to say the least and I was actually genuinely worried, but he was on his feet as quickly as he fell and managed to come out with only a couple scrapes. He brushed himself off and we were on our way again.

After reaching Virginia we encountered what appeared to be fog, but after breathing some of it, we discovered it was smoke. Yeah, no kidding. Smoke. I assume this is smoke blowing from North Carolina into Virginia, but it ruined the rest of today's ride. It was so bad that we saw a few, unfortunate pedestrians walking with bandannas over their faces to keep from breathing the smoke into their lungs.

Tomorrow we ride from Yorktown to Tappahannock. I have been informed that there isn't much there so tomorrow should be interesting. However, the day after we will be riding through D.C. and Baltimore. How we will go from nowhere to the U.S. capital from one day to the next, I will never know.

Tomorrow is Jamaal's birthday, so I am sure he would appreciate it a lot if you could leave him a message for after tomorrow's ride. Thanks everyone. Take care and be safe.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 9:18 PM 10 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments:

### Anonymous said...

happy birthday jamaal!  
= ]  
June 16, 2008 11:24 PM

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### Anonymous said...

John and Jamaal, Stay STRONG. Stay POSITIVE. Stay FOCUSED. Stay SAFE.  
Happy Birthday Jamaal! We Love You! See you in DC/Philadelphia!  
June 16, 2008 11:44 PM

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### Anonymous said...

Happy birthday, bro :) Stay Strong!  
-Jonathan  
June 16, 2008 11:57 PM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys, Have a great ride tomorrow. Hope you have good weather and clean air to breathe.  
Happy Birthday Jamaal! See you both when you get home.  
-Love, Aunt Nancy  
June 17, 2008 12:28 AM

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### Melanie said...

Have a great ride today John and Jamaal! I will see you in one day in the DC area. Be safe and have fun!  
Happy Birthday Jamaal! Enjoy your new jersey. I am looking forward to seeing photos of it with the bike.  
June 17, 2008 7:36 AM

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### Anonymous said...

Happy Birthday Jamaal! Must of been some big candles for the day with all that smoke:)  
June 17, 2008 8:27 AM

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### Jessica said...

Happy Happy Happy Happy Birthday! Can you believe you guys are almost here!!  
June 17, 2008 10:27 AM

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### Terry said...

Hey John. Happy B-day, Jamaal. You guys are doing great. Ya'll have made it so far already. Say hey to the city of brotherly love for me, my lovely brothers, and I will see you when you get back. :)Peace out.  
June 17, 2008 10:57 AM

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### Anonymous said...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JAMAAL!!!  
June 17, 2008 1:00 PM

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### Pam said...

Happy 18th Birthday Jamaal!! Hope you have a great day!! Miss being part of the pit crew - you probably won't have fallen if your pit crew had been on the ball :)  
June 17, 2008 1:17 PM

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**profTB said...**

You are both remarkable young men, inspiring us all! Joan and I greatly enjoy reading your regular messages, which are well written and engaging. Wishing you both continued progress and safe travels, and looking forward to your triumphant arrival!

-Timothy Block

June 17, 2008 10:41 PM

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**Paul said...**

Happy birthday anniversary Jamaal. I'm sure that this will be a birthday anniversary celebration that you will never forget. Take care both of you. Peace and blessings.....

June 17, 2008 10:45 PM

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**Anonymous said...**

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU, HAPPY BIRTHDAY JAMALL, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU"

=] -Rachel

June 18, 2008 1:54 AM

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**Anonymous said...**

I hope you saw some eagles and osprey as you came up on Tappahannock. There is actually a lot to see but the best bits are off the main roads. Thank you both for doing this good work. And happy birthday to Jamaal!

June 18, 2008 5:31 AM

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**Jackson Willis said...**

Happy Birthday, Jamaal!

You is legal now!

Lol.

=D

You guys are almost there!

It seems like just yesterday you started, and you've gone 800+ miles.

It's crazy.

Go hard on the home stretch, guys.

=]

Godspeed,

Jackson

June 17, 2008 7:02 PM

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**Ashton =) said...**

Happy Birthday Masta Jaymall!!!! =)

I love you guys. Hope you had a good day! Have fun and stay safe!

June 17, 2008 7:02 PM

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**Anonymous said...**

Happy Birthday, Jamaal!!

I can't believe you've gotten so OLD!!! And that makes me OLDER!!!

Have I told you lately how proud I am of the two of you?? I check your blog EVERY night! Please stay safe and I love you both! Mrs. Maness

June 17, 2008 10:37 PM

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**Tuesday, June 17, 2008**

## Day 16- Happy Birthday Hills!

After two days of little riding at all, we woke up itching to get on the bikes. Jamaal sported his new jersey and his new gloves that my mother and I bought for his birthday. I am not going to lie, I was kind of jealous. He looked very comfortable riding in it and has yet to take it off all day. Before this trip is over, I WILL get a cycling jersey. Anyways...

Today was the most beautiful ride of the trip. I thought South Carolina was beautiful, but Virginia has topped that. We've passed some of the most beautiful farms, and in between, there are large forests that rise up into high ridges and dip into low gullies. The trees don't even stop for ponds, as they grow out of the water like spindly fingers. We had quite a few hills to climb, but our focus was drawn towards our surroundings so we didn't mind the climbs much at all. The shoulder was so large that it was almost like we had an entire lane reserved for us. Jamaal should have had a birthday long before because it seemed like everything went in our favor today.

Jamaal promises me that he has a couple of videos in the works so maybe tomorrow when we make it to D.C., he will get a chance to upload them. Also, Jamaal's mother is flying in to meet us tomorrow, and she will be riding with us the rest of the way. Sorry that there isn't much to say tonight, but I think that could be a good thing. It means things went pretty smoothly. Alright, well, Happy Birthday Jamaal. Hope you had a good day, and I hope everyone else had a wonderful day as well.

Here we come Philly!

John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 10:24 PM 4 COMMENTS**

### Posted Comments:

#### Joan Block said...

Happy belated birthday Jamaal!! So glad to hear it was a great day and that you were dressed so well for the occasion. Wow, you have a great mom if she's willing to ride with you...always, Tim and Joan

June 18, 2008 9:04 AM

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#### cyregray said...

Happy Birthing Jamaal! I'm proud of your moms for riding with y'all for the rest of the trip - there's no way my 'rents could follow suit.

As always madd props.

-Brent K

June 18, 2008 9:48 AM

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#### Anonymous said...

Happy Birthday Jamaal!!! Can't wait for you guys to arrive... it has been so inspirational following your journey through the blog. Me thinks a fabulous writing career may be in your future...

June 18, 2008 10:57 AM

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#### Lauren said...

Happy Belated Birthday Jamaal (seeing as I am writing this on the 18th)! I can't believe you guys are almost here! Also, I've been meaning to comment to let you guys know that one of the main bike races in Philly happened about a week and a half ago and almost 100 of the approx. 180 riders dropped out because of the heat, and you guys keep pushing through it every day. That should make you guys feel tough and awesome!

June 18, 2008 10:59 AM

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#### alex may said...

miss me yet?

June 18, 2008 9:31 PM

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**Wednesday, June 18, 2008**

## Day 17- Sunshine Skies with Raincloud Eyes.

Nothing felt real today. As if I witnessed everything from outside of my skin. I heard the news early this morning. Far before anyone is mentally prepared for anything, let alone the news that I received. I didn't believe it at first. I didn't want to believe it. My best friend's father passed away and I still can't believe it.

Mr. Patrick Clancy was one of the only father figures I have ever had. He was always well dressed and had some bit of wisdom to spread every time he saw me. His bow tie and suspenders made me feel like I could relate to him because of his quirky sense of style. When I spoke with him, he was one of the only adults that actually made me feel like he was listening. Just before I left for the ride, I talked with him in length about the tour. He asked questions of concern, and spoke to me as if I were his own son. I will miss him as I am sure many others will. I would like to dedicate tonight's blog post to Mr. Clancy and the entire Clancy family. I am incredibly sorry for your loss.

I find it odd how something as grievous as this can occur, but yet the sun can shine brighter than any other day. Maybe this is an attempt to console us. That when we are feeling our lowest, the sun shines bright to keep our spirits from falling any lower. We rode today from Tappahannock to Fredricksburg on more of the most beautiful roads we have been on the entire trip. In Fredricksburg, the traffic into D.C. began getting heavy so we hopped in the van to pick up Jamaal's mother from the Reagan National Airport. Afterwards, we headed to our hotel in Mount Vernon, Virginia where we met with Melanie Groft. She was in the city and stopped by to discuss the final days of the tour with us.

Tomorrow we will be staying just outside Baltimore, so I believe Jamaal and I are going to do some riding in downtown D.C. to see the sights. Tonight we got a taste as we drove through the downtown area, and I absolutely fell in love. There is so much to see and so much going on that just the sight of it all makes me happy to say that this is the capital of my country. Taken with the good and the bad, I am looking forward to being in D.C. tomorrow. Well, take care folks. I ask that you might pray for the Clancy family, if you would.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

May you be happy soon and forever, Mr. Clancy.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 9:51 PM 2 COMMENTS**

### Posted Comments:

#### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys,

I am sorry to hear of the loss of Mr. Clancey. I will be saying a special pray for the family and for you, John tonight.

I hope you guys enjoy DC. I will let Grandma know you are there and loving her "North Country". I hope you get to see the awesome breathtaking monuments and buildings that are in DC. Be careful and take care. Love, Aunt Nancy

June 19, 2008 2:05 AM

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#### Bahrtender said...

Hey Boys,

I read this and teared up, I'm sorry for the loss. I will pray for the Clancey family and friends. Well I'm glad to hear that the trip is going well. Glad I got to talk to you boys the other day! Made my day!! Please be careful, and kloveyoubye!! =]

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 19, 2008 9:16 PM

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**Thursday, June 19, 2008**

## Day 18- Lost in the Capital.

Streets leading in every direction, navigating somehow got placed in my hands. "John, which way?" "Which way are we going, John?" These questions thrown at me when I was just as lost as everyone else. "Straight." This was the only response that made sense to me. We saw the Washington Monument, the Washington Harbor, the Pentagon, the Department of the Treasury, (My grandmother joked about asking them to print us off some money. I don't think it works that way though.) and much more. Sadly, though, this was all from the car. I think we were just overwhelmed with the history of the city. We couldn't decide where to go or what to do, and when we did, we would get lost. D.C. definitely won the battle today, but I have a feeling this won't be my last run in with the city. I will be back.

I have noticed that I have been eating a lot lately. I mean obviously I need more calories than I would need normally, but there is no way I am going to be able to eat this well when I get back home. It'll be back to PB&J and grandma's dinner special then. That's nothing to complain about though. I don't think Jamaal's diet has really changed much on this trip though. He's always managed to find something to his liking at any restaurant we've visited.

Tomorrow we ride to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I have been told that we are guaranteed to see Amish people tomorrow so that should be interesting. I find their culture to be very interesting and I believe this will be a great experience for both me and Jamaal. If nothing else, it'll be something new to experience. Anyways, I hope everyone had a wonderful day wherever you happened to spend it. Take care, and tune back in tomorrow. We will have a big post tomorrow.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 10:13 PM 6 COMMENTS**

## Posted Comments

### Ashton. =) said...

I cant believe yall are already to Pennsylvania!!! Im seriously so proud of you guys.  
June 20, 2008 9:38 AM

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### cyregray said...

Yeah DCs a bit insane. Took three years of living there to finally get a handle on navigation. Oh, it's also infamous for bike theft, even if you lock it up, it best be a super-thick chain, with a super-thick lock anything less will get clipped and ganked.

Lancaster is well... kinda dull, pretty though it's not like y'all are spending a weekend and looking for hoppin party's anyway.

Safe Travels,

-Brent

June 20, 2008 9:44 AM

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### Bahrtender said...

Well boys... YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW PROUD I AM RIGHT NOW!!!! You two are unstoppable, no matter what challenges you faces you pedeled on. I LOVE YOU JOHN AND JAYMALL!!!

kloveyoubye

KEEP IT UP!!!

-Bri Bri

June 21, 2008 12:02 AM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Hey Guys, You are doing GREAT!!! I can't believe how far you have come. You two are really to be adored for what you have done to bring awaremess to many. Andrew will be flying to Philly in about 6 hours. He will be there to see you guys finish. Wish I could be there, but will be praying for you. Lots of love,

-Aunt Nancy

June 21, 2008 1:09 AM

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### Anonymous said...

hey guys,

Keep it up, almost there... Eat a cheese steak for me while in Philly.

-eric

monster Graphics

June 21, 2008 1:32 AM

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### Anonymous said...

wow... almost done... i probably could have made it that far too... i just didnt want to slow yall down thats why i stopped at six miles! haha jk... well i guess its starting to feel like home, everybody's flying up there to see your journey come to end in philly! thats so exciting, i hope yall have lots of fun and good luck!!! cant wait till yall are back in pcola!!! props to the both of yall!!! (happy early birthday john) love yall Rachel, Jamie, and Jordan

June 21, 2008 2:30 PM

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**Monday June 23, 2008**

## Day 21- Final Day

I apologize for the lack of updates, but do not worry, I will catch up tonight with one final post. I did not mean to leave everyone in suspense, it was just that there was quite a few things that came up to prohibit me from updating. (I'll tell you all about it tonight. It is rather amusing.)

Today is the day. The ride to Philadelphia. We are leaving the hotel here in Conshohocken in a little over an hour to ride into the city. I can't believe that this day is already here. I feel happily nervously excitedly elated. Basically, I don't know what or how to feel. I am now eighteen years old and I am completing one of my dreams. I had an idea and I have just witnessed its fruition. I just would like to everyone who followed Jamaal and I through our journey, and all those who kept us in their thoughts and prayers. This is something that I will never forget and has given me a lifetime of memories. I am truly grateful for that.

We have reached and surpassed our goal of \$10,000, and in turn, received the matching donation of an additional \$10,000, bringing our total to \$20,000. Our new goal is now \$25,000, so if you haven't already, every little bit will help. Thanks again for everyone's support. I PROMISE WE WILL POST MULTIPLE VIDEOS AND I WILL CATCH YOU UP ON EVERYTHING.

Love,  
John and Jamaal.

P.S. I am sorry if none of this is coherent. This is probably just one of the greatest days of my life, so thoughts are fleeting.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 7:35 AM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)**

## Posted Comments

### samantha Stevens said...

i cant believe you boys finish on monday. im so proud of you. cant wait until you get home. we all miss you like crazy!  
June 22, 2008 4:05 AM

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### Anonymous said...

Can't wait to meet the two of you! Happy Riding for the last day.  
June 22, 2008 5:50 AM

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### Anonymous said...

yeah.....almost done, so exciting! good luck on your last 12 miles and i hope the end is a blast. wish i could have been there! love rachel  
June 22, 2008 10:03 PM

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### Bahrtender said...

well it's your final night, way to go. i'm so proud. i love you guys!  
-Bri Bri  
June 22, 2008 11:33 PM

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### Anonymous said...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JOHN!!!! I THINK ITS PRETTY COOL THAT YALL ARE ARRIVING IN PHILLY ON YOUR 18TH BIRTHDAY! =)  
LOVE YOU BOYS.  
June 23, 2008 1:31 AM

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### Anonymous said...

I'm praying ya'll have a great last day....what a wonderful experience and for such a admiral cause....I love you both and can't believe it's the last day tomorrow....Oh, and HAPPY BIRTHDAY to you, John.....didn't know you were also getting older!!!! I will miss keeping up with your blog!!  
-Mrs. Maness  
June 23, 2008 1:56 AM

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### Anonymous said...

John,  
fantastic mate.....18 years old too.....so proud of what you are doing .....you are making a lot of people proud.....keep cycling and raising awareness !!!  
June 23, 2008 3:02 PM

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### Aunt Nancy said...

Happy 18th Birthday John! We will have a family celebration for you when you return. You guys have done a great job with completing your goal and surpassing it with donations! How awesome is that!  
Can't wait to see you both. Hope Andrew is Helping to keep you guys in line. : )  
-Love, Aunt Nancy  
June 23, 2008 3:22 PM

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### Anonymous said...

Happy Birthday John!  
Great Job Guys! I am so happy for you John! You guys rock!! =] See yall when you get back!  
Love,  
Rachel  
June 23, 2008 8:12 PM

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**Anonymous said...**

John:

I'm very proud of you. I hope you will stay in touch with me and tell me all the wonderful things you are doing with your life.

Mr. C

June 23, 2008 10:21 PM

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**Alex said...**

Dang man, all done now.

June 24, 2008 12:02 PM

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**Anonymous said...**

John,

Keep fighting the fight! Perseverance, determination, and a love for life to get you through whatever life throws at you! Congratulations for finishing this fight. I'm sure there is more to come.

Keep pressing in and pursuing your goals! And never let go of those friends who stick by your side---

Jamaal he couldn't of done it without you. Take good care!

June 24, 2008 8:50 PM

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**Thursday June 26, 2008**

## Reflections.

I know this is coming more than a little late, and that everyone has probably been waiting on this post more than any of the others, but I have made it home now to a stable internet connection and an empty space to collect my thoughts. I suppose I have been putting this off simply because this confirms the end of the 2008 Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour. Nevertheless, this needs to be said.

The days leading up to the final ride passed in a blur. The excitement built with every revolution of our wheels. The hills that had been such a problem, only a minor obstacle to our goal that we had been working so hard towards for the past three weeks. We pedaled fast and it was fine because Philadelphia, our final destination, was so close.

Our last full day of riding, from Lancaster to Conshohocken, Jamaal and I both agreed to finish strong. Regardless of the heat, soreness, hills, or anything else that we've complained about thus far, nothing would keep us from finishing this day without feeling as if we had put everything of ourselves into the ride. We owed it to ourselves, to the cause, and to everyone who has ever had a dream and has striven to achieve it.

This tour has been the biggest blessing in my life because it has shown me that there is little in the way of one's dreams. It just seemed as if everything came through for the success of this ride. As if circumstance approved by having everything fall into place. I truly believe this event brought together some of the most beautiful people in the world. I don't mean beautiful in the physical sense, I mean beautiful in the emotional sense. I have met some of the most passionate, caring individuals because of this ride, and without them I would never have realized my dream. This being said, it is those who we encounter along our life's journey that will allow us to overcome the obstacles in our path. As I have mentioned before, I believe mine has allowed me to meet some of the most beautiful souls on the planet. I could never begin to repay them in thanks, but here is an attempt to thank those who have helped Jamaal and I. (Sorry if I leave anyone out.)

Our Sponsors- Without your financial support, this ride would have never been possible. Thank you for contributing to the hope of so many people with hepatitis B, and not just searching for an opportunity to increase profits. Thank you for being human beings, and not just a corporate business facade. You have done more good than you can ever know.

The Hepatitis B Foundation- I can not thank you enough. Everyone there, the researchers, the staff, thank you. You are the refuge of hope for those of us who are infected with hepatitis B. Your efforts do not go unnoticed, and you are appreciated.

Our Family- Jamaal and I couldn't have done this without our family's support. The approval and encouragement from them were greatly comforting to us on the road, and we are glad to be back home with our families. Thank you both, my family and Jamaal's.

Matt Gorman and the fellow riders- Thank you for riding with Jamaal and I into Philadelphia. You have no idea how much it meant to Jamaal and I to have other riders along with us for the final stretch. I wouldn't mind riding bikes for another three weeks if I had you all along with me. Thank you so much. It meant a lot to Jamaal and I.

The BBB girls- Suzie, Allison, and Cara. THANK YOU! It was nice to unwind at the party that you had planned for us after arriving in Philly. It's too bad though because now, when I am craving Rita's Ice, I'll have no where to turn. Thank you.

The Blocks and the Wittes- Thank you for believing in me. You very easily could have turned me away, but instead you gave me the opportunity to fight for myself and others through the Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour. I am truly grateful, and I am blessed to have met you all. Thank you so very much for this opportunity you have given me.

Melanie Groft- It will be odd not talking logistics with you over the phone or via email. I have truly enjoyed working with you while planning this, and I can't help but think that this was a little more than coincidence. Coming into the new position of Director of Development at the Hepatitis B Foundation, you took me up on my idea, and look what it has become. Thank you very much, Melanie. It has been a great ride. (Pun totally intended.)

Everyone that has followed Jamaal and I along our journey, thank you. Your support through your thoughts and prayers has been tremendous in helping Jamaal and I complete our journey that has now come to a close. All in all, it has been the greatest experience of my life. Thank you for allowing me to share it with you.

In closing, thank you everyone. Without you, who knows how the world would be. We have come far and endured much, and we have persevered to accomplish our goal with the help of others. Successfully have we completed the plight of mankind embodied in a 1,287 mile journey undertaken by two teenage boys. Rest assured, however, that this is not the last of my journeys.

Pedal on everyone, and take care.

-The beauty of mankind lies not in his greatness, but in his limitations.-

John Ellis

P.S. I am really going to miss the slurpees from 7 Eleven. Just saying.

**POSTED BY JOHN ELLIS AT 11:38 AM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST**

## Posted Comments

### Baruch Blumberg said...

Dear John and Jamaal,

Congratulations on the completion of your remarkable trip. You have made a great contribution to helping others with HBV and also to your own growth.

It was a pleasure to ride the last few miles with you.

-Baruch Blumberg

June 28, 2008 11:40 AM

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### Anonymous said...

Hey John and Jamaal!

I'm glad I had the chance to meet both of you. I feel like I am very repetitive in what I have to say to you guys but I really am amazed and admiring of you too for doing this. After all, it's not everyday seventeen (now eighteen!) year old teens are able to get their act together and do something so inspiring and beneficial for not only themselves but for others as well.

Then when I finally met you guys and each of your names had a face and personality I knew right away you guys weren't average; you both are people who cannot be described with various adjectives and even the beloved phrase "one of a kind" doesn't do any justice. I have a strong feeling that you both are going to succeed in life with whatever you do, even your presence makes a difference in the room.

Well, take care and I hope that day is not the last time I see both of you, including your awesome mom John, and I mean that!

-Suzie Block

June 29, 2008 11:44 PM

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