

Five Boro Bike Tour

written by Kathleen M. Pike, PhD

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The mental health benefits of exercise are well documented. The power of community to promote healing are profound. The energy and vision of upcoming generations to address the wicked complexities of mental illness infuses in me a hope and confidence for the future. This synergy of exercise, community, energy, and vision will be on full display this Sunday: 40 miles, five boroughs, no cars! Our Global Mental Health Program is a charity partner for the Five Boro Bike Tour, and we have 18 riders whose pedaling will raise funds and awareness for mental health!



[Photo Credit](#)

Meet some of our team here:

1. Ian Rodgers, Master of Public Health in 2018

I ride because of my battle with depression, which has made me a stronger person: I have my wounds, I have my scars, I've lived my life behind invisible bars. But I have my friends, I have my life, and I will continue to battle this strife. I will not give up, no matter how dark. I will not stop trying to make my mark. I will not give in, fall into the gloom. I won't let you take me, monster that looms. I will continue to search for the light, I will continue to fight the good fight. I will continue to reign over me. I'll continue to live for me, just me.

2. Brian Neff, GMHP Research Associate and PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology at The City College of New York (CUNY Graduate Center)

There is no health without mental health, but too many people lack access to mental healthcare worldwide. Depression will be the single biggest cause of global disease burden by the year 2030, according to the World Health Organization. Research now shows a range of psychosocial interventions to be effective at alleviating mental distress, but we need to find better ways to bring these treatments into the lowest resource areas, where there is so much need. That's exactly what the Global Mental Health Program works towards, and that's why I am riding to support our efforts.

3. Nicole Khauli, Master of Public Health in 2018

Biking reminds me of family. I remember going on bike rides as a young girl in the beautiful alps of my hometown, Innsbruck, Austria. Only two months ago my other hometown, Beirut, Lebanon, launched its first

ever public bike-sharing system, which I hope to use during the summer of 2017 when I am there for my MPH Practicum. Today, as an MPH student at Columbia University, I have the GMHP team as my family to share a riding experience with. I am extremely excited to be biking on May 7th alongside my new community and all those who stand for mental health, in my third hometown, Manhattan, NYC.

4. Bijan Khaksari, *Master of Public Health in 2018*

Growing up in Massachusetts, I was able to enjoy the great outdoors on a regular basis for 18 years. Promoting mental health awareness requires activity rather than stagnancy. The Global Mental Health Team and myself will combat depression by emulating a continuously flowing tidal river rather than a still and pathogen infested lake. According to the WHO, an estimated 350 million people suffer with depression, which actually represents the disorder with the largest global burden of disease. During my education at Columbia University, I aim to contribute to the mission of prioritizing mood disorders as a public health agenda.

5. Chelsea Ziegelbaum, *Global Mental Health Program Young Professionals Advisory Board*

I started riding because it was a fun family tradition. I loved having the opportunity to see much of the city that I grew up so close to and now call home. I now continue to ride as an opportunity to raise money and awareness for mental health. I am fortunate to have a family that is a wonderful support system and a sister who works tirelessly in the field as a Clinical Psychologist. I have seen first hand the benefits that the correct treatment can have on the life of somebody living with mental health issues and want to help support those without access to quality care.

[Click here if you would like to meet more members of our team and/or donate to support our riders.](#)

Please root for us and hope for good riding weather on Sunday!