

[Why I Ride for Mental Health](#)

written by Kathleen M. Pike, PhD

May 11, 2018

Last Sunday was the Five Boro Bike Tour. It is a 40-mile recreational ride that takes about 32,000 riders through the streets of Manhattan, Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island. It is a fabulous way to see parts of the city that aren't part of our every day routines. For the second year, we had a team riding in support of our Global Mental Health Program.



With team jerseys and tons of enthusiasm, our GMHP riders raised awareness and funds for mental health. Here's why they chose to ride with our GMHP team:

Adam Michael

I've been riding bikes all my life. When I was given the opportunity to ride in support of global mental health, it was the opportunity to combine a long-lived passion with a sense of purpose, while exploring this city that I love. I am excited to ride with this community of inspiring individuals sharing the same goal of preventing mental illness and promoting well-being. For me, riding is not only about raising money, but also promoting ecosystem sustainability, a sense of community, and breaking a sweat.

Bijan Khaksari

Mental health decline is often manifested from a neuropsychiatric condition or traumatic life event, in which the quality of one's life can be suffocated. With my graduate education from Columbia University, I aim to improve the quality of life for various mental health subpopulations through improved delivery and efficacy of treatment.

Ian Rodgers

At mile 33 of 40 in last year's ride, I found myself lying in the middle of the Bronx-Queens Expressway with a dislocated kneecap. Even though last year it was my knee, usually it's my head, my depression, that knocks me

down over and over again. And every time I fall, I somehow find the strength to get back on my feet and keep pushing forward. This year's 5BBT is my way of showing we all have the strength to get back on the bike. No matter whether it's a kneecap or a mental health condition that knocks us down, we all deserve a fighting chance to get to our finish line.

Jacqueline Wong

From a college student with fleeting dreams of starting a non-profit, to now a mental health therapist for underprivileged adolescents and adults in Trenton, I have always wanted to be a pillar of support for others. I continue to aspire to help people achieve their full potential and "Stamp Out Stigma" on mental health. "Be the change you wish to see!"

Kaitlynn Menoche

I'm riding because mental health deserves just as much care, research, and attention as physical health. One in five people suffers with mental illness every year. Let's be part of a conversation to help ourselves, our friends, and our neighbors feel empowered to get help whenever it's needed.

Richard Sloan

Because depression is the leading cause of poor health and disability in the world.

Kelsey Clayman

As a member of the GMHP team, I am riding to support a cause that is dear to my heart. The integration of mental health and physical health is an often misunderstood and overlooked concept. We truly can't have one without the other. How we act - whether it is hopping on a bike, building friendships, or enjoying the sunshine - influences how we think and feel, and vice versa. By riding, I am hoping that we can bring this relationship into our daily conversation, in an accessible, authentic, and thoughtful way.

Lauren Hoisl

Help me ride 40 miles through the five boroughs of New York City to advocate for the millions of people suffering from psychological disorders! We will support education and training to increase mental health services in under-resourced communities, reduce stigma of mental illness and enhance mental health awareness around the world.

Lauren Murdock

Mental health is often overlooked and people across the world, including myself, face mental health issues every day. I'm riding because everyone deserves the same care for their brain as they do their bodies. Sponsor my ride and help make an impact on the lives of the many people across the world who don't have access to the care they need.

Matt Klein

I believe mental health is just as important as our physical health, and that it's time we talk and honor the two equally.

Michaella Baker

I'm riding to raise awareness about mental illness and promote mental wellness, I am an advocate for global mental health and am passionate about alleviating stigma and spreading awareness. Physical wellness is a

component of mental wellness, so please support me as I ride with the Global Mental Health Program.

Nicole Khaul

Biking reminds me of family. I remember going on bike rides as a child in the beautiful alps of my hometown, Innsbruck, Austria. Only two months ago my second hometown, Beirut, Lebanon, launched its first ever public bike-sharing system, which I hope to use when I return in the summer. Today, as a Master of Public Health 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 6th alongside my new community and all those who stand for mental health, in my third hometown, Manhattan.

Peter Maa

After riding for Global Fund for Mental Health last year, I am happy to be back for year two with my lovely partner. Mental health issues fall through the cracks in our society, leaving some unattended to, others afraid to seek help, and a shortage in proper care. Globally, those with archaic mindsets consider this matter taboo and ostracize those in need. Perceiving these issues through the eyes of my friends, family, and partner, who is a clinical mental health therapist, I recognize the growing need to “Stomp the Stigma” on mental illness.

Sabrina Hermosilla

Life as a postdoctoral researcher can feel isolating. You transition quickly from a world surrounded by peers to one where you are equal parts faculty and unpaid intern. Add to this mix having a child (which many do) and the isolation can feel even worse. The first time I came back for a GMHP talk during my maternity leave I had the honor of being re-introduced to the team by one of my mentors, and program founder, Dr. Kathy Pike. Her words of encouragement, respect, and genuine support touched me personally. In a high stress, competitive, overly divided world in which we live, the GMHP not only strives to improve the outside world, but also to internalize and practice creating a world of respect, collaboration, and support.

Soa Andrian

I care about realistic representations of mental illness and ending stigma surrounding them so that there are fewer barriers to getting help for people of all backgrounds.

Tahilia Rebello

I am honored to be a part of the Global Mental Health Program bike team. My motivation to ride is both professional and personal. As a scientist, I have dedicated my life to understanding and addressing mental illness and its associated burden through research and advocacy. Personally, I have seen the devastating consequences of mental illness on those I cherish. The funds raised through this initiative will support several important mental health initiatives worldwide aimed at improving the lives of those who suffer. I look forward to 40 miles of endurance, introspection and camaraderie!

Joseph Gendelman

Mental Health is extremely important and frequently overlooked in terms of funding. I was delighted to have the opportunity to ride for such a great cause.

Kathy Pike

Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the world. It is something most of us don't think about until things are not quite right with ourselves or others. Riding in the Five Boro Bike Tour, is a chance to have some fun, get some exercise, and raise awareness about the importance of mental health, for each of us and for all of

us, everyday.

Many thanks to all our GMHP Five Boro Bike Tour Riders and sponsors! Your commitment to raising awareness about mental health and mental illness is inspiring. A great metaphor for our work - the ride has potholes galore, strenuous uphill climbs, and dangerous curves that are slippery when wet, but it is also filled with thrilling moments of discovery, some great straightaways where we can pick up speed, and wonderful opportunities to see what is around us everyday from new points of view. Keep on riding!!