

*Daily Journal*

***Sisters to bike 220 miles in dialysis benefit ride***

July 17, 2014

HAMLET – Two young women are taking their pedaling skills across the country in September to raise money for DaVita Dialysis.

Sisters Leann Stubbs and Ashleigh Arey will be heading to Oregon Sept. 13-17 for a 220-mile bike ride through the Willamette Valley for the eighth annual Tour DaVita.

This will be Stubbs' second year competing in the race and Arey's first due to her just now turning 21 –the minimum age to participate. Stubbs got involved as a registered nurse with DaVita Dialysis in Hamlet and knew she could do some good as well as raise some money. She quickly got her sister involved as soon as she was eligible.

The two typically ride roughly 12 miles a day in Richmond County, but once they get to Oregon, they'll be expected to make the 220-mile trek in just three days.

"It's 60 miles the first day, 100 miles the second day, which is known as century day, and 60 miles the third day," said Stubbs. "Last year I did 105 miles. This year I want to do the whole tour."

Before Arey could say how many miles she predicts she'll be able to ride, Stubbs offered a bold prediction.

"I'm gonna make her do them," Stubbs interjected. "It helps when you have a partner."

The ladies have their own personal bikes, but due to shipping costs, they'll just rent two from a company called Backroads that provides bikes and helmets to those participating as well as route maps.

In order to ride in the event, each sister must raise at least \$750. Both are currently at \$375.

"We want people to know it's a tax write-off," Stubbs said. "They can also donate cellphones or chargers. We get on average \$7 per item donated, but we only have until the end of July to mail them in."

All money that the sisters and other participants raise goes to building dialysis centers in countries that don't have them.

"The beneficiary of Tour DaVita is DaVita Village Trust, a new organization that aspires to improve community health, wellness and vitality, including chronic kidney disease education, prevention and treatment," Arey wrote in a letter she provides to prospective donors. "With your support, DaVita Village Trust will be able to complete 18 international medical missions and install or repair 80 dialysis machines that will expand access to quality dialysis treatment for more than 440 new patients around the world. Additionally, DaVita Village Trust will be able to provide free rapid screenings for more than 12,000 people in at-risk and under-served communities."

Those who are able to participate include any DaVita employee and immediate family members who are over 21, such as Stubbs and Arey, nephrologists who are credentialed physicians in DaVita facilities, Village service partners who are sponsoring the event and DaVita dialysis patients.

Stubbs said that patients are not allowed to donate, however.

The event in South Carolina last year raised \$1 million with 554 people riding, according to Tour DaVita's website.

"Tour DaVita isn't a bike race, but rather a collection of like-minded people from across the country cycling together to spread awareness of a disease that affects over 1.4 million people worldwide," DaVita Chairman and CEO Kent Thiry said on the website. "I have ridden in Tour DaVita every year to date because this is too important of an event – and frankly, too much fun – not to participate."

Those interested in donating to Stubbs and Arey can visit their fundraising pages at [https://www.tourdavita.org/donate/Ashleigh\\_Arey\\_4757/index.html](https://www.tourdavita.org/donate/Ashleigh_Arey_4757/index.html) and [https://www.tourdavita.org/donate/Leann\\_Stubbs\\_4608/index.html](https://www.tourdavita.org/donate/Leann_Stubbs_4608/index.html).

Anyone wishing to donate offline can do so by visiting DaVita Dialysis in Hamlet at 771 Cheraw Road.