



2023 MEDIA KIT

THIS
is HOW
WE ROLL

AIDS/LifeCycle®

SF TO LA • END AIDS • 545 MILES

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For Immediate Release

Bay to Beach: More than 2,000 AIDS/LifeCycle® Participants Journeying 545 Miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles

SEVEN-DAY BIKE RIDE FROM JUNE 4 - 10 IS WORLD'S LARGEST HIV/AIDS FUNDRAISER

SAN FRANCISCO/LOS ANGELES, May 31, 2023 — More than 2,000 Cyclists and volunteer "Roadies" will embark on a 545-mile journey from San Francisco to Los Angeles, from June 4 - 10, united by a common cause: fighting to end HIV and AIDS. AIDS/LifeCycle raises millions of dollars annually to support San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the HIV-related services of the Los Angeles LGBT Center.

AIDS/LifeCycle Participants represent broad diversity: ages range from 18 to 81, include both the LGBTQIA+ community and allies, as well as Participants who are HIV-negative or may be living with HIV. The Ride also boasts over 52% first time Cyclists from across the country. For the first time, the event ends with Participants crossing the finish line on the beach, in Santa Monica.

The event debuted in 1994 as the California AIDS Ride before it was reconfigured to what is known today as AIDS/LifeCycle, the world's largest annual HIV and AIDS fundraiser. AIDS/LifeCycle is a fully supported, 545-mile bike ride that raises important awareness about the ongoing HIV and AIDS epidemic, in addition to funding critical services such as HIV testing and screenings for other sexually transmitted infections, HIV care, harm reduction, prevention services including PrEP, and more.

"The funds raised by AIDS/LifeCycle support the many life-saving services we provide for free to the community," said Tyler TerMeer, PhD, CEO of San Francisco AIDS Foundation and 12-time AIDS/LifeCycle participant. "The epidemic has been ongoing for more than 40 years, and it is far from over. Every year, this event helps bring us closer to a time when we reach zero new HIV infections, when everyone living with HIV is fully supported with health and wellness services, and when people at risk for HIV have the tools and information they need to prevent HIV."

In the seven days it takes the riders to reach Los Angeles, more than 650 people in the United States will contract HIV. More than one million people are currently living with HIV in the U.S., and one in eight people living with HIV nationwide are not aware of their status. Since the California AIDS Ride first began, participants have raised more than \$300 million and completed more than 63,000 journeys on bikes from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

"After more than 40 years, the fight to end this epidemic continues," said Joe Hollendoner, CEO of the Los Angeles LGBT Center. "The contributions of thousands of people who are part of the AIDS/LifeCycle community—riders, roadies, staff and donors—provide the resources necessary to continue this fight. The donations, through hard work and determination, support medical care and social services to those living with HIV and make it possible to offer prevention tools, such as PrEP, to people most at risk of becoming infected. I am so proud to be a part of this community that continues to fight every day to bring an end to this epidemic."

AIDS/LifeCycle's sponsors are Gilead, FedEx, Amazon, United Airlines, Toyota, PwC, Chevron, and Keck Medicine of USC.

To follow the journey during the week of the ride through pictures, stories and videos, visit aidslifecycle.org. AIDS/LifeCycle social media platforms: Facebook/[aidslifecycle](https://www.facebook.com/aidslifecycle) and Instagram/[aidslifecycle](https://www.instagram.com/aidslifecycle)

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For Immediate Release

ABOUT AIDS/LIFECYCLE

AIDS/LifeCycle is a fully-supported, seven-day bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles. It's a life-changing ride— not a race—through some of California's most beautiful countryside. AIDS/LifeCycle is co-produced by the Los Angeles LGBT Center and San Francisco AIDS Foundation and is designed to advance their shared interest in reducing new HIV infections and improving the quality of life for people living with HIV. **Learn more at aidslifecycle.org.**

ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER

Since 1969 the Los Angeles LGBT Center has cared for, championed, and celebrated LGBT individuals and families in Los Angeles and beyond. Today the Center's nearly 800 employees provide services for more LGBT people than any other organization in the world, offering programs, services, and global advocacy that span four broad categories: Health, Social Services and Housing, Culture and Education, Leadership and Advocacy. We are an unstoppable force in the fight against bigotry and the struggle to build a better world; a world in which LGBT people thrive as healthy, equal, and complete members of society. **Learn more at lalgbtcenter.org.**

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO AIDS FOUNDATION

San Francisco AIDS Foundation promotes health, wellness, and social justice for communities most impacted by HIV, through sexual health and substance use services, advocacy, and community partnerships. Ultimately, we strive for a day when: race is not a barrier to health and wellness; substance use is not stigmatized; HIV status does not determine quality of life; and HIV transmission is eliminated. **Learn more at sfaf.org.**

Fact Sheet

WHAT

More than 2,000 people (including Cyclists and volunteer Roadies) are participating in AIDS/LifeCycle 2023, a seven-day, 545-mile bicycle ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles to raise money for San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the HIV-related services of the Los Angeles LGBT Center. Historically, AIDS/LifeCycle has raised more than \$300 million, making it the largest fundraiser for HIV and AIDS in the world.

WHEN

Sunday, June 4 – Saturday, June 10, 2023
Opening Ceremony & Ride Out: 6:30 a.m. at Cow Palace in Daly City
Finish Line Crossing at Santa Monica Beach at Lot 4 South, Santa Monica, CA 90405
Finish Line Festival at Santa Monica Beach beginning at 10:30 a.m.

WHERE

DAY
1

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

Start: Opening Ceremony, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave., Daly City
End: Harvey West Park, 326 Evergreen St., Santa Cruz

DAY
2

MONDAY, JUNE 5

Start: Harvey West Park, 326 Evergreen St., Santa Cruz
End: San Lorenzo County Park, 1160 Broadway St., King City

DAY
3

TUESDAY, JUNE 6

Start: San Lorenzo County Park, 1160 Broadway St., King City
End: Mid-State Fairgrounds, 2198 Riverside Ave., Paso Robles

DAY
4

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7

Start: Mid-State Fairgrounds, 2198 Riverside Ave., Paso Robles
End: Preisker Park, 330 Hidden Pines Way, Santa Maria

DAY
5

THURSDAY, JUNE 8

Start: Preisker Park, 330 Hidden Pines Way, Santa Maria
End: Riverbend Park, Lompoc

DAY
6

FRIDAY, JUNE 9

Start: Riverbend Park, Lompoc
End: San Buenaventura State Beach, 901 San Pedro St., Ventura

DAY
7

SATURDAY, JUNE 10

Start: San Buenaventura State Beach, 901 San Pedro St., Ventura
End: Lot 4 South, Santa Monica, CA 90405
with Finish Line Festival at Santa Monica Beach

**The route opens at various times each day, but Cyclists are on the road by 7 a.m.*

WHY

To raise critically needed funds for HIV/AIDS-related services provided by the Los Angeles LGBT Center and San Francisco AIDS Foundation and to raise awareness that AIDS is still devastating our society, particularly the LGBT community and communities of color in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and throughout California.

SOCIAL MEDIA

aidslifecycle.org | facebook.com/aidslifecycle | [#aidslifecycle](https://twitter.com/AIDSLifeCycle) | [@AIDSLifeCycle](https://twitter.com/AIDSLifeCycle)

Fact Sheet

HISTORY

\$304,676,859

Total funds raised through 2022,
including AIDS/LifeCycle's
predecessor California AIDS Ride

66,105

Total participants through 2022,
including AIDS/LifeCycle's
predecessor California AIDS Ride

29

Number of years of riding bikes
to end AIDS, including AIDS/LifeCycle's
predecessor California AIDS Ride

2023 PARTICIPANTS

1,800+

Cyclists

600

Roadies

18

Youngest participant

81

Oldest participant

47

States represented

14

Countries represented*

**Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States*

TRAVEL ROUTE

545

Total number of miles

95

Permits required

45

Towns

8

Counties

3,410

Calories burned each day
(on average for a 170-pound cyclist)

ENERGY EXPENDITURE

FOOD

44,600

Eggs

18,800

Gallons of water

11,000

Snack bars

6,000

Breakfast pastries

3,880

Pounds of bananas

2,100

Pounds of pasta

810

Gallons of
Peet's Coffee

660

Gallons of milk

20

Lunches served per
minute (on average, at
lunchtime)

3.3

Tons of vegetables

2.2

Tons of oatmeal

2.2

Tons of chicken

SUPPLIES

16,000

Packets of "butt balm"

7,000

Trash can liners

1,500

Tents

1,641

Toilets

HIV/AIDS Facts

IN SAN FRANCISCO

- San Francisco has an estimated 15,631 people living with HIV. San Francisco has one of the largest populations of people living with HIV in the United States. The city represents 2% of California's total population, but is home to 11% of its HIV-positive population.
- Of the total number of San Franciscans living with HIV, 8,759 were living with AIDS at the end of 2021. AIDS is a late stage of HIV disease defined by a low count of CD4 cells.
- Men who have sex with men of all ages and ethnicities continue to be significantly affected by HIV: 86% of people living with HIV in San Francisco are among gay and bisexual men and 63% of new HIV diagnoses in 2021 were among gay and bisexual men.
- More than a quarter (28%) of people living with HIV have not achieved viral suppression, a level of the virus so low that it is undetectable and nearly impossible to transmit. Nearly a quarter (21%) are not retained in care.
- Black communities are disproportionately represented among new HIV diagnoses: While Black San Franciscans are only 5.7% of the city's population, they represented 16% of new HIV diagnoses in 2021.
- Of all new HIV diagnoses, transgender women represent 8% of new cases. 94% of trans women newly diagnosed were <50 years old.
- The Latinx community represents 38% of all new diagnoses in San Francisco.
- Deaths from AIDS-related causes have declined dramatically as a result of effective treatment and adherence. In 2019, 70 people died from AIDS-related causes. Since the beginning of the epidemic, the city has lost over 22,300 people to the disease. At its peak in 1992, the city lost 2,331 people.

IN LOS ANGELES

- More than 57,000 people are living with HIV in Los Angeles County. A majority of the people living with HIV in the county are male (81%) and/or Latinx (41%).
- 84% of new diagnoses were among gay and bisexual men.
- 65% of new diagnoses were among people between the ages of 20–29.
- 46% of new diagnoses were among Latinx.
- Black communities are nearly four times more likely to test positive for HIV compared to Caucasians.
- The Hollywood-Wilshire district in Los Angeles, which includes the city of West Hollywood, has the highest rate of people living with HIV in the county.
- 60% of people living with HIV in the county are virally suppressed (i.e., their viral loads have reached an undetectable level).

IN CALIFORNIA

- More than 139,000 people are living with HIV.
- Beginning in 2017, more than 4,000 people are diagnosed with HIV each year.
- 70% of all HIV diagnoses occur among gay or bisexual men.
- Since 2011, there has been a steady increase in the number of HIV diagnoses among transgender people.
- Black communities account for nearly 17% of those living with HIV.
- Latinx people account for over 38% of those living with HIV—a percentage that has grown since 2011.
- Nearly half of all Californians living with HIV reside in Los Angeles County or the San Francisco Bay Area.

HIV/AIDS Facts

IN THE UNITED STATES

- More than 1.2 million people are living with HIV.
- 1 in 8 (13%) of those who contract HIV are not aware of their status.
- While gay and bisexual men account for the majority of all new HIV diagnoses, Black gay and bi men are disproportionately affected, accounting for 37% of new diagnoses.
- Black communities comprise only 13% of the total U.S. population yet account for an estimated 42% of new HIV infections nationally in 2019. They also accounted for 40% of everyone living with HIV in the U.S.

IN THE WORLD

- Approximately 38 million people are living with HIV.
- Since the beginning of the epidemic, over 84 million people have contracted HIV and about 40.1 million people have died of AIDS-related causes, including over 650,000 in 2021.
- The number of new HIV diagnoses has decreased from 2.5 million in 2009 to 1.5 million in 2021.
- 10% of new HIV diagnoses occur in people under age 15.
- Deaths of people in Africa accounted for 69% of the world's AIDS-related deaths in 2020.
- Around 75% of people—some 28.7 million people—living with HIV had access to antiretroviral therapy in 2021.

SOURCES

HIV Epidemiology Annual Report 2021, SFDPH; Los Angeles County Department of Public Health 2021 Annual HIV Surveillance Report; California Department of Public Health 2020 HIV Surveillance Report; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention HIV in the United States: At a Glance; amFAR Statistics: Worldwide; UNAIDS Fact Sheet.



HIV & AIDS-Related Fact Sheet

The Los Angeles LGBT Center has been a leader in battling AIDS and caring for those who are living with HIV since the earliest days of the pandemic. Today, the millions of dollars raised annually by AIDS/LifeCycle participants support these vital Center services:

MEDICAL CARE

Our Jeffrey Goodman Special Care Clinic offers people living with HIV comprehensive free or low-cost primary and specialty medical care. About 3,102 people receive care at the clinic in 2022, with 44% of them identifying as Hispanic or Latinx.

MEDICAL CARE COORDINATION (MCC)

MCC is a multidisciplinary team of nurses and social workers who provide support services for people living with HIV (PLWH). Our teams focus on treatment adherence, linkage to care, and minimizing barriers to successful treatment like unemployment, poor access to food, and substance use. We also support patients who are homeless or at risk of losing their housing with rental assistance and other services. Our Case Management team provided services to over 3,800 patients in 2022.

TRANSGENDER HEALTH PROGRAM

Transgender people are disproportionately affected by HIV. Forty-four percent of Black transgender women and 26% of Latinx transgender women are diagnosed with HIV. Our Trans Health Program provides comprehensive, wraparound services for over 2,337 trans people to help keep those who are living with HIV engaged in care and to prevent transmission to those who are HIV-negative.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Our staff of mental health professionals offers one-on-one and group therapy to help people struggling with HIV overcome substance use and addiction, adhere to difficult HIV drug regimens, improve self-esteem, get through the trauma of a new HIV diagnosis, and manage other issues they may be facing. The program serves more than 2,840 people each year.

HIV TESTING

One out of seven people nationwide who are HIV-positive don't know it. We are working to lower that percentage by offering free HIV testing across Los Angeles, where we also test for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. We tested 21,138 people for HIV in 2022. The tests are among the most advanced available and can detect HIV as early as seven days after exposure.

HIV PREVENTION

We are working to reduce the spread of HIV through a myriad of education, prevention, and community support services. We have the leading PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) program in California by enrollees, raising awareness and enabling free access to this life-saving medication for almost anyone who wants it. Much of our current focus is on the communities most affected by HIV: young Black and Latino gay men and transgender women. Key among these prevention programs is our Trans Wellness Center, the first-of-its-kind health center specifically for and operated by members of the transgender community.



HIV RESEARCH

Our HIV research is aligned with the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, focusing on intervening at every stage of HIV infection: testing high-risk populations, linking newly diagnosed people to HIV care, retaining them in care, starting them on HIV medications as soon as possible, supporting and increasing adherence to their antiretroviral medications, and ultimately reducing their HIV viral load to undetectable levels. This comprehensive approach is a complex but promising strategy for reducing “community viral load” and ultimately ending HIV or AIDS as an epidemic in the U.S.

PHARMACY

Our full-service pharmacy provides help for patients who struggle to afford costly medications. For patients without private insurance, medications are supported by the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), Medi-Cal, and Medicare, as well as AIDS/LifeCycle fundraising dollars.

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE?

In 2017, Los Angeles county released the visionary HIV/AIDS Strategy for 2020 and Beyond. In it the County identified three key goals that will help the Center finally bring the HIV epidemic under control: 1) reduce annual new infections to 500 by 2022; 2) increase the proportion of PLWH who are diagnosed to at least 90% by 2022; and 3) increase the proportion of diagnosed PLWH who are virally suppressed to 90% by 2022.

The Center is committed to serving as a key partner in this vital effort to bring our local HIV epidemic under control. In the next year, the Center will:

- Provide 35,000 HIV and STD tests.
- Provide STD treatment to at least 10,000 people.
- Provide ongoing medical care and case management to 2,900 HIV patients in the Jeffrey Goodman Special Care Clinic.

HOW WE USE AIDS/LIFECYCLE FUNDS

\$50,000 Supports the annual cost of comprehensive HIV medical treatment services for 45 patients.

\$30,000 Provides 4 months of mental health therapy to 14 clients.

\$25,000 Supports the annual cost of comprehensive HIV medical treatment services for 22 patients.

\$15,000 Provides comprehensive sexual health services, including HIV and STD tests, treatment, education, and counseling to 85 clients.

\$10,000 Covers a full year of intensive psychosocial case management services for two clients.

\$5,000 Covers a full year of lab testing for nine HIV patients.

\$1,000 Covers the annual cost of medical supplies for 38 HIV patients.

\$280 Provides rapid HIV tests for 20 clients.

\$100 Covers the annual cost of medical supplies for four HIV patients.

\$20 Covers treatment medications for one client diagnosed with an STI.

\$10 Buys 155 condoms that Community Health Programs will distribute throughout the Center.



HIV & AIDS-Related Fact Sheet

San Francisco AIDS Foundation promotes health, wellness, and social justice for communities most impacted by HIV, through sexual health and substance use services, advocacy, and community partnerships. Ultimately, we strive for a day when: race is not a barrier to health and wellness; substance use is not stigmatized; HIV status does not determine quality of life; and HIV transmission is eliminated.

Funds raised by AIDS/LifeCycle participants support these five interconnected program areas:

SEXUAL HEALTH

We provide no-judgement sexual health services for gay, bi and queer men, trans and gender non-binary people and their friends, lovers and allies, and many other communities at risk for HIV. Community members can access health services through Magnet and our clinic in the Castro. People who inject drugs can also receive HIV and STI testing at the Harm Reduction Center. Sexual health services include HIV and STI testing, STI treatment, trans health, anal health, hepatitis C services, vaccinations, PrEP and PEP.

SUBSTANCE & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Substance use is one of many factors impacting HIV risk, and people living with HIV who inject drugs have the lowest viral suppression rate of any transmission category. Our substance use and behavioral health services are based on principles of harm reduction, offering substance use counseling, overdose prevention resources, and substance use group support. We work in partnership with clients who use drugs to help them create the goals that make sense in their lives.

ENGAGEMENT & RETENTION

A critical component of our work is ensuring people living with HIV have access to health care services, housing and public benefits. Through these services, we are helping people connect to HIV care and achieve viral suppression ensuring better health outcomes and preventing new infections.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

We cannot end the HIV epidemic in San Francisco until all communities have equal access to health care, housing, education, and social support. Our teams provide social support, health education and individual advocacy services in safe and supportive spaces that center Black and Latinx communities, transgender and gender non-binary people, and long-term HIV survivors over age 50. Our teams work across program areas to ensure that clients have access to our entire spectrum of services.

POLICY & PUBLIC EDUCATION

We champion evidence-based HIV/AIDS policy in San Francisco, California and in Washington D.C., fighting every day to protect the human rights of people at risk of and living with HIV. Our community mobilization team provides countless advocacy opportunities for community members to speak truth to power.



HIV & AIDS-Related Fact Sheet

OUR STRATEGY

Our work is guided by these goals:

Goal 1. People living with HIV will have equal rates of viral suppression regardless of race and ethnicity.

Goal 2. Fewer than 100 people living in San Francisco will newly acquire HIV in 2024.

Goal 3. 90% fewer people living with HIV will have hepatitis C because of increased awareness, testing and treatment.

Goal 4. 10,000 fewer people will die from drug overdose over 5 years because of overdose prevention efforts including safe injection services.

Goal 5. 50% fewer long-term survivors will experience isolation, poor physical health or unmet mental health needs.

HOW WE USE AIDS/LIFECYCLE FUNDS

\$15,000 Can allow 75 people to access PrEP.

\$5,000 Can provide one year of substance use counseling services for one program participant, and provide our sexual health team with the supplies they need to offer HIV and STI screenings for 560 people

\$3,000 Helps 50 Queer and trans people of color access health and wellness services.

\$1,300 Allows San Francisco AIDS Foundation to provide same-day testing and rapid HIV start medication to one person.

\$500 Allows San Francisco AIDS Foundation to host one night of social programming for long-term survivors of HIV.

\$250 Can allow 20 clients living with HIV to attend weekly group counseling sessions.

\$100 Allows San Francisco AIDS Foundation to provide one HIV test to a member of the community.

\$50 Helps a case manager stay connected to a client living with HIV to help them get to appointments and stay in care.

AIDS/LifeCycle®

SF TO LA • END AIDS • 545 MILES

2023

MEDIA AMBASSADORS



To arrange an interview with a Media Ambassador, please contact:

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Media Ambassadors



CARLOS RICARDO ALVAREZ CYCLIST HE/HIM
SYLMAR, CA

Carlos joins AIDS/LifeCycle as a member of team Trudging Buddies. Carlos grew up with limited knowledge about HIV, which he attributes to the inadequate systems in place in both his home country of Mexico and the United States where he received his diagnosis. Carlos vividly recalls feeling isolated and despondent upon learning of his positive status. However, he found solace in the Los Angeles LGBT Center, which helped him recognize that he's worth enough to get help and that he shouldn't be ashamed of his condition. Carlos is motivated to fundraise and ride to prevent others from experiencing the same feelings of hopelessness that he once felt. He says, "I am spreading awareness about the disease, which as you know today it's not a death sentence. There is hope." Carlos is the Head Chef of Crateful Catering, based in Los Angeles.



DANI BARANOWSKI CYCLIST SHE/HER
LAS VEGAS, NV

Dani joins the Ride this year as a first time cyclist with Team Cretins. She's riding this year in honor and memory of her aunt, who she lost to HIV in 2002, two months after being diagnosed. A life-long volunteer, Dani believes in "service above self," and is motivated to change the stigma around HIV and support organizations providing lifesaving resources to people living with HIV and AIDS. "I can't wait to take part in the movement!," said Dani. She is a plant medicine and holistic healing advocate, and co-founder and Vice President of the nonprofit Chamber of Cannabis.



DENNIS BEECH ROADIE HE/HIM
COSTA RICA

Dennis is joining our medical team for the third time, and has ridden the ride 9 times. Dennis moved to Costa Rica last year, but is returning to California to join AIDS/LifeCycle as part of the medical team. Dennis's motivation for getting involved with AIDS Life/Cycle is personal. His experience of losing his partner and seeing the devastation caused by AIDS in his community has inspired him to support others affected. Dennis has already seen a lot of change, and is highly motivated to continue the fight; he said, "I became a nurse in the late 80's to care for people with AIDS. I watched AIDS go from a disease many died from to one that people now live with."

Media Ambassadors



KEVIN CARNELL CYCLIST HE/HIM
CHICAGO, IL

Kevin is an LGBTQ+ influencer and three-time AIDS/LifeCycle participant. Equipped with a strong desire to show some skin and a never ending love for Beyoncé, Kevin has energized his social media platforms to fundraise for each event through tasteful imagery and a dedication to personal wellness that can be seen all around the world. This year marks Kevin's return to the Ride since working as a Recruitment Coordinator (2018–2020) and first year as a \$10,000+ fundraiser, with a cumulative fundraising total of nearly \$30,000 since 2015.



RACHEL FREEMON SOWERS ROADIE SHE/HER
REDDING, CA

Rachel is an entrepreneur, visibility coach, and podcast creator who is returning to AIDS/LifeCycle for the second time but her first time as a Roadie. She participates to honor her dad, Jim Freemon, who rode AIDS/LifeCycle three times before passing away in 2019. Rachel remembers that when she came out to her dad in her 20s, "he became a champion for me and the LGBTQ+ community." Having ridden hundreds of miles together, she says that even though he is now gone, "there is no closer feeling to my dad when I am on the bike."



POLLUX LOPEZ CYCLIST HE/HIM
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Pollux is a passionate member of the San Francisco Latinx immigrant community who is riding this year for the first time. As a person living with HIV (undetectable = untransmittable), he has a firsthand understanding of the importance of access to HIV and AIDS treatment and is committed to giving back to the community that has given him so much. "Activist heroes like Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, all the members of ACT UP, and all those who have participated in the ride before me have shown by example that I can and do have a responsibility to help those in need and to work towards a better present and future." By day, Pollux works as a sexual health counselor for UCSF, helping to provide essential HIV and AIDS services. When he's not working, he volunteers his time as a mentor for queer foster youth and as a friendly visitor to gay seniors. Pollux is also a ceramic sculptor and has contributed his work to fundraising events for AIDS and LGBTQIA+ organizations.

Media Ambassadors



RORY SLIKKER CYCLIST HE/HIM

PALM SPRINGS, CA

This is Rory's first ever time as an AIDS/LifeCycle participant! Although this is the first time he'll be joining the ride on a bike, this will not be Rory's first impression of the ride. Rory was born and raised in Lompoc, California, and has very fond memories of AIDS/LifeCycle coming through his hometown every year. The experience of flocking to the streets to watch riders in red dresses pass through was very formative for Rory as a young, closeted, gay boy in a semi-conservative town. Rory has a career as an addictions specialist, and has recently found his way back into pursuing his passions that he thought HIV and drugs had stolen from him. He is riding and fundraising for education, access, prevention and, he said, "so that maybe as I pass through my hometown, some little boy may see me in my red dress and decide that someday he too wants to make a difference."



JEFF SEKIDO CYCLIST HE/HIM

TOLUCA LAKE, CA

Jeff returns to AIDS/LifeCycle for his seventh time this year. Born and raised in Southern California, Jeff came of age in the 1980s in the shadow of the HIV epidemic and remembers the experience as being "traumatic." But his motivation to participate in AIDS/LifeCycle was borne out of a different experience: when he was 38-years-old, Jeff was diagnosed with cancer. As he began the road to recovery, he viewed the ride as a way to connect with a greater community and views his time there as a privilege. "I can't imagine spending the first week of June anywhere else."



JEN REESE ROADIE SHE/HER

DALY CITY, CA

Jen is a two-time Rider and long-time volunteer Roadie and co-captain of the Lunch Stop on AIDS/LifeCycle. Since the early 1990s, Jen has been volunteering for various AIDS-related charities and events, including AIDS Walk San Francisco, the San Francisco Dance-a-thon, and AIDS Walk LA, all in honor of friends who have tested positive for HIV early in the epidemic. She came to participate in AIDS/LifeCycle in 2008, after a close friend signed up to complete the event, and has been involved in the Ride ever since. "Riding my first AIDS/LifeCycle was a life-changing experience," she said. Through her participation in the ride, Jen said she has gained a better understanding of HIV and the impact that AIDS organizations have on the lives of people they support. She has trained and volunteered with Positive Pedalers, a group for people living with or supporting those with HIV and AIDS, been a captain on a water stop, and is now the co-captain for the lunch stop every day on the event.

Media Ambassadors



AURELIA TALEB-AHMED CYCLIST THEY/THEM

LOS ANGELES, CA

Aurelia joins AIDS/LifeCycle as the co-captain of team Rider Dykes, returning to the Ride as a former cyclist and previous AIDS/LifeCycle team member. Aurelia said that through the Ride, they've found "my people, my community, acceptance, love, and friendship. And, a purpose." Originally from a small town in France, Aurelia remembers the stigma and taboo surrounding HIV—the fear of getting an HIV test, having to wait a week for the result, and the uncomfortable discussions around homosexuality with clinical staff. They participate in AIDS/LifeCycle to break down the stigma around HIV and AIDS, and help ensure that people have free and easy access to HIV services. "It is about visibility, it is about education, it is about inspiring others," they said. Aurelia is currently a staff member at the Los Angeles LGBT Center.



URIEL TORRES CYCLIST HE/HIM

WASHINGTON, DC

This will be Uriel's third time participating in AIDS/LifeCycle, returning as the team captain of Flying Hands, a team made up of eight Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing cyclists and roadies who have raised nearly \$30,000 this year. Uriel comes back this year because "stigma is real in the Deaf Community." Language deprivation is prevalent among the deaf and hard of hearing children today. By raising awareness in American Sign Language (ASL) among these communities, he aims to share that if you are living with HIV, "you can live healthier by receiving treatment and becoming undetectable." This is Uriel's #WhyISign & #WhyIRide.



KALLIE BEEBE CYCLIST SHE/HER

BOULDER, CO

Kallie returns to AIDS/LifeCycle for her fifth time, and less than two weeks after marrying her partner of eight years. Her first time as a cyclist was in 2011 and she says that the experience "changed her to [her] core." Part of Kallie's motivation for riding is to honor her dear friend and "surrogate grandmother" who has been living with HIV for over 30 years. In addition to paying tribute to the person who has shown her so much love, Kallie believes that the ride continues to "inspire [her] to be a part of something much bigger outside [herself] while staying deeply connected to [her] humanity as a queer person." Originally from Santa Cruz, CA, Kallie lives in Boulder, CO and is the Program Manager at Techstars Boulder, an accelerator program that helps startups grow. When not training for AIDS/LifeCycle, Kallie can be found dabbling in music and enjoying all other quintessential Colorado activities.