

Swimming, Biking and Running Races to Save Lives

How do you know if your volunteer efforts really have made a difference? For me, it is my AAA Volunteerism with The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) through its athletic program, Team In Training (TNT), that proves I have made an impact. This year, I donating my time, energy and fundraising skills to help make a difference to those afflicted with leukemia when I pledged to raise over \$5,000 for LLS and to complete an Olympic Distance Triathlon in June in exchange for professional athletic training. As the season kicked off in January, so too did the diagnosis of a high school friend's six-year-old grand daughter. Her diagnosis: ALL, Acute Lymboblastic Leukemia. I decided to dedicate my entire season and fundraising efforts to Kendall, my personal honoree. As my resolve intensified, so did my bruises, cuts and scrapes from falling off the bike. But my injuries paled by comparison to the frequent blood transfusions, needle sticks, abundant hair loss, unending rounds of chemo, nausea, fevers, and worse endured by Kendall who will need to continue her treatment for 2 more years because ALL is survivable if caught early as in Kendall's case. After recurring hospital trips totaling over 180 days, Kendall was finally well enough to visit Disneyworld with her family, proving that my efforts made a difference. Further proof that I have made a difference was just hearing our team honoree, Mark, who is in remission largely due to the drugs funded by LLS research, announce that he will spend his winter vacation scaling Machu Pichu and hiking in Peru. That's how you know you have made a difference: surviving cancer and hiking in the Andes Mountains. It just doesn't get any better than that.