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Notre Dame dean, wife are biking for cause

Cross-country trip to aid NPC research.

By **MARGARET FOSMOE**
Tribune Staff Writer

SOUTH BEND — Gregory and Renate Crawford are getting more than their usual share of exercise this summer: waking up at 4 a.m. to work out, bicycling 200 to 350 miles a week, and running up and down the steps of Notre Dame Stadium.

And that's just preparation for the big event: a 2,200-mile bike ride from Tucson to South Bend.

Gregory Crawford, dean of the University of Notre Dame's College of Science, and his wife will start Saturday on the long-distance ride to mark an expanded relationship between the university and the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation.

They'll be raising money for that cause and speaking to Notre Dame alumni groups along the way. The effort is dubbed: "Desert to Dome: Riding for the Lives of Children."

"I thought this would be a great way to show our support," Gregory Crawford said. "We want to bring a lot of visibility to this rare disease."

The Granger couple are dedicated cyclists, sometimes participating in 100-mile rides, but this will be their first cross-country ride.

They plan to ride for 29 days across seven states, averaging 100 miles per day. They'll be taking breaks to speak to Notre Dame clubs and cycling groups.

The Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to [funding](#) medical research to find a treatment for Niemann-Pick Type C (NPC) disease and related disorders.

NPC is an inherited cholesterol metabolism disease that strikes one in every 150,000 children. Symptoms include deterioration of memory and balance, lung and liver failure, delayed motor development and seizures. It is usually fatal.

Seven or eight researchers at Notre Dame have been involved in NPC research, Crawford said. With the new endowment, that number is expected to increase both at Notre Dame and among researchers at other universities who present research plans and make grant requests.

The Crawfords expect to arrive back at Notre Dame around midday Aug. 23.

The Crawfords will be blogging about their experiences during their bike trip. To follow the trip online or donate to the effort, visit: blogs.nd.edu/gregcrawford.

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