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# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## Cranksgiving puts new spin on food drives



NOV. 15, 2009 -- Cyclists Christopher Fenter (from left), Mateo Robbins and Nate Rose stop to fix a flat during the fourth annual Cranksgiving charity bike ride in St. Louis. (Dawn Majors/P-D)

**By Michele Munz (11/16/2009)**

Armed with orange maps of grocery stores and various bags and baskets to hold their purchases, more than 300 cyclists pedaled their way around the St. Louis area Sunday to help the hungry and sick. The fourth annual Cranksgiving bike ride and food drive started and finished at the Atomic Cowboy bar and restaurant in the Grove area of St. Louis. Participants chose among three different routes — six miles, 8.5 miles or 25 miles — with stops at either two, three or five groceries. Whatever food they purchased and carried back went to Food Outreach, which provides nutritional support for adults and children living with HIV/AIDS and cancer within a 200-mile radius of St. Louis.

"This is one of the more creative events we're affiliated with," said Food Outreach executive director Greg Lukeman, 49, who planned to bike the long route. The agency is on pace to distribute more than 410,000 meals this year, he said.

Cranksgiving was first started by New York City bike messengers about 10 years ago. The idea has spread across the country to cities such as Los Angeles, Madison, Wis., and Des Moines, Iowa. The local Cranksgiving is the largest event organized by Will Cycle for Charity, a group of cyclists that holds fundraisers such as races and scavenger hunts for various local charities. This year's event brought in almost 3,400 food items.

The Team Revolution all-female cycling club rides in the food drive each year. About 12 members posed for pictures before heading out.

"We love any local organization we can partner with," said president Stephanie Nadeau, 34, of St. Louis.