

Biking for a cure



JAMES QUIGG, DAILY PRESS Nels Matson, left, and Kennedy Speitel pose for photographs before Matson headed out for his cross country bike trip for the Children's Heart Foundation. Both Matson and Speitel have had similar open heart surgeries.

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[PAIGE RYAN, Special to the Daily Press](#)

VICTORVILLE • Twenty-five years after he underwent open heart surgery to repair a congenital heart defect, Nels Matson is biking across the country to raise money for children with the same condition.

“I want to use my health to raise money for research so others with congenital heart defects can live healthy lives,” Matson said.

At age three the native of Bradenton, Fla. received open heart surgery, which left him with a six-inch scar on his chest. However, unlike many children with CHD he survived, and by age five he was given a clean bill of health by doctors.

Now Matson is trying to raise \$100,000 for research and awareness for children with similar conditions by biking from Santa Monica to New York City.

Matson left Tuesday and headed to his first stop in Victorville. He will continue until July 20, when he is scheduled to arrive in New York City. Matson will complete over 3,700 miles as he travels an average of 100 miles a day.