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CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
(Office) 937.766.8800
(Mobile) 937-532-6885

“Riding for a New Day” Captures Heart of College Graduates

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Four Cedarville University alumni — three from the class of 2015 — will be riding their bicycles 4,200 miles across the United States to generate awareness and support for Safe Harbor House of Springfield. The trip will begin on June 14, 2015, in Cape Alava, Washington, and conclude in Montauk, New York, on August 11, 2015.

Making the trip will be James Blackwell, a senior from Clare, Michigan; Ben Tuttle, a senior from Eastport, New York; Ryan Gustafson, a December 2014 graduate from Fox River Grove, Illinois; and Greg Johnson, a 2014 graduate from Dillsburg, Pennsylvania. All of the riders participated in cross country and track at Cedarville University.

“We wanted to do something significant before starting our careers, like a cross-country bicycle ride with a purpose,” said Blackwell, the organizer of the event. “We decided that in order to achieve our objective, the event needed to be bigger than ourselves, and we needed to find the right cause to support.”

The right organization turned out to be Safe Harbor House, a residential home for at-risk women who have experience sex trafficking, homelessness, childhood sexual abuse or substance abuse. They named their trip “Riding for a New Day,” signifying their ride from west to east, or sunset to sunrise, as well as their hope to give the women at Safe Harbor House a second chance, or a “new day.”

Part of Tuttle's senior engineering design project was building a wooden bike. With the help of Professor Jay Kinsinger, he will build two additional bikes so that three of the riders will be riding wooden bikes across the country.

The group is traveling an average of 75 miles per day, and will camp in tents along the way. In addition, they are looking for Cedarville alumni families and churches along the route to host them. During the trip, they will eat food that is accessible and storable such as oatmeal, granola, trail mix, eggs, sandwiches, tuna fish, chicken salad, rice, beans, hamburgers, coffee, fruit, and vegetables.

They planned the route using a map donated by the Adventure Cycling Association. Blackwell said that some of the highlights of the trip will be taking a picture at the transcontinental divide, and spending a few days at Glacier National Park.

Blackwell said that others can get involved through financial donations, prayer and other encouragement.

“Some people have asked if they can ride alongside of us to be an encouragement for a day or a few hours,” said Blackwell. “That would be great, absolutely! Some people have asked if they can take us out to eat along the route or let us stay the night in their home. The opportunities are endless.”

For more information, visit www.ridingforanewday.org.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,620 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings.