

Not



FACE IT

Alone

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● We Made It

There is no better feeling than when a plan comes together. After months of planning, the 2011 Face It Together Bike Tour went off without a hitch. OK so there were a few bumps in the road but it was all worth it in the end.

On May 11th Mark Meier and Bill Dehkes loaded a "Face It" emblazoned RV and headed west to California. After spending a week in San

the first two days of biking, the mountains appeared and the uphill climb across the Sierra and Rocky Mountains took nearly a month. The physical challenges were tough but so were the emotional ones. Very little of our great country is flat; cell and Internet coverage were not as strong as had been hoped. Mark and Bill found themselves without any form of communication for days at a time. Feelings of isolation and missing their families were eased by a short stop in Minneapolis over the July 4th holiday

Anna Meier, Mark's 14-year-old daughter who turned 15 while on the trip, joined the efforts in Denver and rode a tandem bike with her father for 1500 miles to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Anna gave the two "Old Timers" a real burst of energy as they all pushed east. Anna's efforts to promote understanding of depression resulted in

a proclamation by the City of Milwaukee in the form of "Anna Meier Day" on July 21st, 2011.

The purpose of the bike tour was to promote conversation and raise awareness about the struggles faced by men suffering from depression. In the end, Face It



Francisco, they pointed their wheels east and Mark started pedaling. At the end of August and some 3200 miles later, Mark and Bill reached their destination, NEW YORK CITY!

The trip was filled with plenty of ups and downs both figuratively and literally. After

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organized and participated in 39 Depression Awareness Events, bringing the message of hope to universities, Indian reservations, hospitals, community groups, Boys and Girls Clubs, coffee shops, art galleries, and family gatherings

The bike tour gave Face It representatives the opportunity to talk to thousands of people about the very real issue of male depression. Face It Chief Operating Officer, Bill Dehkes, lost two friends to suicide while on the journey. Bill said upon his return-home, "life looks a lot different today than it did back in May." 



A Message from Mark

As 2012 begins, I am filled with optimism and energy! I am inspired to roll up my sleeves and make this an even bigger year for Face It than 2011. Last summer, I rode my bicycle 3200 miles across the country to raise awareness and promote discussions about depression in men.



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I was pleased with the events we organized and participated in. Over and over we heard from our event partners such things as, "This was our biggest turnout for a depression event ever" and "I can't believe how much this has energized our community." All in all, great accomplishments, but I want more. I will consider 2012 a success if Face It can touch and improve the lives of 3200 men struggling with depression.


So where do we go from here? Very simply we keep pushing forward. Face It will continue to be a leader in pushing for new advancements and treatments for depression as it is evident we have significant gaps in our ability to effectively manage depression. I am troubled by how we currently view and treat depression. Our understanding of the cause of depression, while advancing has yet to reveal a single source or region of the brain that we can target. We know the onset and often chronic nature of depression has its origins in many places throughout our bodies as well as the environment we live in.

Yet the primary approach to treating depression in the United States is a heavy reliance on antidepressants. The effectiveness of this approach is far from certain. In large clinical trials, antidepressants for mild to moderate depression are no more effective than placebo (sugar pills).

In severe depression antidepressants are often effective in the short term, but on their own do not provide long-term recovery.

I believe we need to have very serious conversations about the current level of treatment available to people suffering from depression. We need to continue to battle the stigma associated with the disease so individuals will feel comfortable coming forward. And we need to create additional approaches for treating depression. Sure this is an ambitious agenda.

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But, just like my recovery from my own depression and suicide attempt, as well as a 3200 mile cross country bike ride, with a little help from you, my family, my faith, and my own determination, an agenda I know we can fulfill. 

What's New DEPRESSION UPDATE

In this section of the newsletter we are going to bring you some of the latest developments or exciting efforts that are taking place to improve the management and care of those who suffer from depression. Let's kick off this first edition by talking about the efforts of the National Network of Depression Centers (www.NNDC.org). From the NNDC website:

The National Network of Depression Centers (NNDC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization comprised of 21 leading depression centers and academic medical centers dedicated to advancing research, treatment and public education regarding depression and bipolar disorder through comprehensive, multidisciplinary collaboration and national-scale networking of resources. The mission of the NNDC is "to improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of depression and bipolar diagnosis, treatment, and prevention so people can live better lives."

One of our Face It Foundation Medical and Scientific Advisory Board (MSAB) Members; Dr. John Greden from the University of Michigan was the key visionary for launching this effort and is the Founding Chair of the NNDC Board of Directors. Dr. Greden's passion for improving the care of individuals with depression is inspiring. In addition to

particular challenges of depression in men including the stigma, shame, and embarrassment many men feel when it comes to admitting they are depressed. Face It also spoke loudly about the importance of using peers and the internet as critical components of reaching men with depression. Our message was received in an extremely positive



Dr. John Greden



Dr. Mark Frye



Dr. Madhukar Trivedi

Dr. Greden, Dr. Mark Frye (Mayo Clinic) and Dr. Madukhar Trivedi (University of Texas Southwestern) who also serve on the Face It MSAB are integrally involved in NNDC Projects.

manner by the NNDC members, pointing to the importance of our work here at Face It.

This past summer, The Face It Bike Tour team had the chance to participate in awareness events with several NNDC members including; Stanford University, The University of Colorado Denver, The Mayo Clinic, and the University of Michigan. During these events Face It had the chance to speak to the

As Face It moves forward we will continue to build relationships and partner with groups such as the NNDC. The need to innovate and further understand additional approaches to addressing depression in men cannot be understated. Through the power of collaboration and with the support of such critical institutions found in the NNDC, Face It will indeed improve the lives of men with depression!

By The Numbers

- **6 million men** suffer from depression each year and this number is growing (National Institute of Mental Health)
- **15% of all men** will experience a bout of depression in their lifetime (National Institute of Mental Health)
- **28,450 men** died by suicide in 2009 (Centers for Disease Control)

NATIONAL NETWORK OF DEPRESSION CENTERS MEMBERS

