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***Bicyclists, riding for kidney disease awareness, roll into town***

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PLAINVILLE — More than 450 cyclists from across the United States, part of Tour DaVita, pedaled into town Tuesday morning to raise awareness of kidney disease.

The Tour DaVita is an annual bicycle ride that is held in a different location each year. Participants work for DaVita, which provides dialysis and other support for people with kidney disease. It operates 1,669 facilities serving 131,000 patients.

This year, Tour DaVita riders traveled from Great Barrington, Mass., to Madison in three days. Jim Cassidy, with the Plainville Bicycle Friendly Community Committee and Plainville Greenway Association, found out they would be riding through town and decided to host a rest stop. Grace Lutheran Church on Farmington Avenue allowed him to use its parking lot.

“I was on an e-mail list and got an advisory that they were going to ride down Route 6,” he said. “I replied that Route 10 would be better.”

By 10 a.m. the lot was filled with a sea of bicycles. The riders had camped in Simsbury on Monday night. Some early risers arrived at the church at 8 a.m. The bicyclists were treated to a buffet of energy bars, chips, crackers, fruit and candy, all high-energy foods to sustain them along the ride. They were scheduled to arrive in Madison by evening. A light rain did not deter them. Many had light rain jackets on.

A company called Backroads, which hosts biking and hiking trips, organized the ride.

Lynn Gladstone, a trip leader, said Backroads arranges for meals and accommodations for the cyclists.

“We start creating the route a year in advance,” she said. “It’s a big job.”

Misha Palecek, who runs DaVita clinics in northern California, said this year the participants raised \$700,000 in donations. The money goes to the Kidney Foundation to pay for research on the disease, which affects more than 31 million Americans, many of whom don’t know they have it.

DaVita recommends that all adults be tested for kidney disease. According to its website ([www.davita.com](http://www.davita.com)), losing weight and adapting a low-fat, low-sodium diet can reduce the chances that the disease will become severe.