

# My “kindergarten” bike tour

**H**ave you heard of the book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*? My version is *All I Really Need to Know I Learned on My First MS Bike Tour*.

It was 1985 and I was a new chapter president. The two-day bike tour was 10 weeks away and our planning committee had four experienced cyclists and one volunteer. First lesson: When you’re making important plans, get a wide range of inputs. Here’s why:

The route we planned was 170 miles—not the 150 we had advertised—and we thought the riders wouldn’t notice. We were wrong. We thought we’d have a lovely evening program at the overnight, but we shuttled one cyclist after another to the hospital with dehydration instead. Wrong again!

The next day I brought up the rear and was the last to hear that the box lunches got lost. Second lesson: You can’t lead from the back.

After the ride, the evaluations were painful. But there was some hope.

“My mom has MS—that’s why I rode. I’ll help next year.”

“You guys need help from expe-

rienced cyclists—PLEASE let our bike club help next year.”

“We’re always looking for causes that need help—and you clearly qualify! Let us manage your rest stops next year.”

Third lesson: There are good people who are waiting and willing to help.

We’ve learned a lot since 1985. Our special events are now delivered with enviable precision. And I’ve learned to ask people who live with MS for input for me and others. I’ve learned that we must be out in front of the movement to end MS leading bold research initiatives and providing relevant programs. I’ve learned that people with and without MS are willing and ready to join the movement if we just ask.

Please add to the lessons I need to learn by writing to me at [joyce@nmss.org](mailto:joyce@nmss.org). That’s what’s on my mind. What’s on yours?



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce".

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