

# 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Key West Bike Ride & Run

by Justin Hanneken

Ends of the Earth Cycling, a ministry of New Mission Systems International, hosted its 6<sup>th</sup> annual Key West Bike Ride & Run from March 18-23rd, 2017. This benefit ride raised funds and awareness for youth ministry in Kenya. Fifty-three cyclists, runners and support staff made the 5-day trek, stopping in Everglades City, Homestead, Key Largo and Marathon before arriving in Key West at the Southernmost Point on Wednesday afternoon. Serving as Ride Director, I want to take a moment and say a special thank-you to all of our host churches! I'd like to highlight four of our partners on this tour - Paradise Bicycles of Fort Myers, Johnson University (campuses in TN, FL and online), Nu Image Cleaners of Ft. Myers and Plastic Letters & Signs of Fort Myers.

It was very nice to have Patty Huff come to our worship gathering on Saturday night at Everglades Community Church. She shared an update with our group regarding her work on the River of Grass Greenway. I have been all for the Greenway from the first time I heard about it two years ago. Crossing the Everglades on a 2-lane road has NEVER been an ideal situation for any cycling group. With cars passing at speeds upwards of 65 mph, it is extremely dangerous, especially when the bridges cause the shoulder to disappear. We surely appreciate the work that the Friends of the River of Grass Greenway has done to work on safety issues on US41.

There was a moment when we had made it through Naples, and we were traveling toward the turn for Marco Island. We saw the beautiful bike path that had been created on the right side of the road and dreamed, for a brief minute of what it might look like to see a similar path extend all the way to Miami. It would be the safest option for cyclists to cross our beautiful state. I am surely hopeful that it can be accomplished in my lifetime.

In closing, the KWBR2017 was a huge success. We give all the glory and thanks to GOD - who is truly the reason we ride. It is our hope that the \$46,000+ that was raised through this ride would go to promote and facilitate youth ministry in Kenya. We are always intentional to share stories with our cyclists of how the funds were used and we continue to host these tours for youth globally, in Jesus' Name. For more information about this ride, visit website [www.endscycling.com](http://www.endscycling.com).

