



Elle Crofton has always ridden her bike but never considered herself a huge cyclist. That didn't stop her from riding to raise money and awareness for [NMDP Cycle](#) two years in a row.

"The most fun part is meeting all the people on the rides—transplant recipients, doctors..." she said. "It's fun to ride with different people."

Elle hopes the rides and the money she raises will bring hope to patients facing transplant. Because she knows how important that can be—as a transplant patient herself.

## Fighting the fight

On her 25th birthday, Elle was diagnosed with myelodysplastic syndrome, a disorder in which the bone marrow doesn't produce enough healthy blood cells. It meant leaving Philadelphia and moving to Houston to live with her parents while she underwent treatment.

Two years after her diagnosis, Elle's medication stopped working—she needed a blood stem cell transplant to save her life. "My brother was so upset that he was only a half-genetic match," Elle said. Fortunately, a more suitable match was found on the NMDP Registry<sup>SM</sup>.

## A new beginning

In May 2015, after quitting her job as a teacher and moving back to Texas again, Elle received her stem cell transplant. During her post-transplant recovery, she kept herself busy with crafts, cooking, baking, knitting and crocheting and says it was about three years before she settled into her new body. But once she did, she moved back to Philadelphia and was back to teaching and doing things she loves—like the horseback riding she did as a child.

Eventually, Elle got to meet her amazing donor match, Jess, who's just a few years younger than she was. The two got to see each other during last year's Tour de TC ride through Long Island where Jess lives. And Jess—along with her sister and mom—even joined Elle for a few NMDP walk and run events in Philadelphia.

## Riding for hope

Now, this year—like last year—Elle and her dad (an avid cyclist) will be fundraising for NMDP Cycle while co-leading two [rides](#): Boston and Philadelphia, where Elle now lives.

“Last year we rode through New York state and places I’ve never been before,” she said. “It was beautiful to see the countryside—it was gorgeous!”

She hopes her ride will show other transplant patients that even though there are times when they’re down and out, there will be better times ahead. “It will get better and you can maybe join us on a ride one day,” she said.

You don’t have to be a serious cyclist to give hope to patients by supporting NMDP. You can root for Elle and [help her reach her fundraising goal](#) or get creative and [come up with your own DIY NMDP fundraiser!](#)

