



switchpoint™



IT TAKES ALL OF US



Breaking the Cycles - Coast to Coast

Raising Awareness to End the Cycle of Homelessness



Where are they now? Find out by visiting

breakingthecycles.org



On August 20th, 2015, Bob and Carol Hollowell embarked from San Francisco, California on a 3,760 mile cross-country bike ride in order to raise awareness to help “Break the Cycle” of poverty and intergenerational homelessness among families and veterans throughout America.

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Day 1 – San Francisco, California



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Lesson of the day #1- It's my job!

Jimmy Buffett has a song that stuck in my mind all day. One verse goes like this- "It's my job to be different than the rest and that's enough reason to go for me. It's my job to be better than the best and that's a tough break for me." I contemplated this for 103 miles of pain, thinking -" why am I doing this"?? The answer came. It's my job. It's my job to make a difference. It's my job to change status quo. It's my job to serve. Then I hung my head down and pedaled out the 12 hour day. Switchpoint is different, The model is working and we need to share. Many of the shelters think they are doing all they can- but what I see is that it takes a lot more work to do it right. Huge shout out to Baron, Frankie and Mako. Great sag team- the dogs always great us with lots of wags. So we named them the Wag Sag!



Day 4 – Austin, California



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Lesson of the day #2 - 40 days!!

Listening to Zac Brown on the long hot ride it occurred to me that 40 days is a long time. Who knows what tomorrow will bring?? "When I was a baby child my daddy said to me, many mountains we must climb before we'll be free. But he never told me about the bruises on my knees. How they would be the map that leads him where we need to be. And oh that storm came down forty days and forty nights". We will have storms along the way- all of us. But the storms don't last forever. Even Noah had a storm for only 40 days. The ride today is dedicated to my friend "Jerry", a former resident at Switchpoint. His storm has lasted him 40 years. He rode his bike all over the country searching for peace and freedom from his chains. I hope he remembers to get on his knees. Jerry motivated me to get on a bike again.



Day 5 – Eureka, Nevada

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Today we woke up and the weather was perfect! It was a little chill in the morning but no headwind and not too hot! Best weather day we have had. We had 2 major hills to climb and the Frisco pass kicked our butts! I had to sing the *Finding Nemo* song to myself...just keep pedaling, just keep pedaling. A helicopter flew over and saw us and the guy waved. He must have thought we were crazy to be riding out in the middle of nowhere.

Lesson of the day #3 - Like so many things in life- we all want to quit when the going gets rough. I see this every day at work. I see it with myself on a diet or exercise plan, etc. Today was the going gets rough part. Day 8 of riding every day and I will admit quite lonely. I love to be around people and sitting on the back of the bike is not like being at work. We faced some tough climbs on very tired legs today and it took everything we had to push through and keep pedaling. One special person comes to mind-This lady has a disability. She suffers from seizures and has a hard time getting a job because employers are afraid to hire her. She has worked with her case manager for 11 months of turning her life around, becoming independent, getting and staying in housing, etc. Many times she wanted to give up because changing is so hard. But she stuck with it and her life is remarkably different today than it was 11 months ago. She has income, a nice apartment and dignity!



Day 8 – Frisco Pass,
California

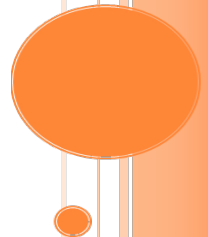
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Lesson of the Day #4 –

We left Blanding in the morning and headed uphill to Monticello. Not kidding... we then turned East towards Cortez, Colorado. This turned into the land of the Roly poly's. Up a hill, down a hill, repeat for the next 69 miles. This is beautiful country and come to find out they grow a lot of pinto beans here. Everyone we have run into in Cortez has been friendly. Once we rolled into Cortez, we stopped at the emergency shelter. Bridges is a seasonal shelter that opens from October to April. The concern is the added need this year and the lack of space. Same thing we have heard a long our trip. This small shelter is facing the same struggles of not enough room, not enough funding and clients who work but don't make enough to pay rent. One pattern that remains the same is the lack of affordable housing. Doesn't matter what community we have visited- there needs more affordable housing.



Day 14 – Cortez,
Colorado



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Lesson of the Day #5 - You Can Conquer Anything with Friends.

Today was wet! It rained all night in Garrison. Iohan, a friend of ours who is "the bike wanderer", gave Bob the day off and rode in the front seat with me from Garrison to Salida. It was a shorter mile day because we climbed over 4000 ft to a summit of 11,312. The monarch pass on the continental divide. We actually stopped and talked with a man who was homeless and looking for a ride to Pueblo. offered him food and drink but he only wanted a ride. So I called the sag team of Don and Bob and they stopped and asked him too. He was traveling south to find work and get out of the cold. All his belongings were in a black plastic bag. Iohan was so fast! He is 30 years younger than Bob and bikes for a living, so we powered along at a good clip. As I thought about how much easier it was today, it put into perspective that life is easier with friends. I have been blessed with many good friends who have lifted me up over the years. Many of them, like Iohan I met because we took a chance to help someone. hosting Iohan, through a cycling website, we gained a lifetime friend and now share a love of cycling. Not only did Iohan ride all day with me up a huge mountain, but he donated his best day of work this summer of planting trees to the breaking the cycles campaign. has a servant's heart with huge compassion for others.



Day 17 – Garrison

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Lesson of the Day #6: Don't Give Up!

Favorite event of the day was our stop at the Wayside Rescue Mission. John and Jen gave me a tour and shared their experience of being homeless and how they came to work at the shelter. Jen brought me to tears as she shared her testimony and her strength. What a powerful story. I met with Barb, client, she shared her life journey with me which will be in our finished film. What an energetic and spunky soul. She used to feed people out of her school bus! The Wayside is a faith based shelter housing men and women. They need more donations! I was so impressed with the staff and how passionate they all were about serving others. The motto of the shelter is "never give up" which was perfect for the bracelets I left with them say the same thing. As I walked back to the truck, a volunteer named Debbie showed up and told me about her dinner in the parks efforts. She was so kind as well. I was reminded again of how much need there is and how many good people there are.



Day 18 – Wayside
Rescue Mission

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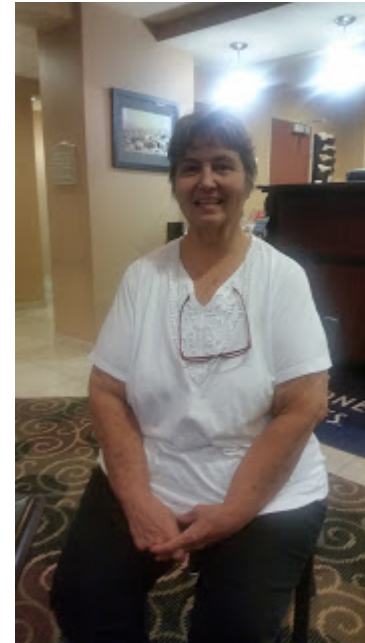
We rode from Pueblo to Eads today. We rode past a lady on her bike and her sag was very enthusiastic cheering everyone on. She has just got back from Afghanistan after 6 years working on a contract for the government. She decided that before she went home, she should reunite with American soil. So she flew straight to the west coast, bought a bike and started riding. She is 64, but in great shape. She has run 64 marathons. Her brother and husband are sagging for her. Her cause is "Help our soldiers." We enjoyed riding by her and then shared dinner together. She is one tough cookie! I have enjoyed meeting so many inspiring people on this trip.

At dinner, we met an amazing woman named Patty. She shared her experience working with a shelter. She wasn't able to have kids of her own and had started working with some foster programs. One night they got a call. A nurse had been working at the shelter and had noticed three little kids in dire medical situations. She tried to get the parents to take them to hospital but they wouldn't. Child services was called and the children were taken care of and removed from the parents care. Patty was given a chance to adopt these three children - age 2,3 and 5. Now they are 18, 19 and 21. She loves these children! A year after they adopted Patty tried to find the nurse to thank her. The shelter said there was never a nurse who worked there. Patty believes angels saved those children. I do too!

Lesson of the Day # 7 -



Janis, riding for soldiers



Patty



Day 19 – Eads

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Newton Homeless Shelter

Next we visited the Newton Homeless shelter. Again, this was a faith based mission but they were struggling financially. It was a small shelter that served families, men and women. I met a client named John. He had lost his wife to cancer 13 years ago and started driving. He said he couldn't handle the grief. Finally he got a job at the carnival and he worked there for 7 years. He had just found an apartment today that he could afford! His story is very similar to others I have met at Switchpoint. Men in their 70's who couldn't cope with loss and became homeless. Very heartbreaking.

My friend, Terry Hartke drove in tonight from Austin, Texas. She is willing to take my spot on the back and give my buns and legs a rest. What a true friend!! Hope she still likes me after her day is over. One thing we have noticed in Kansas- people are so friendly in small towns. Love it!!

Lesson of the Day # 8 -

Today we woke up and decided to drive the 28 miles to Wichita so I could visit the Union Rescue Mission. I met with Denny, the executive director for a tour and their mission. I have to say that in this shelter, I felt so peaceful. The minute I walked in, there was a notable difference in the air. Part of it could have been the entry with the water feature or the chapel right in view. It could have been the quiet hum of people busy at work. I was impressed with the programs for life change, the desire of the staff to accept everyone and their faults. The Union Rescue Mission is a faith based mission (serve men only) which runs on donations only. No federal or state monies. I noted that Wichita is a very generous community.



Day 23 – Union Rescue Mission,
Wichita, KS

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Lesson of the Day # 9 -



Lockwood Guys

I thought all day about the many people I have met at Switchpoint who have broke too many rules, lost their families, and wander all over the US because they have no where to put down roots. Many of them have been a black sheep with their family and have burned all of their bridges. What I have learned on this trip is that many shelters continue to love and serve those "Remittance Men". The Safe Haven Shelter in Parsons, Kansas was having three baptisms today with people who have chosen to change their lives and stop "breaking all the rules." I think about Tim- a client at Switchpoint who I have known for 4 years. He is a Remittance Man and just wants to be loved, just wants to have a home- but he breaks the rules of alcohol(alcoholic). My hope is he can accept help and make a change.

Thought for the day- Jimmy Buffett- I know I quote him a lot- has a song that I totally love. It is called Remittance Man. Here is one verse. Listen to the whole song if you can.

"Sinner on the mainland he's a sinner on the sea
He looks for absolution not accountability
How many destinations oh God he's seen them all
He collects his precious pittance never a port of call
Remittance Man
Black sheep of the family clan broke too many rules along the way
Remittance Man
So far away from home no they'll never understand
The Remittance Man
A man of empty pockets from jingling his change
The idleness and grieving for all that he retains
By the harbor lights of Sydney or the Bora Bora moon
He recites his sad confession to the seagulls and the loons"



Day 25 – Missouri

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This morning we started off in Buffalo to head towards Berea. The first sign we should have noticed was our gear was slipping as we pulled out of the parking lot. We ignored it and headed down the road. After 13 miles we were looking at our map and nothing was matching up. So we asked a guy driving by. We had accidentally turned the wrong way from the get go!! So we called Dad, the sag and he saved us and drove us to the correct point. As we rode along, we kept feeling the chain slip so we stopped and all looked at it and scratched our head. The verdict was, we thought the small chain ring was installed backwards by the mechanic yesterday. AARGH!! Not even close to a bike shop and it is Sunday so everything is closed. We decided to ride on and if the hill was too steep have Dad put the bike on the RV and then ride down the hill.

So we took off again and headed towards Bardstown. As we came up to a big hill, the chain fell off. We hopped off, put chain on, Dad gave a big shove to get us started and we rode on. After about 45 more miles, the chain started slipping on just about every ring. We knew it would tear up the bike if we continued riding so we called Dad the Sag and got a lift to the closest town. It was a difficult, slow day to say the least. We had decided to take a different route on a highway to try and avoid steep hills, but we were still out of luck. Tomorrow morning we will visit the 3rd bike shop in 3 days to see if we can get it fixed enough to finish the last 800 miles!! **Thought for the day- Have a Plan B** - Sometimes life just doesn't go as planned. If we have a Plan B, it is a lot easier to handle the bumps along the way.



Lesson of the Day # 10 -

Our Plan B of finding less hills, having a Sag driver, stopping when lost- all added up to making it safely today. I could have lost it a couple of times but instead, we found a cute place to camp and enjoy the town. The stress of the day could have ruined our trip. I choose to be happy and see what tomorrow brings.



Day 31 – Springville, KY

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The Switchpoint Model

The mission of Switchpoint is to empower homeless families and individuals in Washington County by addressing the underlying cause of poverty and providing each client with an individualized, comprehensive plan that supports them on their journey to self-sufficiency and the opportunity to contribute to the community.

Travelers Aid International fits right in with this mission.

At many Travelers Aid locations, on an individual basis, a case worker will work with a stranded individual and offer suggestions on the best way to get home. Not all Travelers Aid locations provide a stranded traveler program and funding may not be available at all times to support the program.

Why this is a best fit

Travelers Aid members are a diverse group of human service nonprofit organizations and a network of key transportation centers. Each member agency has evolved to provide core services that meet their own community's specific needs. Members help stranded travelers, provide shelter for the homeless, transitional housing, job training, counseling, local transportation assistance and other programs to help people who encounter crises as they journey through life as well as information and referral services at airports, train stations and bus depots. Through our network, nearly 5,000 Travelers Aid volunteers and professional staff members assist more than 29 million individuals including travelers, veterans, seniors, children, and homeless to get from a position of instability to stability.

Switchpoint works with its team of case managers and local area government and non-profit agencies to overcome client's barriers to homelessness and poverty. By partnering with Travelers Aid, we are able to extend the services we can offer to veterans, seniors, children and homeless and help get them on the right track to further their progression out of the cycle of poverty.

