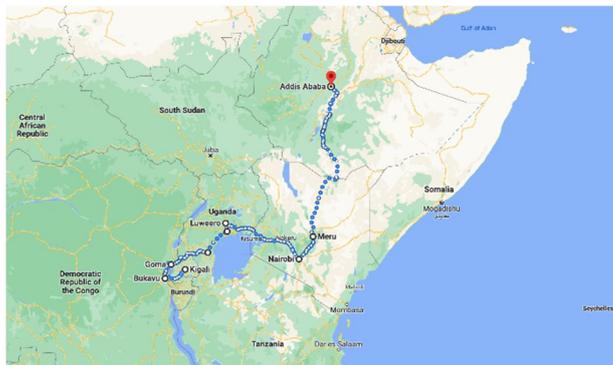


# Peddalling the Cycle Tour News

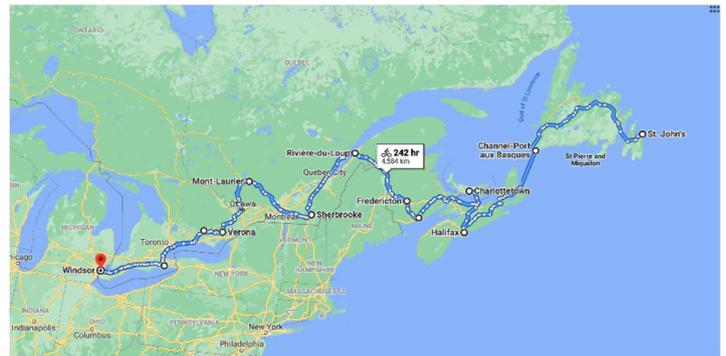


## Last Week



We rode 7787 km last week, from Kigali, Rwanda to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the end of the African leg of our virtual tour. We dipped into DRC and cycled along the north shore of Lake Victoria in Uganda and Kenya along the way.

We started again in St. John's NL and rode as far as Windsor ON, as much as possible on *The Great Trail*. We need only 6000 more km next week to get us back to Victoria!



## Celebrating more Newbies (Cyclists doing their first VG4A Cycle Tour):



Lauren getting stronger



Cyndi on the 3-ferry ride



Melva at the winery



Joan clocking kilometres



Sandra with a friend



Paddy with her faithful sidekick sitting on .... What???

## Celebrating Connections:



Lunch with Patricia and Beth, Saltspring Island Grandmothers, during the 3-ferry ride



4 VG4A members and 3 Galiano Gogos met at the ferry for a ride to Sidney

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/VeEkjYJkgQqPdZGS6>

## This Week

(Please send a photo of your cycling or coffee adventures from the final week to [vacationlauren@gmail.com](mailto:vacationlauren@gmail.com). Thanks!)

- **Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am – Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup> 2:15 pm** – Brentwood Bay to Chemainus overnight ride for 24 pre-registered riders, with 2 support vehicles
- **Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am** at the Saanich Municipal Hall at [Darwin Ave & Lochside Trail](#) – 25 – 35K Gentle Friday ride. Leader will be Lynn Kobierski. If you have any kilometres left to ride, this would be a fun group to do it with!
- **By Friday evening, September 10<sup>th</sup>** – Send your final kilometres (rounded off to the nearest km please!) to [vg4acycledistance@gmail.com](mailto:vg4acycledistance@gmail.com). This deadline is quite critical because we are trying to put together all of the data, maps, numbers etc. to be as accurate as possible for the Sunday morning finale.
- **Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> 10 am** at Central Park → Mile 0 – Cycle Tour 2021 Finale

Join us as we celebrate the end of our tour by riding with Victoria Mayor, Lisa Helps, from Central Park down Vancouver Street with its new separated bike lanes to Beacon Hill Park and Mile 0 where we launched our tour on August 14<sup>th</sup>. This is a short 3.5 km ride downhill!

Meet at **10:00 a.m. at the basketball courts at Central Park** just south of the Crystal Pool on Pembroke Street (there is plenty of street parking in the neighbourhood if you are driving there with your bike).

Please wear your Grandmother's campaign jersey as your top layer (with some warm layers underneath if necessary) and tuck your jacket in your saddle bag to wear after our celebration ride.

Once we arrive at Mile 0, we will announce the distance we have traveled together as well as the amount of money we have raised to date. We also anticipate that Mayor Helps will say a few words.

We had 15 at the launch... let's go for double that number for the Finale!

## A Piece of Cycle Tour History



Mayor Lisa Helps leading our cyclists towards the Legislature in 2017, the first of her soon-to-be five years of welcoming us home.

## Did you know???

- Our collective funds raised as of September 5<sup>th</sup> are \$88,490! Our goal is \$100,000. Let's all put on a bit of a push this week – send a reminder to your faithfuls, e-mail a couple more names, give your auntie a call ... Let's see if we can't tip this over by the finale.

WOW

- We have more business cards / info cards available to give to people who ask who you're cycling for. Let the registrar know if you could use a few more.

## Meeting Women on our Virtual Tour of sub-Saharan Africa

During Week 3 our virtual tour took us through Uganda where there are many active SLF initiatives. One of the many things that worries the African grandmothers is what will happen when they are gone. However, they have now been supported and empowered for over 15 years and some of their grandchildren are rising to take up the causes. We were lucky enough to meet an amazing young Ugandan woman, Josephine Nabukenya, when she spoke at our Regional Gathering in November 2019. →

When Josephine Nabukenya's mother visited an organization, MU-JHU, for a health check-up, she discovered that she and her daughter were HIV positive. She didn't tell anyone, not even Josephine. Thinking she would soon die, she drafted a letter that Josephine later found by accident. That's how Josephine, at age eight, discovered that both she and her mother were living with the virus. She didn't tell her mother she knew, and she spiralled in blame, fear and isolation. "Finally, I joined a psychosocial support group at MU-JHU, and it helped me to come to terms with being HIV positive," Josephine says. The group was based at MU-JHU Care, a research collaboration between Makerere and Johns Hopkins universities. "The group made me realize I wasn't the only one, and we were getting a lot of love from different doctors and counsellors. To me, the group helped me grow and actually get to the point where I could think about realizing my dream." Years later, Josephine attained part of her dream: she became a leader at MU-JHU. Her mother joined a group as well, participated in treatment and psychosocial support, and is thriving as a result. Josephine now works at MUJHU with 305 children and youth who are living with HIV. Josephine is an HIV advocate who's passionate about providing better treatment and psychosocial support to people living with HIV. "Already we have 50 school visits planned, 15 community outreaches, and a lot of activities for mutual support groups," she says. Within the groups, new peer leaders are identified and trained on how to work with other youth who live with HIV and who face stigma and discrimination. "And we pick one of the youth in each group to be the leader of the process. We're also doing fundraising activities with the groups, for the children who are dropping out of school, because they can't pay for school fees or materials. The beauty of our programme is that it's youth-led, and we have internship slots within the groups for a number of youth every year – they come on board with us, gain skills and learn how to run activities."



Such leadership, common in our partner organizations in 15 countries, is powerful, because it involves collective action by thousands of young women like Josephine, as well as thousands of grandmothers and community members. Together, they consult, make decisions and take action – all with the singular purpose of turning the tide of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. This is leadership beyond individual heroes. It's about deeper commitments to human rights and protections for women and girls. It's about tens of thousands of women at our 125 partner organizations who are leading Africa out of the AIDS pandemic. "Many organizations say they're youth-led, but often that's not true. Our activities really are youth-led. The fact that the youth who used to be with MU-JHU are now getting on board as staff and volunteers, that's something that we should be proud of. MU-JHU and the SLF have supported us since we were little, and now we have grown up and are starting to lead this work." – Josephine Nabukenya, MU-JHU, Uganda. Ugandan youth look up to leaders like Josephine, the co-founder of MU-JHU Young Generation Alive, a psychosocial support group and partner of the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Josephine is also the author of a book, *Beyond Your Status, Thriving in Life in Spite of HIV*, available from the VG4A Lending Library.

**Information taken (almost entirely) from:** *the SLF Year in Review 2018*

[https://stephenlewisfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SLF2018\\_YIR.pdf](https://stephenlewisfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SLF2018_YIR.pdf)



Read here a quote from Erika Kellerhals, one of our cyclists from Campbell River, also a doctor working in addictions medicine. The quote is quite far down in the article:

[https://www.nationalobserver.com/2021/08/31/news/canadas-drug-policy-not-drugs-killing-people-record-numbers-advocates-say?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=sept1--](https://www.nationalobserver.com/2021/08/31/news/canadas-drug-policy-not-drugs-killing-people-record-numbers-advocates-say?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=sept1--)