



E³ WELLNESS

ENGAGE · EDUCATE · EMPOWER

"County of Marin Employee Wellness Program"

Meet
Eddie Estrada
H&HS
Adult Social Services
since 2017



Sharing is caring, sharing is connecting

LET'S INSPIRE EACH OTHER

We all have stories. We all have overcome hardships. The intention behind sharing our different journeys in life is to encourage us all to lean into adventure, fight for fulfillment and give back to our community. Here's just one story from our very own Eddie Estrada who challenged himself to ride his bike from Novato to Ventura in four days!

I understand you rode your bike with your friend from Novato to Ventura in four days, can you describe what a typical day entailed?

We had to wake up pretty early, as most days we knew we would be on the bike for 10-12 hours. Luckily, being summer, the days were longer, but we had to pace ourselves if we were going to make it 4 century rides in a row. Each ride starts out with at least 4 hours of riding non-stop. This usually gets us past the 50/60 mile marker which is important as rest stops can become more frequent after 80 miles. Most days we rode past 120 miles. Lunch is usually very short, and I like to eat a big meal. One of my favorite lunches was in Pesacadero and eating an entire loaf of artichoke bread with carbonated water. It was so tasty! Each day ended with us rolling into a new town to scarf down dinner, at least 3000+ calories, and heading to the hotel. Shower, icing knees, and early bedtime in order to feel somewhat fresh the next day

What inspired you to do this in the first place?

I have only been cycling as a serious sport the last couple of years. The idea came to us when we saw a local tour group doing a Bay Area to Socal ride in 5 days, but with car support, full meals, water, hotels, masseuse etc. The cost was near \$5,000. I thought why not try the exact ride, in less days and try to come in under \$500. It was just stupid enough to try.

Why was it so important you do this?

I previously tried this ride back in January earlier this year. I made it just a hair over 300 miles, well short of the goal and destination, due to severe knee pain. I later found out it was overuse because I hadn't done much winter riding to prepare. Honestly you cannot really prepare as you won't know what your body can handle, nor how resilient it is the next day after riding 100 miles the day before. We were trying

to string together four 100 mile rides. People have done it, sure, but not with one set of bibs, carrying all of your food on you, and without the luxuries of home. I needed to accomplish this ride as I only had the previous failure to live with and often reflect back on. That ride in January truly cost me as I could not ride for 6 weeks afterwards. Most cyclists know and embrace the feeling of "the great struggle." Most of the sport is a series of struggling on the bike. Struggling to make it further than before, or struggling to climb the top of Mt. Tam going 5 mph, or climbing an 8% grade for well over an hour. It doesn't sound fun at all, but once you have some accomplishments, like the first time I rode 30 miles, you get hungry for more.

What did you take away from this experience?

I haven't really processed what this experience has taught me. It might just end up a cool ride I did once. I will say that we got to see all the beauty our coast offers and you miss so much of it when you are in a car. I know now that physically there is not much I cannot do on a bike. As they say, riding a bike is easy, we only make it as hard as we like. I believe any of us can do this ride, but it's the willingness to take it on, sometimes going to a dark mental place, and finishing it nonetheless.

What does Wellness mean to you?

Wellness is an attitude. I try to live well everyday of my life. I understand we are not here for a long time, but it better be for a good time! Being an employee in social services can be a stressful job; I have observed colleagues who are beyond compassion well into burnout. I often skip lunch with colleagues to get outside and take an hour bike ride or walk the lagoon, because it makes a direct, positive impact on my mental health. I know others

who enjoy a quick nap in their car or take out a book and read. Wellness it is taking the time to focus on yourself, your thoughts, centering your ideas, etc. I do not measure myself against the next person because what matters is how I am feeling, and lately, it has been great!

What encouragement would you have for someone looking to do something adventurous like this?

I say start small. Build up a routine before any endurance activity. Also, plan ahead and if possible, have someone join you. Not only is moral support important, but in case of an emergency you have someone with you. Lastly, enable location services so that your loved ones can track your progress, but more importantly know where you are at all times.

Anything else about yourself that you would like to share?

Do me a huge favor, if you are ever riding around or running, wave to the person waving at you.

"Wellness is taking the time to focus on yourself"

"start small, build up a routine before endurance activity"

Day 1: 126.36 miles
6,923 ft climbed

Day 2: 143.08 miles
9,196 ft climbed

Day 3: 75.02 miles
2,694 ft climbed

Day 4: 123.60 miles
9,150 ft climbed

Do you have an inspiring story or know a County employee who does?
Email: kgraff@marincounty.org