

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Some people will NEVER hear this press release (even if they want to!)

Hundreds, possibly even thousands within the range of your influence, actually *millions* across the country, MUST deal with severe to profound hearing loss every day. And although applause is truly deserved for those few who have excelled in spite of their circumstances, the sad truth is that *far too many* Deaf are NOT productive, contributing members of our society.

GHA's First Family
(from left to right)
Reggie [26] Deaf
Torin [18] Hearing
Earline [29] Ha-Ha
Melisha [26] Deaf
Jon [56] Going Deaf*



*I am NOT!.....Wait!.....what did you say?!

The goal at God's Hands Agency, *especially* in these difficult economic times, is to change that scenario. They believe that the Deaf can be productive, happy, and successful members of our American culture.

So when asked, "What did you do on your summer vacation?,"

Silent Pedalers Jon and Earline Blumhagen would tell you that they physically trudged their I.C.E. trikes 2,222 miles down the Mississippi River Trail from Lake Itasca, Minnesota south to Venice, Louisiana.

This pedaling pair are the co-founders of God's Hands Agency, a non-profit which works with the Deaf and Families of Central Florida by providing effective services through community-based partnerships.

Known as the WiFi (an acronym for Word-Inspired, Family Involvement) Pedalers, the Blumhagens have raised 3 children, 2 of which are profoundly Deaf.

The tour, confidently named "*The Mission Possible Tour*," is intended to **bridge the gaps** in communication between the deaf and hearing worlds as they cross the 36 bridges along the Mississippi River Trail. They plan to ride 40 to 50 miles per day throughout June, July and August, staying with families and churches involved with the Deaf Community while exchanging ideas on Deaf awareness, building leaders, and community involvement. As partnerships are very important to God's Hands Agency, it is the Blumhagen's hope to form many new partnerships along the 2,222 mile route.

The hearing world has little knowledge of such Deaf facts as:

- **There are 26 million Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in America.**
- **90% of all Deaf children are born to hearing parents and less than 10% of these parents learn to effectively communicate with their children using American Sign Language.**
- **Hearing loss affects one out of every four families in America.**
- **Only about 8 in 100 Deaf people attend church in America, making the Deaf the largest unreached people group.**
- **The hearing aid is the second most widely used assistive technology device after the walking cane.**
- **Deaf people do not consider themselves disabled, but rather a cultural group with their own language, history, and community.**



It's the WiFi Pedalers' goal, through their *Mission Possible Tour*, to bring awareness and knowledge to the heartland of America through personal interaction and the sharing of ideas and programs. Their specific route can already be reviewed at:
http://www.thewifipedalers.com/The_Route.html

Funds for the trip are being raised by seeking corporate and individual sponsors (corporate packages available – the I.C.E. trikes they will be riding are sponsored in part by Power On Cycling [www.PowerOnCycling.com] in Riverview, Florida, just east of Tampa) willing to get involved, and sponsor one or more miles along the route at the cost of \$35 per mile. Sponsors can even choose the mile(s) they wish to sponsor. There will be daily blogs so that each person will know what happened along 'their' mile. Jon has already started blogging about the trip. See it at www.thewifipedalers.com. Also see www.godshandsagency.com.



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