

## Her biking to help bring new focus on Cape housing need

By [Susan Milton](#)

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EASTHAM — On one of the hottest summer days so far, Gwen Pelletier was sweating bananas and energy drink on a bike ride from Eastham to Provincetown and back.

She was training to pedal twice that far Monday at the start of this year's Housing for Love fundraiser.

"There are days when I question my sanity. But I already have \$3,000 (in donations) so I have to do it," said Pelletier, 68.

Local residents know her as the retired director of the Lower Cape Community Development Corp., the quick-to-rule Eastham town moderator and now a yellow-helmeted rider who uses all 24 gears on her Cannondale bicycle.

While housing guru Bob Murray and other Cape leaders walk 108 miles between July 14 and 20, Pelletier will ride 100 miles in a single day.

"They kept asking me to walk with them," Pelletier said, who returned to bicycling after retiring in 2006. "I said, 'I don't walk, I ride.'"

But she usually rides only 10 to 20 miles at a time. The exception was the 65-mile Last Gasp fundraising ride two years ago from the Cape Cod Canal to Provincetown.

"I've never ridden 100 miles at one fell swoop," she said. "And I'm not a fast rider. Other bicyclists leave me in their dust, but I do have endurance."

To rack up 100 miles, Pelletier is riding from Eastham to Provincetown on July 14 and, after meeting the walking fund-raisers, returning to Eastham to ride to Chatham and back.

Her strategic goal is to get the Truro hills behind her and then gut out the relatively flat Cape Cod Bike Trail by 5 p.m.

Pelletier has already exceeded her \$3,000 goal for her all-day ride by drawing contributions from \$10 to \$250 from people pledging per mile or sponsoring a wheel or even a spoke on her bicycle.

As she pedals, she will pass through the eight towns, Provincetown to Harwich, where the agency she formally worked with has created affordable apartments and homes for Cape residents.

The CDC currently is working with housing authorities on rental housing in Harwich and Wellfleet. Currently, the agency either owns or manages 45 affordable rental units for families who earn no more than 50 or 60 percent of the area's medium income, now \$73,500, according to executive director Elizabeth Bridgewater. The agency also has made 188 loans to homeowners to create affordable apartments in the eight towns.

As she rides Monday, Pelletier will think of the painter, the carpenter, the waitress, the rehab worker and others who once struggled to find a home on the Lower Cape.

Through the agency and others involved in Cape housing, "those people could stabilize their lives and were able to contribute to this community," Pelletier said. "This whole walk and bike thing draws attention to the fact that there continues to be a need for affordable housing on the Cape."

## **The 16th annual Housing with Love Walk, July 14-20**

Bob Murray and others from 11 participating agencies walk 108 miles from Provincetown to Falmouth to benefit housing agencies on the Cape. Last year's walk raised \$231,000, a new record.

Donations may be sent to participating agencies directly or to P.O. Box 2192, Teaticket, MA 02536

Walk Schedule:

July 14. St Mary's Church, Provincetown via Route 6, to Southfleet Motor Inn, Wellfleet.

July 15 - Southfleet Motor Inn, via Rtes. 6/ 6A to Brewster General Store.

July 16 - Holy Redeemer Church, Chatham, via Rte. 28 to old Friendly's site, Yarmouth..

July 17 - Old Friendly's site via Rtes. 28/132/6A to Stop & Shop, Sandwich.

July 18 - Canal entrance via canal, Rtes. 28/28A to Nickelodeon, Rte. 151, Mashpee.

July 19 - Nickelodeon via Routes 151/28 to Falmouth Town Green.

July 20 - Falmouth town Green via bike path to Woods Hole. Return along road race route to Liam Maguire's Irish Pub.