

Cycling Jamaica by Bike for charity

The cycle continues, indeed, as the annual Jamaica by Bike, Kingston to Negril Charity Ride, gets set to roll on October 15, with organisers looking to help the Sir John Golding Foundation raise funds for a much-needed portable defibrillator.

Jamaica by Bike, which was conceptualised as a means to promote a healthy lifestyle while raising money for worthy charities and making a real difference in communities across the island, will test participants over 160 miles and 11 hours. This year's instalment sees ATL Automotive pedalling as the main sponsors to the tune of \$500,000, and its new Volkswagen (VW) Amarok pickup as the vehicle behind the event, with The Gleaner Company, Wisynco and Restaurants of Jamaica (KFC) chipping in as well. The ride, which started in 1992 by pioneering cyclists Dr Franklyn Bennett, Paul Andrew Goldson and Tim Byam, has evolved into one of the most eagerly anticipated cycling events on the local calendar - a perfect fusion of competitive riding and social responsibility. The event is expected to attract more than 100 cyclists, including some of the island's best in the sport. Speaking at yesterday's launch at the Spanish Court Hotel, Senator Mark Golding expressed gratitude at the consideration and shared some of the challenges faced by the institution, which caters to persons with issues that require orthopaedic attention. "I wish to state how impressed I am with this initiative," Golding said. "The proceeds will be used towards buying a portable defibrillator. "This as a particular need and the organisation that is putting on this event has indicated that they are more than willing to assist. We do not currently have one of these machines at the centre and this will save lives. This is a very worthy cause," Golding added. 'A natural fit' Adam Harris, VW brand manager, was proud of his company's involvement with the event, which he considers a natural fit. "We view this to be a worthy cause and that is why we jumped at the opportunity to come on board. For cyclists, if you are not actually riding the bike, the most ideal way to carry it is in a pickup and, naturally, we wanted the VW Amarok to be the vehicle of choice at the event," said Harris. Organiser Martin Fong Kong highlighted the purpose of the event. "Jamaica by Bike is dedicated towards providing healthy lifestyle, fitness and teamwork, as well as family bonding while raising money for charity. "Our primary objective has also been to have fun while making a difference in the lives of others," said Fong Kong. Along with the Sir John Golding Rehabilitation Centre, the Intensive Care Unit of the University Hospital of the West Indies has also benefited from money raised through the event.