

# Staying busy in days leading up to MS 4000



**ROBBIE McDERMOTT**

Guest Columnist

*Editor's Note: Robbie McDermott, a Far North Dallas resident and 2011 graduate of Plano West High School, begins a 4,286-mile cross-country trek Sunday to raise money for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.*

I spent the month of April trying my best to publicize the **MS 4000** and increase public awareness of multiple sclerosis through the MS 4000 website, mailing sponsor packets, placing flyers on windshields during local races and asking for public relations assistance from **Carol Lanham**, my youth minister and parishioner of **All Saints Catholic Community** in Far North Dallas. I also devoted time to training for the **Ironman** and making final equipment orders.

I try not to get discouraged when I do not hear back from people who received my letters, because I realize people are busy and the economy is tough right now.

But I am excited that my biggest spon-

sor is **Richardson Bike Mart**. The people there have been supportive with valuable advice on gear and biking performance and made a generous donation to the **MS Society**. It has been so gratifying to see that Bike Mart cares, and supports me and the cause.

My dad has been researching the use of an RV as a support vehicle because of the threat of cold or rainy weather and all the gear I will take on the trip, including two bikes. The thought of trying to dry out a tent every day sent us shopping. The sale is not final but it seems imminent.

On May 21, I completed my first Ironman (2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and a 26.2-mile marathon). I have since recovered from my aches and blisters incurred during that grueling 90-degree, 12 ½ hour event.

I recently added information to my website, updated the sponsor page and completed my day-to-day trip itinerary. I met with **KTVT (Channel 11)** news to do a photo shoot and interview on June 1.

It is important to get the word out about multiple sclerosis. If 50,000 people send only \$1, I will have reached my goal of raising \$50,000 for MS research.

After my June 7 graduation, I have one weekend to get my gear organized and pack before we hit the road to the starting point, Anacortes, Wash.

## MORE INFO

To follow Robbie McDermott's 4,286-mile trek, visit his blog at [neighborsgo.com/blog/RidingWithRobbie](http://neighborsgo.com/blog/RidingWithRobbie).

**Robbie McDermott** will begin his 4,286-mile MS 4000 on Sunday.

Photo submitted by **ROBBIE McDERMOTT**



## CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC



**Five Eagle Scouts** are among supporters of the second annual Research Down Syndrome Charity Golf Classic to be held Thursday. They are Rob Kyker of Richardson (back from left), U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions, Alan Edwards of Richardson (middle from left), Texas Gov. Rick Perry and **Alex Sessions** (front) of Dallas.

Submitted photo by **ELISABETH SHORE**

# Tournament to benefit Down syndrome research

By **MELISSA BENTLEY** and **ALAN EDWARDS**

Contributors

## MORE INFO

To learn more about the Research Down Syndrome Charity Golf Classic, visit [nathanrds.com](http://nathanrds.com). To learn more about the Research Down Syndrome Foundation, visit [researchds.org](http://researchds.org).

The second annual Research Down Syndrome Charity Golf Classic, an 18-hole, four-person scramble, will be held Thursday at the Bridlewood Golf Club in Flower Mound. Paul and Patty Watson of Flower Mound are hosting the event.

They are the parents of two daughters and three sons, including Nathan, 9, who has Down syndrome.

"We are honored to have U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions serve as honorary chairman, and Gov. Rick Perry as an honorary sponsor," Paul Watson said, adding that a group of hard-working volunteers, including Richardson and Lake Highlands residents, have supported the event.

Sessions and his wife, Nita, are the parents of two sons, Bill, 21, and Alex, 17, who has Down syndrome.

"I am proud to serve as the honorary chairman and to promote leading-edge research and public policies that would enhance the quality of life for individuals with Down syndrome," Sessions said. "As

the father of a young man with Down syndrome, I understand firsthand the importance of providing resources and opportunities for individuals with special needs."

Paul Watson is confident that this year's event will build on the success of the inaugural tournament, which featured 124 golfers, including 25 retired sports celebrities, who helped raise \$66,000 for Down syndrome research.

In addition to golf, there will be a cocktail reception with live and silent auctions the evening before the tournament. Tournament day will feature a Down syndrome community roundtable, research panel discussion and an awards banquet.

*Alan Edwards and Melissa Bentley contribute to neighborsgo.com on behalf of the Research Down Syndrome Charity Golf Classic.*

## Alex Sessions strives to achieve his dreams

Alex Sessions attended Dallas ISD's Lakewood Elementary School and J.L. Long Middle School and is completing his freshman year at Notre Dame School of Dallas.

"He is a very physically fit young man who has earned several Special Olympics gold medals in swimming, basketball and track," said his mother, Nita Sessions.

For more than six years, Alex has been a member of **North Trail District Boy Scout Troop 890**, which is chartered by and meets at Lake Highlands United Methodist Church. Last November, he was one of three Scouts who received their Eagle awards at a Troop 890 Court of Honor. He now shares this distinction with his paternal grandfather, William S. Sessions, and his father and older brother.

He has attended six Troop 890 summer camps at Circle Ten Council's Camp Constantin on Possum Kingdom Lake in Palo Pinto County and will go again this summer.