

No Gifts Please

by Emily Brown

Birthdays for kids usually mean cake, ice cream and presents, but when Jennifer Sterner turned 12-years-old on October 15, she had strict orders: no gifts please. “She wanted them to make a donation to the NF Endurance RAAM team,” Alan Sterner, Jennifer’s father said.

Alan is on a team of four bike riders called the NF Endurance RAAM team. In June they will ride from California to Maryland in a nonstop relay to raise money for a genetic disorder called neurofibromatosis.

Alan and his wife Kathy have often talked with their daughters about helping others. One suggestion was to swap birthday presents for charitable donations. Jennifer eagerly decided to write a letter.

She wrote to her friends, “I wish I could make you understand how truly unbelievable it is that these children need all the care, donations, and research they can get, while I am so fortunate. I really feel that God has given me everything that I could ever need, and I know that another couple birthday presents wouldn’t make much of a difference in my life, but I know donations would make an outstanding difference in these children’s lives and finding a cure for NF. I know that I am incredibly blessed, and I am hoping that I can make these children feel blessed too.”

Jennifer raised about \$150 which will go towards research for neurofibromatosis through the Children’s Tumor Foundation. “We were proud and humbled by her eagerness to help others,” Kathy Sterner, Jennifer’s mom, said.