

John Becker and volunteer Michael Mayou: Reconnecting lives through cycling in the Northland

Whether you are a volunteer or a participant, one of the greatest things about being involved with Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute - Northland is the new and renewed connections you can make

John Becker is a participant in adaptive yoga, sailing, and most recently, adaptive cycling. A Duluth native, Becker graduated from Marshall High School and St. John's College. He lived in California until he was 55 when he decided to move back to Minnesota to attend graduate school at the College of St. Scholastica.

When Becker, who has been diagnosed with ALS, showed up the first night of adaptive cycling, he was paired with volunteer Michael Mayou.

Also from Duluth, Mayou is a recent graduate from Duluth East High School entering his freshman year at the University of Minnesota - Duluth. He began volunteering with Courage Kenny Rehabilitation - Northland last year. In addition to adaptive cycling he also volunteers with sailing and curling.

Both men quickly realized they had met before. It turns out that Becker had been a substitute teacher when Mayou was in 6th or 7th grade.

"The best part about riding with Michael is the conversations that we have. It's part of the sport," Becker said.

Becker shares adventures about traveling when he served in the army, and from when he lived in California.

"I do it as much for the social aspect as I do for the physical" Becker added about his participation in cycling. Mayou said it has been really awesome getting to work with Becker.

"He's a cool guy who has great stories to tell about the places he's been and the things he's done in his life. I remember that he was a pretty fun sub in middle school and all of the students loved having him."

Before Becker was diagnosed with ALS, he was always involved with one thing or another and attests that Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute - Northland has provided a safe and an encouraging environment.

"It's the best adaptation that I've done since I've had this disease," he said.

Becker and Mayou both plan to return for another season of cycling next summer.

