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Dispatch From a Livestrong Rally: Insult Cancer, Ride with Lance Armstrong, Grow a Mo

BY CHUCK SALTER Thu Oct 21, 2010

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As I chronicle in our [November cover story](#), much of what Lance Armstrong's foundation does on a daily basis happens behind the scenes: researching the economic burden of cancer, coming up with new services for survivors, prodding policymakers to boost funding. But four times a year, Livestrong hosts a large rally for its supporters. The latest is this weekend in Austin, where the foundation is based. Thousands are gathering for the [Livestrong Challenge](#), which includes a bike ride, a run, and an awards banquet for top local fundraisers.

wallpapered with similar tributes. Some cyclists wore the names pinned to their jerseys in the race.

The Challenges illustrate how hands-off Livestrong is with its supporters. It offers training in fundraising and lobbying but doesn't micromanage. At the awards dinner in Philadelphia, the organization showed videos celebrating supporters' creativity. Two brothers sporting "I hate cancer" t-shirts who used Facebook to network and raise about \$22,000. Cyclists known as Team Fatty, many of whom met online and as a group raised more than \$140,000.

In that sense, Livestrong does what few companies are willing to do: entrust its brand to its supporters. But as Livestrong CEO Doug Ulman explains, "If the brand is really authentic, it's theirs."

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