



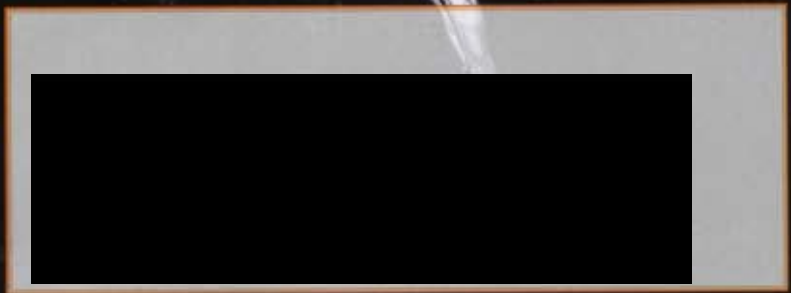
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ALTERNATIVE PRESS

MOST ANTICIPATED
ALBUMS OF 2010
FEATURING

MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE



OP-ED

SPEAK OUT

DANGEROUS RECORDS co-founder **JEFF CASTELAZ** experienced every parent's worst nightmare this summer: He lost his 6-year-old son, Pablo, to cancer. This fall, Castelaz cycled across the country, spreading his important message: Even in the midst of exhausting treatments, kids with cancer should be encouraged to still be kids. Here, Castelaz explains the mission behind Pablove Across America and why biking is his refuge.

I HAVE DEVOTED MY ENTIRE ADULT LIFE to being an artist advocate. So much so that six years ago, I co-founded Dangerbird Records, home of Silversun Pickups, Sea Wolf, Eulogies and the One AM Radio. Over the years, I've managed the Promise Ring, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and Phoenix. I'm pretty deep into this artist-advocacy stuff. I believe in it.

I never knew what good training 15 years of rock business would be for becoming an advocate for kids with cancer. For a start, I never even *knew* kids got cancer. Not until the day my little boy Pablo was diagnosed with Wilms' Tumor, a rare form of childhood cancer. On that day, my wife Jo Ann and I looked around the cancer ward at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and saw kids, families, nurses and doctors who needed help—help to help kids with cancer still be kids. On that day, I knew I had to connect my drive in marketing rock bands in the hearts of people around the world to a much larger purpose: to help kids with cancer. Within the first month of visiting CHLA, we started the Pablove Foundation. Our tagline sums up our mission—we aim to fight childhood cancer with love. We support advances in pediatric cancer research and treatment and child life programs—the music, reading, art and playroom activities that allow kids with cancer to still be kids.

For the 13 months and 10 days of Pablo's battle with cancer, Jo Ann and I rallied and kicked ass for Pablo. We were his advocates on the frontlines of oncology. Through chemo, surgeries and radiation, he continued to buzz around, bringing a smile to everyone. Pablo was a magnet for goodness and community. People lit up around him—he was always on the path of play, a raconteur and a joker. On June 27 of this year, just six days after Pablo's sixth birthday, his life came to a sudden end. I was shattered. Pablo was my best friend. He was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. When he died, I felt an emptiness deeper than any rock band has ever committed to tape. The Smiths' "I Know It's Over" comes close, but it couldn't possibly

convey the icy-hot feeling that drips from my heart when I walk past Pablo's bedroom, devoid of his full-bloom kid-ness. Elliott Smith's "Everything Means Nothing To Me" was the soundtrack to my life for a long string of weeks.

In the weeks following Pablo's death, I spent many hours on my bike, pedaling dozens of miles in the mountains around L.A. I'm obsessed with cycling. In a typical week, I cover more than 250 miles. While my cranks turn over millions of times, I dump out the contents on my heart and head. It's meditative, and a great way to wring out my soul. On one of those days, an idea popped into my head: I should ride my bike across the entire United States. "Pablo loved riding his bike," I said to myself. "I love riding my bike." I even came up with a name for the ride: Pablove Across America. The ride would also be the foundation's first public fundraising effort, and a great way to bring our name and mission to a national level. My personal purpose in riding would be to honor Pablo, and to spread his spirit and hope to cancer kids along the route.

Since the day I hatched this idea, the Dangerbird family—along with our friends at Filter, Warner Bros. Records and a cadre of cycling companies—have been hard at work planning the logistics and marketing for the first Pablove Across America (which we hope to make an annual event). In less than three months, my crazy idea has formed into a reality. We've approached it like the marketing for an album. Instead of sending people an advance CD, we're sending links to the Pablove Foundation mission statement, and the Livestrong commercial Pablo and I appeared in. Day after day,



people at press, radio and TV commit to supporting us. So have the execs at Choice Hotels (parent company of the rock's home away from home, Days Inn), the RV company CruiseAmerica, JetBlue airlines, Felt Bikes and SRAM, the bike-parts manufacturer.

As I write this, the planning is done. I'm ready to go on tour, on two wheels. No Ford van or tour bus for me. Pablove Across America started Oct. 10 in St. Augustine, Florida, the adopted hometown of Tom Gabel from Against Me! (who gave me a complete guide to the city, so I knew where to get the best coffee). As I cranked through the 3,100 miles back to Pablo's grave at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles, I'll be joined by guest riders, including Lance Armstrong and Jimmy Eat World bassist Rick Burch.

Like many of the bands I work with, I'm transposing my pain into something productive. After a lifetime dedicated to the delivery of other people's passions, I'm ready for what's in front of me—to carry Pablo's spirit and the mission of the Pablove Foundation to 40 cities from coast to coast.

For more information and to see pictures of Jeff's journey, which ended Nov. 21, check out pablove.org and getwellpablo.blogspot.com.

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