Lisa Frank is ready to roll.

Since 2004, Frank has been co-director of Tour de Pink, a cycling event sponsored by the Young Survival Coalition (YSC), a nonprofit group dedicated to assisting young women diagnosed with breast cancer. She has seen the event grow from five participants on one route to several hundred riders taking part in a half-dozen different sites across the country.

Friday through Sunday (Sept. 23-25), Frank will be one of about 200 people riding from Morristown to Princeton to Bucks County, Pa., to Long Branch. The three-day ride is billed as going from the "Revolutionary War to the Jersey Shore."
“Revolutionary War to the Jersey Shore.”

“It has grown incredibly,” says Frank, a two-time survivor of breast cancer who now lives in Red Bank. “It started as a truly grassroots movement.”

Tour de Pink grew out of Frank’s involvement with YSC. After she was diagnosed with cancer in September 1998, she co-founded the group, which started with only about a dozen members.

“Here were these young women with breast cancer who got together to help each other,” Frank recalls.

She points out that women under 40 with breast cancer must deal with specific medical and social issues that are different from those faced by older women.

“YSC was there to help them.”

Through YSC, Frank befriended Randi Rosenberg, a fellow cancer survivor, and her husband Matt Purdue.

“Matt is a competitive biker,” Frank says. “I had been involved in cycling events for charity. We thought, wouldn’t it be fun to do a multi-day cycling event for YSC? He brought his expertise, and I brought my experience.”

The first Tour de Pink was held in fall 2004 with only six cyclists. Frank was involved in the logistics of finding lodging for the cyclists along the route from Boston to New York. Ironically, Frank herself wasn’t able to ride the route, because she had been diagnosed with a recurrence of cancer.