

New bikes and new friends at Bike Safety Camp

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Park District of Ottawa County Executive Director, Jannah Wilson, left, teaches Norah Blumensaadt how to clean her bike chain. (Photo by Sheri Trusty)

BY SHERI TRUSTY

Bike Safety Camp at Hopfinger Zimmerman Memorial Park on July 31 was about more than just learning how to ride on the road. The event also gave kids the opportunity to learn how to repair a bike, how to keep their bodies healthy, and how to recognize that local law enforcement truly cares about them.



Campers learn how to fix a bike at Bike Safety Camp. (Photo by Sheri Trusty)

Some of the campers went home with a new bike.

Bike Safety Camp was hosted by the Friends of Ottawa County Parks with the help of Hopfinger Zimmerman Memorial Park, the Ottawa County Health Department and the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office. Ottawa County Sheriff Stephen Levorchick and members of his staff taught the students about road safety and maneuverability.



Kids learned how to safely ride on the road during Bike Safety Camp. (Photo by Sheri Trusty)

"What a blessing to have the opportunity to teach kids bicycle safety," Levorchick said. "The second biggest thing is the personal contact with the kids to show our involvement within the community. In Ottawa County, we're blessed to have close connections with the community."

The sheriff's office has been instrumental in the success of Bike Safety Camp. Before grants became available in the second year of camp, Levorchick and Jack and Lorraine Zimmerman donated funds to purchase bikes for campers who didn't have one.



Aaron Leist, Captain of Operations with the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office, talks to a camper about bike safety. (Photo by Sheri Trusty)

"The camp has been a big blessing for the sheriff's office," Levorchick said. "From the very first day, we've been involved."

Park District of Ottawa County Executive Director, Jannah Wilson, is grateful for all the community support that made Bike Safety Camp a success.

"The Park District is thrilled to continue Bike Safety Camp into its third year with our partners, the Ottawa County Health Department and Ottawa County Sheriff's Office. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Jack and Lorraine Zimmerman for continuing to support the program through the use of their park and facilities. They've really built something special at Hopfinger Zimmerman Memorial Park," Wilson said.



Ottawa County Sheriff Chief Deputy, Brad York, explains the maneuverability course to a camper. (Photo by Sheri Trusty)

New this year to camp was the addition of the Boy Scouts of America archery trailer.

"This year, we had other new partners reach out to us, including Boy Scouts of America and Kona Ice. Both provided fun new elements to the program. Friends of Ottawa County Parks contributed in a big way by receiving a grant from the Ottawa County Community Foundation for the purchase of bikes for any student who needed one. To top things off, Bassett's Market donated boxed lunches for all our students and volunteers. It's been wonderful to see the community embrace the program and ensure Ottawa County students have the opportunity to attend Bike Safety Camp. We hope this is just the beginning because Bike Safety Camp is a great experience for our youth."



Detective Jonah Boyer shows a biker where to ride next during Bike Safety Camp. (Photo by Sheri Trusty)

Levorchick was grateful, but not surprised, by the community support.

"Ottawa County puts the community first," he said. "Service is supposed to be community before self, and in Ottawa County, that is done very well."

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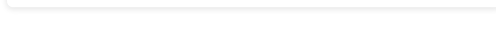
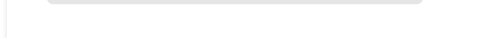
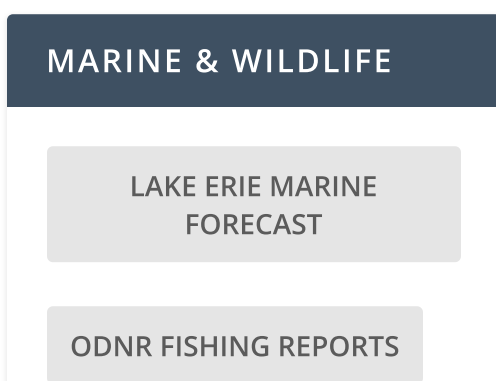
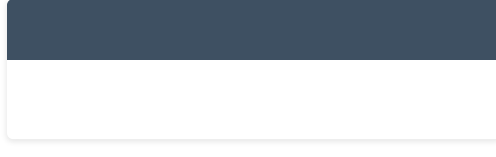
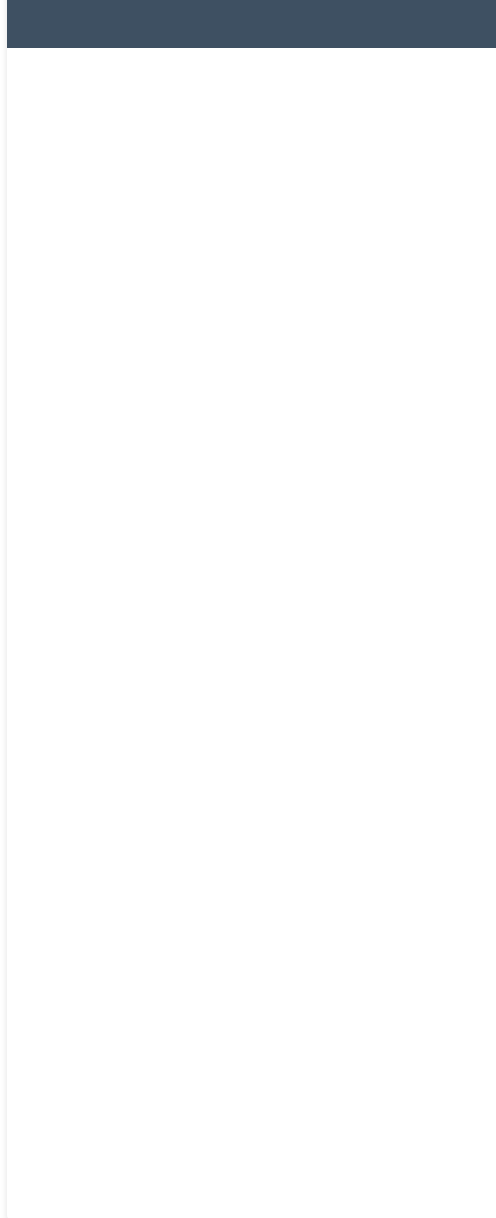
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