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LOCAL

Meet Your Neighbor: Ottawa County agencies offer youths bike safety course

13 of the participants received free bicycles

Sheri Trusty Correspondent
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PORT CLINTON - About 30 local children ages 7 to 12 learned how to safely ride a bicycle on the street, do basic bike maintenance, and stay healthy in the summer heat during Bike Safety Day at Hopfinger Zimmerman Memorial Park last week.

The event held Tuesday and Wednesday was hosted by the Park District of Ottawa County with the help of the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department, the Ottawa County Health Department and Friends of Ottawa County Parks.

"The kids rotate through three stations," Sara Hill, park district administrative specialist. "There are stations on safety and nutrition, hands-on bike repair and maneuverability."



Eight-year-old Miles Moyer of Oak Harbor adjusts his new bell for his new bike on Bike Safety Day. Sheri Trusty/Correspondent

Hand signals included in training

At the event, 7-year-old Ty Bloomer of Oak Harbor learned that hand signals are important.

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"If you're on the road and cars don't know where you're going, you can use hand signals so they know where you're going," Bloomer said.

Eight-year-old William Veliz of Marblehead said he learned that drinking eight glasses of water a day will help keep him hydrated, and his mother, Michelle Veliz, Ottawa County Health Department health educator, gave a watermelon analogy to the kids to reiterate the importance of wearing bike helmets.

"What would happen if you took a watermelon and threw it on the ground? It would smash. You don't want that to happen to your brain," she said. "Protect your melon."



Jannah Wilson, the executive director of the Park District of Ottawa County, teaches basic bike maintenance to participants of Bike Safety Day on June 14. Sheri Trusty/Correspondent

The lesson stuck with 10-year-old Brody Heinsen of Port Clinton who later said he learned bicyclists should always wear helmets "because if you fall, you might risk hurting your melon."

On the maneuverability course, Chief Deputy Brad York taught the kids how to use hand signals.

"You should use them so people know which way you're turning and if you're going to stop," said 7-year-old Caleb Ruth of Oak Harbor.

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Children taught safety tips

Ten-year-old Ben Trabbic of Sylvania Township had fun learning safety tips from York.

"I learned that you have to walk your bike across the street because you can lose control and fall over," Trabbic said.

Jack and Lorraine Zimmerman donated use of the park for Bike Safety Day, and Bassett's Market donated 80 boxed lunches for participants and their families.

"I want to give a humongous thank you to Lorraine and Jack and to Bassett's. What a wonderful thing for them to provide," Hill said.

Thirteen of the participants who didn't already own a bike received a free bike. Every participant received a free bike helmet and bike bell. The event was funded by a \$2,500 grant from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Foundation.

"The grant paid for the bikes, bells, helmets, other equipment and snacks for the nutrition station, as well as for new tire pumps that we needed," said Jannah Wilson, executive director of the park district. "It paid for pretty much everything, and the park district helped with additional funding for miscellaneous items."

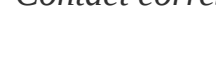


Eight-year-old William Veliz of Marblehead takes a ride on the maneuverability course during Bike Safety Day at Hopfinger Zimmerman Memorial Park. Sheri Trusty/Correspondent

Ten-year-old Hadley Moyer of Oak Harbor and four of her brothers received free bikes at Bike Safety Day.

"I like my bike. It's fun," Moyer said. "Riding my bike on the course — that was my favorite."

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