Heart NIAGARA

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RE: Heart Niagara's Cycling Safety Education (CSE) Project – Progress Report #3

Project Highlights

In 2017, Heart Niagara was awarded $73,943 over two years from the Government of Ontario to provide Cycling Safety Education (CSE) for children aged 9-11. Victoria La Fratta was hired as the project manager and has been working since June to build community collaboration with support from Niagara Region Public Health to enhance Active School Travel. CSE educates children about cycling safely within our community. The intended benefit is to increase cycling as a way to be physically active every day. A value added benefit is to increase active transportation as a solution to reducing the carbon footprint. The project is being delivered in schools throughout the Niagara Region and at community events.

Working Group Members

Heart Niagara formed a CSE working group to seek assistance from cycling experts with the implementation of the project. The working group is comprised of **16 representatives** from organizations such as Bike Niagara, CAA Niagara, CAN-BIKE Cycling Instructors, Niagara Regional Police, Niagara Region Public Health, Niagara Safety Village, Niagara Student Transportation Services, Lincoln Rotary Club, Centre de santé communautaire (Welland), Niagara Region Active Transportation Sub Committee, Thorold Active Transportation Advisory Committee, and the School Boards. To date, we have had 4 meetings.

CAN-BIKE Instructors & Training

- In April/May 2018, Heart Niagara hosted a third CAN-BIKE Instructor Training course. Six individuals completed the training, joining the 16 instructors from our 2016 & 2017 certification course. To date, we have a total of **23 experienced cycling instructors** on our team from various municipalities, who are able to teach safe cycling skills to children
- At each rodeo, we typically have a total of 4 instructors on-site
    - In the fall, we will be testing a new model with 3 instructors and several volunteers. Hopefully this will help to improve program sustainability
    - **ACTION:** *We plan to deliver a third bicycle repair workshop (in partnership with Bikes for Farmworkers) to ensure our new and existing instructors have the skills to perform minor bike repairs at the rodeos*

Bike Rodeos & Participant Numbers

- To date, the project has been delivered in **8 elementary** schools and at **5** community **events** in municipalities throughout Niagara. We have reached approximately **550 students**

- **ACTION:** *We would like to visit another 6 schools and host 2 community events by the fall. By 2019, our goal is to reach a total of 900 students*
  - In the Niagara Region there are a total of 104 elementary schools with approximately 8600 grade 5 and 6 students.

Resources & Equipment

- We have developed various resources such as the parent package, helmet/bike check reports, administration system, skills assessment scorecard, webpage, promotional materials, Niagara implementation guide, and course kits which we continue to adapt to meet local needs
- Using feedback from our instructors, working group members, schools, community groups, volunteers, mechanics, participants, and partners, we are working to perfect our overall program delivery model to increase sustainability
- We have sourced out bikes, helmets, lights and bells to ensure that no student is left without access to safe cycling equipment.
  - To date, we have provided over **350 bells**, approximately **150 helmets**, **50 lights**, and **30 bike locks** to students in need
  - We have also acquired a fleet of over **30 loaner bikes** which we bring with us to each bike rodeo for students to borrow if they do not have access to a bike or if their bicycle does not pass our volunteer mechanics safety inspection

Strategies: Recruit, Repurpose, Reward – "New to You" Bicycle Program

- While developing CSE in the schools, we discovered that many students did not have a bicycle and the requests for bikes have been overwhelming. In response to this need, we sourced out bicycles by leveraging our partnerships with Broken Spoke and Bikes for Farmworkers to purchase refurbished bikes from them at a reduced cost. We also developed a bike drop off program called "Repurpose, Recruit, Reward" to provide "New to You" bikes to students in need. We asked for the community's support, requesting new and used bikes, monetary donations, and repair tools to support cycling in Niagara. The public was invited to drop off bicycles at Heart Niagara. Our partners at Broken Spoken and Bikes for Farmworkers tuned up the bikes, making them road ready.
- To date, we have been able to provide over **40 "New to You" bikes** to students in need throughout Niagara. The "New to You" strategy has enabled us to increase access to safe bikes and we continue to work on a sustainability plan

Supporters & Partnerships

- To date, we have developed **25 partnerships** with various organizations such as Broken Spoke, Bikes for Farmworkers, Share the Road/Safe Cycling Thunderbay, Brooklyn and Trashcan, Lincoln Rotary Club, Niagara Region Police, Grimsby Fire Department, Brock University, LaFarge, Chippawa Lions Club, and CAA Niagara to sustain CSE
- CAA Niagara is sponsoring our bike rodeos and has taken on the role of transporting and storing our loaner bike fleet

  - In the fall, CAA will be transporting a fleet of 20 loaner bikes to each school we visit
- Our partners from the Broken Spoke Bicycle Repair Program and Bikes for Farmworkers-NOTL have provided refurbished bicycles for students who cannot afford them and they have assisted with bike repairs at the rodeos
- We have managed to recruit volunteer mechanics from Niagara Falls, Lincoln, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fonthill, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, and Oakville.
  - Typically we have 1-2 mechanics on-site at each bike rodeo. In the fall, we are going to test out a new program model, focusing on the use of an increased number of loaner bicycles and having any minor bicycle adjustments made by instructors and volunteers. Parents will be notified if their child's bicycle needs any significant repairs with a suggestion that they bring the bicycle to a repair shop.
- The Rotary Club of Lincoln has offered to sponsor up to four rodeos held in Lincoln. To date, we have hosted one rodeo in partnership with Rotary
- LaFarge has offered to deliver "touch a truck" enhanced learning events at schools to reinforce safe cycling messages to all students and they will provide students with bells

Funders/Sponsors

- Government of Ontario
- CAA Niagara
- Niagara Regional Police Association
- Rotary Club of Lincoln
- Barbara Stevens
- Chippawa Lions Club
  - **ACTION:** *We are seeking sponsorship and support from municipalities, local service clubs, and large corporations to help sustain CSE for the future*
  - **ACTION:** *Individuals are welcome to make a financial contribution to the program through Heart Niagara's website "Donate to the Cycling Safety Education Project". Every $20 donation allows two children to participate in a Bike Rodeo or sponsors a helmet for a child in need!*

Moving Forward: Opportunities to Strengthen CSE (Pending Future Funding)

- Heart Niagara Cycling Instructor Training Curriculum (to train future CSE instructors)
- Niagara Community Bicycle Hub (Broken Spoke Model)
- Family Bike Safety- Bicycle Maintenance & Repair Workshop within the Secondary Schools (follow-up mechanic training program)
- Heart Niagara Safe Cycling Videos (for schools and instructors)
- Cycle Forward – New to You Bike Program

Heart Niagara is grateful for the generous support from organizations and individuals for the Cycling Safety Education Project!

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