

Cycling: Learning to ride, off they go

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Some of our HUB Cycling committee members have helped out in the last year with two education courses at schools in our area.

One is a “Ride the Road” course for grades 6 and 7 students at Yennadon elementary in Maple.

The other is a “Learn2Ride” course for younger grades at Highland Park elementary in Pitt Meadows.

The kids at Yennadon got to ride on the road on the last day of the Ride the Road course.

It’s a lot of fun for the kids, and it can be gratifying for volunteers, as well.

Most kids already know how to ride a bike, but some of them have never had the opportunity to even learn the basics. It’s such a thrill to see them progress.

They lean on you heavily, afraid to fall, not yet understanding the mechanics of how, oh so slightly, shifting their weight from one side to the other, and subtle movements of the handlebar, all without even thinking about it, will help them balance, and will make the bike go in the direction they want it to go.

It doesn’t take long before they get it.

All of a sudden they experience the great feeling of accomplishment of mastering this wonderfully liberating skill of staying upright while balancing on two wheels.

For the first time they experience the joy and the freedom that a bicycle can give them, and off they go.

Not only does HUB teach the necessary and basic skills of navigating in traffic and the rules of the road, these courses also help plant a seed in these young minds. Hopefully the few days that HUB instructors spend with them will be the beginning of a more active lifestyle, and the bicycle will become their mode of transportation, for at least some of the trips they make on a daily basis.

It’s exciting that the City of Maple Ridge now has committed to provide cycling education to students in grade 6 and 7 at all 21 elementary schools over the next two years.

Three schools have already been selected for this fall.

HUB instructors will be at Alexander Robinson elementary, Sept. 27 -Oct. 3, at Maple Ridge elementary, Oct. 3-7, and at Blue Mountain elementary on sporadic days, starting Oct. 3.

More students than normal will likely ride their bikes to and from school during these periods, so please watch out for them. On Oct. 3rd, the 7th and the 20th, groups of students will be riding through the neighbourhoods around these schools. Please give them lots of space and be understanding and patient if they make a mistake.

They're learning.

Also this fall, HUB will run two bike maintenance workshops at the Maple Ridge library, Oct. 15 from 10 a.m. to noon and on Oct. 19 from noon to 2 p.m.

Participants will learn bicycle maintenance tips and tricks. These workshops will teach the fundamentals of how your bike works, and how you can keep it running smoothly through the fall, but won't teach you about bike repair.

Participants should bring their bikes for hands-on learning.

The registration information should be up on HUB's website soon at bikehub.ca/bike-education.

Happy, cycling.

– Jackie Chow is a member of the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows chapter of HUB: Your Cycling Connection.