

After-School Bike Clubs



- **Heights Bicycle Coalition / CH-UH PTAs**
- **Type:**
 - Health & fitness
 - Education & safety
 - Nature
 - Culture & history
- After-School Bike Clubs teach students Smart Cycling as they explore their community by bike
- **April 2012 - present**

County: Cuyahoga
Cuyahoga District 10



After School Bike Clubs are 6-week safe and smart biking instruction and recreation clubs for students; the clubs use multi-use trails and bike paths in addition to minor roads for the clubs' weekly community rides. These clubs have been hosted by Fairfax and Canterbury Elementary Schools in the Cleveland Heights – University Heights School District and sponsored by the Heights Bicycle Coalition. Heights Bicycle Coalition seeks to encourage cycling as a healthy, fun and sustainable form of transportation and recreation in the community.

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After-School Bike Clubs



- **Participants:** 3rd – 5th grade students; 8-10 per club per school
- **Skilled Cyclists lead;** PTA supports
- **Clubs meet:** 1/week for 6 week sessions, Fall and Spring, 3:15 - 4:30pm at school
- **Ride** on multi-use paths and minor roads near school

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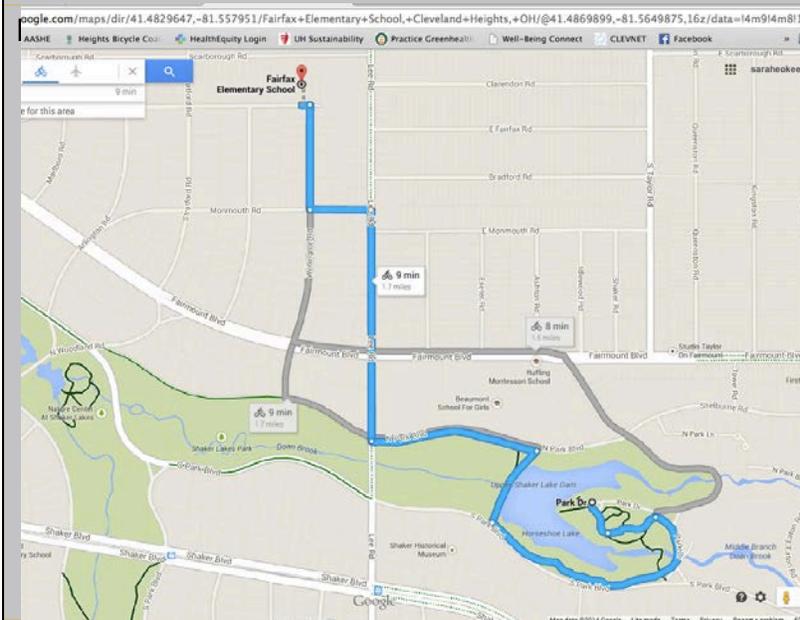



Participants – about 46 have participated in total, to date, at two different elementary schools Fairfax and Canterbury in CH-UH School District

Heights Bicycle Coalition volunteers who are skilled cyclists lead the club rides and instruct on bike safety and bike maintenance. PE Teachers promote the programs within their schools and join the club if they desire. PTA collects permission forms, fees and also promotes the program as a part of After School Enrichment. PTA/Parent volunteers assist HBC volunteers by offering familiarity and discipline, as needed to students.

More about Rides on the next -

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- **Benefits, Goals and Results:** Bike clubbers ride 2-3 miles each week and learn the Rules of the Road for cyclists – following the law, being predictable, being visible, riding safe
- **Easily replicated** using Smart Cycling (LAB) or biking club resources

Club participation is contingent upon students passing a basic cycling test (safe stopping, good maneuvering skills) the first session and having a bike and helmet.

Each subsequent session focuses on improving bike safety skills through biking on various multi-use paths and smaller streets while observing the Rules of the Road; rides get progressively longer each week.

Typical destinations for rides include community gardens, playgrounds, parks and a bike shop where mechanics give a demonstration on changing a flat tire, etc.

(MAP – a typical ride for the 4th or 5th session; the park has a playground and the ride uses bike paths as well as a bike lane and smaller roads.)

After-School Bike Clubs



HEIGHTS OBSERVER
News and Views from Cleveland Heights and University Heights

School bike clubs
by Heights Bicycle Coalition

The Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) sponsored after-school bike clubs this fall for third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students at Canterbury and Fairfax elementary schools. Club activities included weekly rides of three to five miles on side streets, with a snack at the half-way stop.

HBC volunteers Sarah O'Keefe, Jeff Sugerman—with bike dog Chipper—Mitch Pilon and PTA members help school PE teachers Julie Lustic and Alice Stratton run the clubs.

The goal of the clubs is to teach children bike safety and the rules of the road. The clubs also encourage students to get out and enjoy the fresh air.

An exciting highlight of the school cycling program was the Oct. 2 bike rodeo at Canterbury. The bicycle division of the Cleveland Heights Police Department demonstrated bike riding skills, including balance and proper braking, to the 33 students in attendance.

"We hope to continue to grow the after-school program for next year," said Sarah O'Keefe, lead HBC volunteer. The clubs served more than 40 students in the last two years.

Interested in having an after-school bike club at your school? Contact Sarah O'Keefe at saraneokeefe@gmail.com.

Heights Bicycle Coalition
The Heights Bicycle Coalition was formed in the spring of 2010 and works to encourage citizens to ride their bicycle for fun, fitness and transportation.

- Repeat participants and Biking leaders
- Local Press
- City of Cleveland Heights Earns Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community, Oct 2013

"When does bike club start again?!"





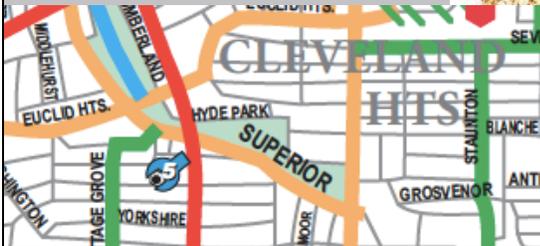

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Endorsements – Bike club participants have come back repeatedly with enthusiasm, and assist new participants in learning the ropes.

The HBC-sponsored After-School Bike Clubs were promoted in the local print and online paper, Heights Observer, prompting other schools to express interest in also having a bike club.

The bike club programs helped contribute to the Education aspect of Cleveland Heights' Bicycle Friendly Community application.

After-School Bike Clubs



- Lessons Learned:
 - Snacks for energy
 - 2nd grade too young
 - Recruit early
 - Photo permission
- Leveraged community resources:
 - Local Experts
 - Strong PTAs
 - Bike Map

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- Instructor/leader qualifications required – Skilled cyclists with stellar road cycling etiquette; if do not exist in community, search for LCIs through League of American Bicyclists
- Equipment needed – Common barriers to participation were not having a bike and/or helmet or money for club fees. PTAs raised money for equipment and/or collected used equipment and then fixed it up; unspent funds from Bike Club fees went toward Bike Club scholarships. Bike route mapping and research is needed preparation by Lead Cyclists – thinking from the perspective of an elementary school student also helps!
- The setting: urban / inner-ring suburb with many minor streets, multi-use paths and close destinations that motivate elementary school students to ride!
- Who was the Program Champion – Alice Stratton, PE Teacher at Fairfax Elementary, created and continues to support this program in addition to many others.
- Program Story: The goal of this program is to encourage students to bike safely and to explore their community by bike. There is an incredible amount of freedom and enjoyment to be had through riding a bicycle, as well as exercise. It is incredibly rewarding for volunteers, parents and teachers to see students excited to learn new and useful skills while participating in a healthy endeavor.

