

New York Mills and Henning Share Bike Fleet



Jeff Rimpila, New York Mills physical education teacher, leads a safety course for 5th grade students. The bikes are neatly organized on the walls of the enclosed trailer.



The students learned how to properly size a bike, the importance of wearing helmets and brightly colored clothing, hand signals, and all bike safety rules.

Physical Activity + Safety + Fun

How can we make physical activity and safety fun for students? New York Mills and Henning School Districts were excited to collaborate on efforts to secure a \$36,000 Minnesota Department of Transportation grant to purchase 40 mountain bikes and a 20-foot enclosed trailer to house the bikes. Additional contributions from Perham Health and assistance from PartnerSHIP 4 Health and Otter Tail County staff made this opportunity possible.

The bike fleet has a variety of sizes of bikes, and is shared between the two school districts. "This is a really great win for our school and our town. For physical education and bike safety to cross country team training, there are countless benefits," says Jeff Rimpila, New York Mills physical education teacher.

Helmets were provided by Perham Health to complete the package. "When we see a way we can help promote health and safety, we're happy to help," says Sue Von Ruden, Community Relations Coordinator for Perham Health.

To accommodate riders of all abilities, two of the bikes were specially modified to meet those needs. One can be adapted to fit a wheelchair, and one offers assistance from a second rider.

Training and Support

In addition to alerting school staff to the grant opportunity and assisting in writing the grant, PartnerSHIP 4 Health partners with BikeMN to provide Walk! Bike! Fun! curriculum focusing on operational instruction and safety training for students. For some students, this will be their only opportunity to learn how to ride a bike. Bike fleets provide an enjoyable opportunity to improve community health and increase bike ridership.

The fleet is also available to community groups for a small fee. The trailer can be taken off site for group rides, such as state trails or parks. If interested in borrowing the bike fleet, contact Jeff Rimpila at jrimpila@nymills.k12.mn.us or 218-385-4208.

For more information on grant opportunities or bike safety support, contact Karen Nitzkorski at knitzkorski@gmail.com or 701-371-9644.

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LOCATION: New York Mills / Henning, MN

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