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Acknowledgements

Recycle-A-Bicycle (RAB) was founded as the youth project of New York City's bicycle advocacy group, Transportation Alternatives, in 1994. Four years later, it incorporated as a non-profit organization with a mission to provide environmental education and job training to NYC youth. RAB works in partnership with neighborhood groups and public schools to offer workshops in bike repair and maintenance and safe cycling. The curriculum may also place the bicycle in a historical, social, geographical, environmental, and artistic context. Each year, over 500 young people benefit from RAB programs.

Contact: www.recycleabicycle.org

Bike New York (BNY) is a new non-profit organization formed in 2000 to organize the event of the same name, an annual springtime bike ride through the five boroughs of New York City. This 42-mile ride attracts 30,000 participants, making it the largest cycling event in America. Bike New York celebrated the 25th annual Tour in 2002. Beyond the Tour, Bike New York seeks to promote and encourage bicycling and bicycle safety through a number of programs, including its support of RAB.

Contact: www.bikenewyork.org

This publication is based on the collaborative efforts of Recycle-A-Bicycle and Bike New York. It draws on the many years of RAB's experience in leading bike trips for NYC youth. The planning and financing of this project was made possible by BNY. Many people provided invaluable input and feedback on the structure, content and editing of One Revolution at a Time. The authors would like to express their gratitude to the following Individuals and Organizations for helping to make this publication a reality! We would also like to give a special acknowledgement to The Children's Aid Society and Henry Street Settlement for providing resources, support, and encouragement throughout this endeavor.

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Since laying the foundation of Recycle-A-Bicycle in 1994, I have worked with hundreds of New York City youth and witnessed the power of a bicycle to transform a young person’s life. The bicycle may represent many things: the freedom to travel; the self-confidence and pride of riding more miles than ever imagined; the security of belonging and contributing to a group; the development of responsibility and skills that can lead to a job; the ability to solve social and mechanical problems, and; the opportunity to explore a city and expand horizons. For the majority of our participants, Recycle-A-Bicycle creates a safe space to learn and grow.

For many years, our organization has focused on providing environmental education and mechanical instruction in ten hour programs. RAB students may opt to attend open shop time to repair their own bikes, or work for credit towards earning a bike. Each bike earned is a tremendous accomplishment for a young person and we make great fanfare over each student who passes the bike safety inspection and takes his or her new bike home.

After some time, however, we came to realize that many kids did not ride their newly acquired bikes. There were many reasons: parental anxiety; fear of theft; uncertainty of where to go or how to get there, or lack of appropriate chaperones. Clearly, our students needed RAB to organize rides if the Earn-A-Bike program was to be of greater relevance in their lives.

There is another compelling reason to organize youth ride clubs. Dr. Ed Fishkin, an RAB advisory board member and Medical Director of Woodhull Hospital, suggests we focus on cycling from a health perspective because one in three Americans are obese. Inactivity means we are more likely to suffer from chronic illness, such as heart disease and diabetes, at a younger age. This has tremendous implications for the cost of health care and for the longevity of our population. It is the first time in our history that children are not expected to live longer than their parents! Clearly, ride clubs have a role to play in addressing this social issue.

As RAB began to look for resources on leading bike rides with young people, we found materials that focused on developing elementary bike safety skills, mostly in suburban settings. We needed information about handling specific situations of cycling with groups of people in urban areas. We also needed safety information that our students would respond to, with images that more accurately reflect the cultural diversity of our city. We gleaned some information from the American Youth Hostel guide to running bike tours and from the local Five Borough Bike Club’s ride leader training manual, but we were still left with lots of questions. So, with the support of Bike New York, Audrey and I embarked upon the project of assembling and organizing materials, and documenting RAB’s experience in a meaningful manner.

We hope this manual will foster physical activity — One Revolution at a Time — by creating many new clubs and allowing young people to experience the life-long benefits of cycling. Just as each revolution of the crank builds confidence and self-esteem, our efforts to expand ride clubs will similarly gain momentum in the community and lead to healthier lifestyles. I have always felt that the bicycle is a tool for both personal and social change. Let One Revolution at a Time take you on this transformative path.

Karen Overton
Executive Director
Recycle-A-Bicycle
Bike New York supports the active involvement of young people and cycling. BNY grew out of a long-time tradition of American Youth Hostels' hostelling/cycling adventure trips.

Since taking over the organization of the New York BIKE NEW YORK event, BNY has involved Recycle-A-Bicycle in providing mechanical support for the 30,000 riders in this annual event.

Proceeds from the Tour support both NYC Department of Transportation's Traffic Safety for NYC as well as RAB activities. The Traffic Safety Program works in the New York City schools to teach city youngsters about navigating the streets safely, whether on wheels or foot. Tour proceeds also support RAB activities at three sites in New York City. Each winter, BNY and RAB present an Introduction to Cycling as part of the New York City Sports and Arts Festival.

In 2001, Bike New York, in partnership with Henry Street Settlement and RAB, sponsored a two-day conference: Leading Youth Rides & Running Cycling Clubs. The contribution of many northeastern U.S. youth bicycle programs was crucial to making this manual. Local experts were invited to speak on topics such as first aid for cyclists, group riding techniques, map-making classes, and fund raising. Much of the information in this manual comes directly from these workshops and the "best practices" of those who have experience leading safe bicycle trips.

Bike New York looks forward to a long partnership with RAB to bring the joys of cycling to many more young people. We encourage adults to become involved in teaching cycling skills and safety by starting a Ride Club. Many are already involved with existing youth-serving organizations where a new activity is needed. A Ride Club could begin as part of a Scouting program, an After School Program, a police-community outreach group, or a health-based group teaching healthy life style skills. Bike New York and Recycle-A-Bicycle will work hard to establish technical assistance capacities to support your efforts, with this manual as a starting point.

Indeed, we are taking this on One Revolution at a Time.

Pam Tice
Executive Director
Bike New York
Club Leaders' Preparation and Responsibilities

Starting a bike ride club may seem like a monumental task, but with the proper division of labor, lots of support, and even more flexibility, it is well within the reach of any capable youth organizer.

All clubs will have their own specific challenges and strengths. Some bike ride clubs will develop as stand-alone projects, while others will grow as extensions of an existing youth program. A club can serve a dedicated group of children or an entire community. You may choose to focus your club activities on physical fitness, team building, self-esteem, or countless other life-skills issues.

One of the most important lessons we've learned through our experiences at Recycle-A-Bicycle is that a competent, communicative, enthusiastic staff is critical to the success of any project. That is why we begin this manual with some words of advice on choosing your ride leaders, whether they are volunteers or paid employees. Ultimately, your staff is your greatest asset.

Ride Leader Recruitment and Training
Every ride involving four or more kids should be chaperoned by at least two adults. Those two adults act as the Ride Leader — heading the line and keeping the pace — and the Sweep — staying in the last position, making sure no child falls behind. Ideally, there should be additional adults in the middle of the line, Chaperones, to give more individual attention to the children. Youth groups, with experience leading rides, agree that for larger groups, the ideal staffing is at least a 1:4 adult/student ratio. However, few groups are in the position to pay this many staff. It is imperative that two qualified adults go on the ride, while volunteers are available to assist with larger groups.

So how does one go about finding and assessing qualified ride leaders? As we will stress throughout this manual, riding in groups (especially with groups of kids) is much different than riding alone. Simply because someone has logged in tens of thousands of miles on a bicycle doesn't necessarily mean that they will be a good leader.

You are looking for someone who will be able to make good, safe decisions based on their own wealth of experiences on the road.

You are looking for someone with experience riding with and leading larger groups of people on the streets of your community; someone who will be able to make good, safe decisions about where and how to ride based on their own wealth of experiences on the road.
are only a few hundred graduates in the entire country. American Youth Hostels also conducts a small leadership training program for their own cross-country and foreign cycling tours, but again, they have not trained large numbers of individuals.

A more likely source of experienced leaders is in local cycling clubs, many of whom train their own ride leaders. Personal contacts and local bike shops can also be an effective way of locating cyclists with relevant experience. School teachers make good candidates for summer and after-school programs because of their schedules and youth experience. It is possible to train cyclists who have never led groups before, but it is unwise to hire them as head ride leaders. It will take several rides for a new leader to get the rest-stop rhythm down, much less deal with more serious concerns like maintaining order and discipline, or what to do in case of an emergency.

Once you identify candidates, you must assess their ride leadership skills so that you can address any of his or her deficiencies in your own training program. Ride leaders must demonstrate the following: master cycling skills; specific knowledge of the geographic area in which you will be cycling. If they are not already familiar with this area, ask them how they will acquaint themselves with the routes before the club starts. Find out if they are first-aid certified. Give them some specific scenarios involving an emergency situation or a disobedient rider and ask them to explain how they would handle it. Have them fix a flat or change a tube. Ask them about their experience dealing with children. Someone who works well with young people is a much stronger candidate than someone with lots of mechanical skills and little youth experience.

If you are working with a partner organization you will need to discuss the logistics of hiring employees. Will the employees and volunteers be covered by the partner’s insurance or your own? Will they need to fill out paperwork for the partner organization in addition to your own contract/agreement? Does the partner organization need to be part of the selection process?

Once you have chosen your staff, have a formal training. It could be an hour meeting or a 20-hour program, depending on your needs, their skill level and their familiarity with the program. It is good to take a ride with the leaders and discuss some on-the-road scenarios. Give them a copy of your rules and procedures in writing and have them sign an agreement when they have read them. One of the adults should be certified in first aid, so consult your local hospital or Red Cross office to find out how your leaders can take a first-aid course.

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At the JP Morgan/Chase Sports and Arts in Schools Festival, we recruit adult volunteers to oversee the racing tournament.
Volunteer Recruitment and Training

Volunteer recruitment philosophies fall into one of two categories. There are those who screen and "hire" volunteers as they would employees—assessing their credentials, asking for firm time commitments and building programs based on their participation. And there are those who view volunteers as a collective resource, cultivating larger pools of potential volunteers who may occasionally help out with a ride or small task but who are not individually held accountable for the daily operation of the program.

To get a handful of employee-style volunteers, you must spend a significant amount of time recruiting and training. Your job will be some-

Even volunteers are considered part of your organization—you may be liable for their actions on the road.

what easier if you already have a group of trusted, committed individuals who are familiar with your organization. But even the most well-intentioned people rarely have the time or ability to commit to a set volunteer schedule beyond a few hours a week, and each bike ride can take 4-12 hours of ride and prep time for the leaders. If you opt for this method, start putting together your core volunteer group at least six months in advance. This will give you time to train them effectively and allow for adjustments in personnel as necessary. Expect that some of your initial core group will not be able to follow through with the entire commitment, so recruit a higher number of people than needed. This sort of intensive volunteer component can pay off in the long run by increasing the student/adult ratio and enriching the experience of each child while maintaining a smaller personnel budget. Unfortunately, many clubs are unable to find enough of these "super-volunteers".

An alternative is to hire ride leaders and then develop a program in which people can volunteer a discrete amount of time to work with the club, but who are not in charge of running the daily operations or solely responsible for the pre-ride preparations. With this less rigorous system, volunteers are simply chaperones and do not carry the weight of leading the ride. For example, you may take rides every Wednesday and Saturday for eight weeks during the summer. If you hire two ride leaders and set your ride capacity at ten kids, you would need one or two additional volunteers per ride to act as chaperones. Once you have recruited and trained your large pool of volunteers, you can set up a calendar—where—they can choose the days they ride with the club. Active volunteers may ride ten times that summer and others may simply assist with one or two. When using this method you must sign up at least one extra volunteer per ride (in this case, three people) to ensure that every ride is properly staffed in case of no-shows or last minute cancellations. Also, it is imperative that the volunteers are called

Here is our pioneering group that gathered to discuss how to lead youth ride clubs at the Bike New York and RAB sponsored conference. This event and their input led to the publication of One Revolution at aTime.
Takeya Johnson and Kristina Rodriguez from the Henry Street Settlement Youth Employment Program teach kids how to create flowers from spokes, inner tubes, and tissue paper.

two nights before to confirm their participation, especially if the ride schedule was generated at the beginning of the cycling season.

Use the same resources to recruit volunteers as you did to recruit ride leaders. If you are simply looking for chaperones, you can lower your criteria to experienced, responsible cyclists who would work well with children. Ask friends and colleagues or post notices with your local cycling clubs. For a more shotgun approach, post fliers at the local college or university. Contact organizations like Big Brothers/Big Sisters or put in a notice at an organization that coordinates city-wide volunteer bases.

The day and time that you schedule your rides plays a big factor in the number of volunteers you can recruit. Obviously, you are more likely to get people to devote a Saturday or Sunday than a Tuesday morning. When you advertise for volunteers, make sure to include the days and time commitments you are looking for in order to avoid a lot of unnecessary inquiries.

If you are partnering with another organization, they may have additional requirements for volunteers. It could be as simple as filling out a release waiver or as involved as going through a criminal background check with fingerprints. Whatever the case, be aware that even if someone is just volunteering, they are still considered part of your organization and you may be liable for their actions on the road. You need to recruit volunteers that you trust.

After you have compiled a list of potential volunteers, set aside a day or time to speak with everyone, either individually or as a group. Let everyone know exactly what you expect of them — how many kids will be on the ride, their role in how they discipline the children, will they be assigned to work with a sub-group of kids, what are the safe riding skills that all adult leaders must model, what are the emergency response procedures, etc. You may have some written information available for them, but do not expect your volunteers to pore over it on their off hours. Be simple and straightforward in your orientation, but do not assume that they will already know how to be the volunteer you need.

Finally, after all of the requirements have been met, paperwork filed, orientations completed, and your volunteers start showing up and making your job possible, do not forget to thank them for all of their hard work. And then thank them again. Whenever possible, buy your volunteers lunch. Throw an end-of-the-season volunteer party or have the kids make all of the volunteers thank you cards. For extra special volunteers, we make a bouquet of our Recycle-A-Bicycle flowers out of spokes and tissue paper [see Spoke Flower Instructions, page 48]. Volunteers are one of your greatest resources, so make sure that they know they are appreciated.

Youth Recruitment
Recruitment can be approached in two ways. You may establish a club independent of other groups or you may approach an existing organization that already offers activities for youth.

Recycle-A-Bicycle's approach is to adopt the partnering method in order to offer a more holistic program to our youth. Recycle-A-Bicycle provides the equipment and expertise to run a youth cycling club, and our partner organizations have the resources to provide a variety of support services such as employment, counseling, tutoring, health care, and meals. If a child approaches Recycle-A-Bicycle and asks to join the program, we first sign them up with our partner organization. Or conversely, someone in our partner organization may refer a child to our pro-
gram. The trade off of the partnership model is that we must often follow guidelines that do not integrate well with our own programmatic goals. For example, we may have to maintain an awkward program schedule or work with a rotating group of students. But for all of its challenges, we feel like this is the best arrangement for our organization at this time.

At each of our sites, RAB and its partner organization approaches recruitment differently. In Washington Heights, the program is based in a community school and students are drawn from both the Intermediate School 218 during the day and from the Children’s Aid Society’s after-school and weekend program. In the Lower East Side, students participate in a job training program and may see a flyer put out by Henry Street Settlement or the NYC Department of Employment. Many hear

Students may be less likely to misbehave when they know channels of communication to their parents are open.

about the program from their friends. In North Brooklyn, students for the summer program are recruited by word of mouth, newspaper announcements, letters to past participants, and recommendations from supportive school teachers and counselors.

Following the independent model, groups recruit youth in many of the same ways: word of mouth, flyers, community newspaper announcements, and letters to youth organizations and schools. The benefit of being independent is that you are in the position to better define and hold to the criteria set for selection and/or membership.

When recruiting youth, have your criteria clearly defined and followed. For example, one RAB site requires that students already know how to cycle and must have access to a bicycle for the summer. A different project site is tied to criteria set by the government that does not allow for such bike-specific screening. These criteria may well affect how your club is structured. In these two cases, one project must maintain a fleet of bikes for its participants, while the other does not. It is important to specify what level of riding skills a child must have in order to ride with the club.

Now, a note about gender sensitivity in recruitment: all of the youth bike projects that we’ve spoken with have had some difficulty recruiting and retaining girls in their programs. Bikes Not Bombs in Roxbury, MA has even gone so far as to initiate a gender sensitivity class into their training program. This disparity in gender participation brings up some interesting points that you should consider when recruiting students.

The gender dynamics of your group of kids may be strongly related to their age. At the sixth grade level, we have almost equal participation and enthusiasm by boys and girls in the Recycle-A-Bicycle programs. But by eighth grade, participation of girls drops significantly. Once the gender balance shifts, it becomes increasingly difficult to recruit new girls, and the atmosphere of the organization can quickly resemble a boys’ club house.

One summer, we led weekly rides from our Washington Heights project in Upper Manhattan. For all eight rides, not a single girl showed up, or even stopped by to ask about it. When we offered a “girls only” trip that fall, 30 girls came in to pick up applications and 13 ended up participating in the ride. Undoubtedly, there were many factors involved. However, making it a “girls only” ride made a big difference. Consider how your recruitment methods affect the number of girls who participate. You may want to
make an extra effort to reach more girls, anticipating that there is a lower recruitment rate for this population.

**Parental Communication**

It is absolutely critical that parents are informed about all club activities. Open the channels of communication from day one and never assume that information is brought home. We have learned this lesson the hard way. Two young ladies once lied to their parents about their whereabouts, claiming to be at the bike shop. Upon discovery, their mothers banned them from all after-school activities for the year. This could have been prevented if we had mailed the parents program information or called them at the start of the project, instead of relying on the students to bring the information home themselves.

**Parent/Student Orientation**

Before the club starts taking rides, you may want to hold an open house for parents and students. It is an excellent opportunity to assuage fears and create an excitement about the program. Students may be less likely to misbehave if they know channels of communication with their parents are open. Furthermore, it is a good way to recruit volunteers! This orientation can be during the recruitment phase of your operation or after you have selected a group of riders.

In Recycle-A-Bicycle's case, parents may not speak English, and we make a huge effort to communicate in Spanish. This can be extremely intimidating at first, but you may be surprised at how much your efforts are appreciated. If no one in your organization is fluent in the parents' language, actively recruit volunteer translators. Colleges, community organizations, churches, other parents, and older students can be good resources. Whenever possible, written communication should also be provided in the parents' language.

**Permission Slips/Orientation Packet**

If an organized general meeting is not possible, an orientation packet should be mailed to students' homes. [See Appendix, pages 39-41] Include an orientation letter, permission slip, health history form, physician's medical clearance form, and a schedule/description of the rides.

An orientation letter should include the following:

- A description of the club
- Requirements for riding with the club (see Students' Responsibilities and Requirements section of this manual)
- What to bring on every ride (see Students' Responsibilities and Requirements)
- Days and times of rides
- Ride leader names
- Contact information (general number for pre-ride questions and emergency contact number for ride days, such as a cell phone)
- A call for volunteers

Employing peer pressure to wear helmets can be an effective strategy. This is Brailly Melo's safety message. Children's Aid Society/IS, 218, 2002.
Every child must have a signed permission slip/release waiver on file. You can make one permission slip for the whole season, or individual permission slips for every ride, depending on the requirements of your insurance and the policies of your partner organization. Every permission slip should include who, what, when, where, and (if applicable) why.

**Permission slips should include the following information:**

- The club name and partner organization's name
- Time of departure and return (give a window for return time)
- A description of the route or destination (specify if you will ride on city streets or bike paths or both)
- Every mode of transportation that the child will take (train + bike, school bus + bike, bike only, etc.)
- Medical release statement

A tear-off section for the parents to provide the following information:

- Name of child
- Name and phone of at least two emergency contacts for the day of the ride
- Allergies and health concerns (specify asthma and insect allergies)
- Who is authorized to pick up the child, or authorization to be released from the ride without an adult chaperone
- Name of parent/guardian
- Signature and date

It is very difficult to tell the most adorable kid in the world, with those big imploring eyes, that he or she can’t go on the cycling trip because of a permission slip. However, be firm. That adorable kid just can’t go. Once you make an exception, you’ve not only made yourself liable, but you’ve opened the door to a flood of other rule infractions. That adorable kid may initially hate you, but will most likely end up respecting you for holding up the rules.

**Insurance**

Liability should not be used as an excuse to prevent the start-up of a youth cycling club. Nevertheless, liability is a serious matter. You absolutely must have liability coverage for club activities. It is a sad, but true, fact that some parents will threaten to sue your organization if their child gets in an accident. This happens, despite the best of safety efforts. There are three golden rules to follow: get coverage, train staff in safety procedures and hold them accountable, and document everything.

Your biggest obstacle may be simply finding an insurance company that will cover your group. If you work in partnership with an organization, their policy may already insure this activity. Be positively sure that this is the case before embarking on your cycling activities. Perhaps additional coverage may be added to the partner organization’s policy for a fee much smaller than the cost of obtaining a new one. If these two options prove fruitless, immediately begin the search for a new policy. Many companies give high quotes because they consider cycling a high risk activity. RAB invested a lot of time shopping for the most affordable policy. Through word of mouth, we found Global Coverage Inc. to be the most sympathetic to

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Voni Tolentino illustrates that kids being safe and having fun are compatible. Children’s Aid Society/L.S. 218, 2002.
our youth program. On top of our general liability coverage ($1,700 per year), they ask for $50 per RAB site that runs a ride club (covering up to 50 kids/club). American Specialty Inc. is an alternative that provides insurance to many cycling organizations around the country. They offer coverage for both special events and cycling clubs.

The importance of thorough training cannot be stressed enough. Your staff are responsible for the welfare of all participants. Staff must be: qualified ride leaders and sweeps; know and follow the rules; make no exceptions to the rules, and; be held accountable for their actions. Something as simple as not stocking or forgetting to bring the first-aid kit could have serious consequences if an accident happens and there is nothing to treat the injury with. Lenience in enforcing the "helmet must be worn at all times" rule could prove fatal in the event of an accident. Most rides are safe and fun. Unfortunately, it only takes one bad event to tempt administrators and parents into canceling all future rides.

Documentation is critical. A good lawyer will do the homework necessary to discover if a case can be made against your organization. Proper documentation will discourage a lawsuit. The Ride Club Leader should keep records of the bike safety curriculum and participant attendance, copies of any communication with the parent/guardian — especially the waiver of consent and medical forms — and, a police report if there is an accident. The American Youth Hostel cycling program requires that, for every accident, all witnesses be asked to fill out an incident report. Documentation ensures greater cooperation from the insurance company. But more importantly, documentation will convince administrators and parents that the rides are safe and should continue.

Fundraising

This is a critical, but not necessarily daunting, task. First, you must develop a budget. This outlines what you plan on spending and where your money comes from. The budget should be developed by the club's governing structure, whether it be the organization's board of directors, staff, or youth officers. [See Sample Bud-

get, page 42.] Here are a few words of advice to follow when putting a budget together.

Think big: It is better to have a well thought-out plan that can be trimmed back if the funds don't come in.

Do your research: Find out what things really cost so that supporters know that the budget is reasonable.

Build in overhead: Don't cut yourself short on things like the phone bill or stamps.

Calculate in-kind services: There is value behind all the volunteer time and materials donated to your cause.

Once your budget is in place, adopt a strategy on how to raise the money. It is important to have a plan that identifies who is the best person to approach the donor or run a special event, the time frame in which this should be done, and when the money may be expected to come in. Cycling is considered seasonal by most, and the flow of cash is important to meeting the needs of a program.

Below is a list of funding sources that RAB has successfully tapped. A brief description about each is provided. This is not a recipe to follow. Each group has different contacts, and each community has a unique combination of resources available. Use this list to get ideas on where to start, and pursue the ones most likely to generate a return on your effort.

1. Foundations and Corporate Giving: Many large companies and wealthy families set up charitable organizations to distribute money into their community or areas of interest they wish to
support. Your organization must be **incorporated** and have a **501(c)(3)** status to qualify for assistance, or you must identify a fiscal conduit to receive money on your behalf. Research must be done to determine who these foundations are, in which geographic locations they work, what areas of giving they fund, and when and how to make a proposal. The Foundation Center has an excellent on-line data base and information on grant writing (www.fdncenter.org). RAB recruits volunteers to help with this leg work, and then staff write and submit proposals. It is important to note that this kind of support requires the cultivation of a relationship with your funder (i.e. we send them regular reports, invitations to events, get their advice on relevant issues, etc.). We also thank them publicly by listing them on our publications. This type of support often takes months or even years to obtain.

2. **Government:** The government is another source of money for your activities. There are various levels: federal, state, and local. RAB has had the most success with local government. Meet with your elected officials. They may have a small fund to distribute among constituents, but more importantly they can steer you to the right agency for funding.

You may get some ideas about where to start from the RAB list of recent government support:
- Department of Health - Chronic Disease Prevention, Healthy Heart Committee;
- Department of Transportation - NYS Traffic Safety Division;
- Department of Youth & Community Development - Job Training
- Board of Education - Experiential Learning.
- Other likely agencies might be the police department and parks department.

If successful, be prepared to do paperwork. The government requires lots of documentation on relevant fiscal and program activity. They may also require that you work first, and then submit invoices to be reimbursed. Make sure you understand the terms of contract and can cover your cash flow, if this latter scenario is the case. Once your organization's activity is established in an agency's budget, you may have the benefit of a steady stream of income.

3. **Cycling Community:** RAB has had great success working with the NYC cycling groups. Most clubs require membership fees, and they are happy to make small donations towards a youth program that gets kids on bikes. More importantly, they are a great source of information on where to cycle and what type of community service projects are relevant to cycling. Their members are also a large potential pool of volunteers. Over the years, RAB has collaborated with these groups in many ways: the NY Cycle Club has a ride leader training program which requires that participants lead one trip for RAB; the Five Borough Bike Club has an annual donation drive at their holiday party, and they provide us with fundraising opportunities, and; Transportation Alternatives and Bike New York place student interns in their office and fund joint projects.

4. **Local Business and Community Organizations:** Do not expect bike retailers to make large cash donations or hand over brand new bikes. The profit margin on bicycle sales are low, and owners may not be in a good position to help in this manner. However, they may be happy to assist in other ways. For example, people often abandon bikes at their store, and they may give them to you. They might also organize a helmet drive on your behalf, do safety checks on bikes, or lead a ride.
There are many good businesses and organizations looking for worthy causes to support. RAB has gone to the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce to get both cash and in-kind support for its activities. RAB has also partnered with community organizations, forming partnerships that make partners responsible for things like space, recruitment of kids, and cost of instruction while RAB provides the material and technical know-how needed to run a program. We work primarily with public schools and established youth organizations.

5. Special Events: Another way to make money for your program is to organize a special event. Many groups organize large bike rides, asking participants to pay a fee. There are a lot of organized rides in NYC, so RAB does not sponsor one. Rather, we work in partnership with some of the groups that do. For example, at the Montauk Century — a 100 mile ride from NYC to the east end of Long Island — many riders ship their bikes back to the city. RAB kids break down the bikes, wrap them with protective material, and load them onto the trucks returning to the city. Anyone requesting this service pays an extra fee that goes directly to Recycle-A-Bicycle. We also hold a bike auction as part of the NYC Bike Show, a consumer exhibit of the latest bikes and related technology. Finally, in recent years, we have been contracted by Bike New York and the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation to organize an indoor bike rodeo during school winter vacation. The event teaches bike safety and introduces kids to cycling culture and the sport of cycling via a stationary bike racing tournament.

6. Sales: Get the kids involved in fundraising by having them make and sell items. In Washington Heights, kids have designed a logo, which they print on t-shirts and sell. In the Lower East Side, kids have made candlestick holders by gluing hubs to freewheels and selling them during the holiday season. Raffles are another easy way to raise money. Of course, RAB also sells bikes. At first, we just organized a couple of sales each year. Then we opened our doors to customers. Now we have a retail shop. To sell bikes, you must have product liability insurance coverage. It may cost more than you make if you only sell bikes a few days per year. So evaluate bike sales carefully before making a decision to proceed.

7. Individuals: Keep a list of everyone involved with your program: kids, volunteers, donors, government officials, and any other person expressing interest in your activities. Publish a regular newsletter, or write a letter at the end of the year — when people are making their tax-deductible contributions — and send it to everyone on the list. Have the kids write articles or make drawings and incorporate this into whatever it is you are mailing. Alternatively, have board members, parents or other sympathetic people reach out to those who may be in a position to make a cash contribution. Be sure to send thank you letters to anyone making a contribution.

The most important thing to remember about fundraising is that you are building relationships within your community. To do this best, document your activities. Written materials, like annual reports and brochures, should be distributed to help convince people of the value your activities bring to the community. Fill these materials with pictures. The old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words", holds true. Give everyone credit for their contributions, whether it is volunteer time or a donation. Make everyone involved feel happy to have contributed.
Preparation to Ride

A Youth Training
Establishing Rules and Consequences

Rules establish boundaries and set the tone for future behavior of the club. Too many rules may blend together like snowflakes in a storm while overly general rules may lead to rather creative interpretations. It is imperative that rules and consequences are defined early in the group formation.

Rules should be specific, but not too wordy—something that every child can memorize by heart. There will be a lot of things for the children to remember on the road, so keep it simple. [See page 42, for examples.]

The leaders should discuss which behaviors and actions are most critical to keeping the ride safe and orderly. This list does not need to include every single rule of the road. Instead, it can generalize them by stating that no one is allowed to pass the leader and students must always follow his or her directions. Since riding is a skill that is learned through practice, there is great benefit in having these overarching rules that allow the ride leaders to give individual safety instruction at an appropriate pace without compromising the well-being of the students.

If the leaders would like to encourage certain behaviors that contribute to the general success of the group dynamics, but do not necessarily effect the immediate safety of the students, they can draw up a separate set of guidelines in addition to the rules.

Students may be asked to make up their own rules for the club. This creates a sense of ownership in the club and the leader may gain respect for his or her willingness to listen to students. However, this method takes longer and the children may not think of all the potential scenarios that require special rules. It is important that the leader facilitates by filling in the gaps to include omitted rules agreed upon by the club leaders.

If the rules are preordained by the leaders, they should be read together and students should be called upon to explain what each one means.

Whether the rules come from the students or the instructors, every child should receive a written copy and all participants must sign off on them, communicating that they understand what is expected of them.

After the rules are agreed upon, open the discussion to the consequences of breaking these rules. Students are often much harsher when...
coming up with potential consequences than the instructors.

From this moment on, the leader must adhere to the rules and be fair in dishing out any punishments. You will be put to the test on the first ride out and your performance will largely determine the behavior on future rides. A good system creates a flexible manner in which to deal with punishments. Steps are taken according to the number and gravity of the infractions. Here is one possible strategy for behavior management on the road:

- Individual warning and reiteration of the rule
- Warning and group involvement
- Punishment and notify parent
- Suspension and conference with parent
- Expulsion

Let's apply it to the rule, "Ride in single file". If Jose passes someone, he gets a warning. If he does it again, the whole group is asked to stop, and Jose is warned in front of the group. If Jose does this for the third time, he is not allowed to go on the next ride and his parents are contacted. On the next ride that Jose is allowed to go on, he takes his helmet off and hangs it from the handlebars. Again, he is warned. Next, Jose passes someone. At this point, you may decide that Jose can no longer participate until a parent meets with you and Jose to discuss his behavior. If on the third ride, Jose does not follow the rules, as a last resort he is banned from future rides.

Riding in a group creates a powerful team dynamic. Everyone on the ride is there to reach the same goal, and no one can do that by himself/herself. If one person is misbehaving, it directly affects the experience of the other riders, and can in extreme cases, be the cause for aborting a trip. If you allow other students to participate in the discussion of why it's important to follow certain rules of conduct, it can generate serious peer pressure to keep the less responsive child in line. The difficult part is to determine which children will respond positively to peer pressure, and those for whom it is completely inappropriate.

Above all you must be flexible. Each child is unique and you must walk a fine line between applying the consequences equally to everyone and responding to the individual needs and personalities of your students. Discipline can include private conversations and secret incentives as long as the other children don’t construe this as favoritism.

With some kids, serious infractions are best addressed with less threatening and confrontational techniques. If the child acts out purely for attention, peer pressure and threats may be ineffective and even harmful. Perhaps pairing that child up with an adult who will engage him in a running dialogue about riding techniques could be the most effective and healthy way to redirect his energy. The appendix of this manual has a section on Group Management Techniques, borrowed from the staff development materials at IS 218 [pages 46-47]. It was written for a classroom setting, but it contains excellent advice applicable on the road.

Most likely, all of the kids on the ride are there because they want to be there, and this is your most powerful tool. You can tell them in all honesty that if they seriously misbehave, especially if they are being unsafe, that their riding privileges will be revoked. But remember, this is your last resort. Empty threats will only backfire.

**Bikes not Bombs takes students to a highway overpass at rush hour to watch road rage first hand.**

**Bike Safety Education**

Your students may already know how to ride bikes, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they know how to bike safely. Bike safety can be broken into three main categories: safe bikes, safety equipment, and safe riding skills. Since it is a prerequisite that the child have access to the first two for the club, you can concentrate the bulk of your safety education on the latter.

Every child should know the rules of the road for cyclists. Specific laws vary from state to state, but generally bicyclists follow all of the same laws as motorized vehicles. Call the Department of Transportation or Department of Motor Vehicles to request a copy of the cycling laws, or ask local bike shops if they have any literature on bicycling laws for your city. Pull out all of the pertinent information and present it to the club in age-appropriate language.

Now that you’ve gone over the laws and club riding rules, you can start to introduce practical, on the street skills. The bottom line is that you want to teach kids how to be safe. That means that they have to 1) pay attention to their surroundings, 2) make good snap decisions, and 3) understand that there is a real physical consequence to crashing.

Simple hands-on activities can sometimes be extremely effective teaching tools. At Bikes Not Bombs, they sometimes take the younger students to a busy road armed with a bunch of grapes. Each young person is instructed to take a handful of grapes and roll them one at a time across the road without checking to see if cars...
Here are a few excellent resources for bicycle safety education:

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign
111 Michigan Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20010-2970
(202) 884-4993
(301) 650-8038 (fax)
The National SAFE KIDS Campaign publishes many age-appropriate materials on injury prevention.

Bicycle Transportation Alliance
PO Box 9072
Portland, Oregon 97207-9072
(503) 226-0676
Contact: Scott Bricker
This Oregon state program has developed a comprehensive bicycle safety education curriculum with an extensive and extremely useful resources list.

Bikes Not Bombs
59 Armory Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
www.bikesnotbombs.org
mail@bikesnotbombs.org
(617) 442-0004
BNB sells their Girls in Action Safety Video for $30 + $3 shipping/handling.

Publications Department
Outdoor Empire Publishing, Inc.
511 Eastlake Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98109
(206) 624-3845
This company publishes Bikecentennial’s Guide to Bicycle Rodeos, a comprehensive must-have manual for setting up bike rodeos.

Bike L.A./Safety Training
5607 Capestrano Ave.
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
(818) 346-4621 (fax)
bikela@lausd.k12.ca.us
This is an introductory training program for youth ages 10-18 and treats bikes as a means of transportation and offers a classroom guide, bike rodeo instruction, safety video, and how to promote the project.

are coming first. They are then asked to describe the results of crossing the intersection without looking. Older students are taken to visit a freeway overpass at rush hour traffic to observe road rage first hand. Aggressive drivers become unwitting bike safety advocates as the young people take a critical look at the irrational behavior of grown-ups stuck in slow moving boxes. Both exercises teach the need to assume responsibility for your own safety instead of relying on the kindness of strangers.

We take for granted that much of our intuitive cycling knowledge comes from driving. Remember, kids have never been behind the wheel before, so they probably do not understand things like blind spots, why a driver would make a right turn onto a street while checking the oncoming traffic to their left, or why someone would open their car door without looking behind them first. Teaching children to anticipate seemingly erratic behavior by drivers is a little more challenging than simply reading the rules of the road. One RAB instructor, Bronwen Mauch, came up with this analogy:

"Have you ever had a friend who swore to you that they were going to do one thing, but then it turns out that they actually do something completely different? Well, that's what cars do all the time."

Teach them to look for clues that might indicate when a driver is not paying attention or identify times where they might be more at risk for getting hit. For example, if the child approaches a parked car with a person in the driver's seat, he should know that it's time to check the traffic behind him and prepare to move over in case the driver fires the door open.

Bikes Not Bombs goes so far as to give one-on-one instruction in assessing and understanding high-volume street intersection dynamics. Students observe and critique traffic and pedestrian conditions, then apply this knowledge by negotiating the intersection on bike with the adult. If they choose, they are also given the opportunity to ride through the intersection again by themselves.

Here are some general rules for improving awareness of your surroundings:

* Be extremely cautious at intersections and driveways. Look for drivers turning right or left. Never assume that they see you until you make eye contact.
- Check for feet under cars or other visual obstructions as you pass (i.e., hidden jaywalkers)
- Check for drivers or passengers in parallel parked cars who might open their doors suddenly.
- Be extra careful when approaching someone hailing a taxi because taxis aren't looking for bicyclists.
- Be extra cautious when you are in a driver's blind spot.
- On bike paths, alert pedestrians and roller bladers before you pass ("On your left!") and slow down to a walking pace if there are small children around.

A critical theme is eye contact. It is perhaps the most effective way to evaluate a situation. If you don't have it, teach the kids to prepare for the worst and make an escape plan.

Sometimes it is difficult to convince children that we need to follow all the rules and be as safe as possible on the bike. You may hear "Me and my friends ride on the sidewalk all the time and nothing happens," or "My cousin got hit by a car and he's o.k.". Children can have an unsettling sense of invincibility.

You should include an honest discussion of the consequences of getting hit by a car in your bike safety education. It is a delicate balance between convincing the kids of the necessity for being alert and riding safely at all times, and not scaring them off the bicycle. BICAS — a youth bike project in Tucson, Arizona — uses the following statement as a starting point for such a discussion: If I get in an accident, it will change everything for me and my family, FOREVER.

Children tend to overestimate their own skills and have a difficult time conceptualizing conditions that would lead to an accident (speed of vehicles, reaction times, medical consequences, etc.). When confronted with potentially dangerous scenarios, younger kids will often say "I'd just jump off my bike and everything would be o.k." or "I'd brake really fast and I wouldn't get hurt".

**Bike Safety Exercises**

Bicycle games and exercises, sometimes known as bicycle rodeos, can augment the club's safety education. These exercises are fun, as well as helpful for developing a cooperative group dynamic. Several of the games can help students learn to work together, and emphasize what to pay attention to.

However, a word of caution: bicycle rodeos should not be used as the sole training method for bicycle safety. Just because a child has made three successful passes looking over his shoulder for imaginary cars in the park does not necessarily mean that she or he has mastered the skill enough to use it on the road. Bicycle rodeos can be used as tools to assess baseline abilities of students. They also make an excellent point of reference when reinforcing skills on the road. "Do you remember when we did the exercise in the park where we looked over our
As part of the summer bike safety skills training workshop, RAB students are fitted with bikes and helmets. They are waiting their turn for a ride through the obstacle course.

shoulder for cars? Well I noticed you didn’t do that when you went around that pothole."

Other fun skill-building activities are the slow bicycle race and an obstacle course made by the group. In the slow bicycle race, the object is to cross the finish line last, while staying in your lane without going backwards or letting your foot hit the ground. This hones balance and challenges kids to master the skill of riding slowly. It is also an opportunity for those kids who might not be so fast to show off other abilities. The obstacle course is a fun test to do at the end, once the participants are more aware of the different skills they have.

**Skill Assessment**

The best way to assess a child’s cycling ability is to go on a test ride with him or her. If possible, set up a time to ride with each student individually or in pairs. Make sure that your route has extremely low traffic and you do not venture far from your home base in case you discover that one of the students has few or no riding skills.

Make up a standardized assessment form for each child with sections to rate ability on various tasks and room to make comments if necessary. The more complete you make each child's profile, the easier it will be for you to plan appropriate trips. If you are recruiting more than one adult to administer the riding tests, make sure that all of adults have the same criteria for ranking a child's ability. For example, if a child does not understand the purpose of gears and will not shift, but does an excellent job shifting if instructed to do so, how would you rate his gear-shifting ability? Practice following a straight path, going up hills, doing emergency stops, shifting gears, looking over the shoulder without swerving, and being aware of the surroundings without losing focus on the road.

Once you have screened all of your potential riders, you may have to make some hard decisions. If a child demonstrates such poor riding skills that he or she may be a hazard to him or herself or others on the road, the child should not participate in the group rides. Group rides are not the appropriate setting to teach a child how to ride a bike and the other students will soon grow to resent the slow pace and/or frequent stops. To prevent too much disappointment, you can advertise your club from the beginning like it’s a sports team; everyone who tries out does not necessarily get to play. Those that don't make the cut should be encouraged to work on their bike riding skills with mom or dad and apply next time around.

If you feel like there is a wide disparity in cycling and endurance abilities, you may want to divide the students into beginner and advanced groups. Of course you don’t have to call them “beginner” and “advanced” groups. The New York Cycle Club has "Worker B", "Honey B", and "Killer B" groups. Dividing the children according to ability can make it a more enjoyable experience for everyone involved. For the less advanced kids, you can plan shorter rides with more rests and a greater adult/child ratio. With the more advanced students you can ride faster and farther. Unfortunately, there is not always the time nor staffing to run two separate rides for your group.

### Bicycle rodeos should not be kids' only training in bicycle safety skills.

**Licensing**

Making a physical license for each member can be an extremely powerful tool for creating a sense of ownership in the club and leverage as a consequence for poor decisions.

It’s hard to think back to a time when you didn’t have three pieces of ID, six credit cards, and 17 keys to carry around. But for kids, a new ID
is another step to adulthood. Legitimate membership cards are coveted. And if it has their picture on it, watch out!

When the kids apply for the club, the application has all of the information needed to create a license. We modeled ours after an actual driver's license, asking hair color, height, weight, etc. You may also want to include information about allergies and emergency contact information, but do not use this as your only record of that child's information. Licenses are also a good place to write your Rules of the Road so that everyone has a copy at their fingertips.

If you have access to a digital camera and a simple page-layout program you can include photos on the cards. If you are not computer savvy enough to put it together, you may call up

**Participants should learn to read maps before riding. But the true test is in the streets.**

one of those people who expressed interest in helping your club but just couldn't make the rides. Don't forget to laminate the cards or they'll be destroyed in no time.

You can use the licenses as a way to divide kids during activities: "O.K. everyone give me your licenses. Shuffle, shuffle. Now everyone in this pile go get a drink of water and everyone in this pile go to the bathroom." Or you can use it as part of your consequences for bad behavior: "I'm suspending your license for the next ride. Hand it over,"

**Map Reading Education**

It is a good idea for participants to learn how to read a map before going on a ride. The U.S. Geological Survey has pretty good curriculum for teaching map reading skills for 5th-8th graders and high school students. Go to [www.usgs.gov/education/](http://www.usgs.gov/education/) and follow the link for Teaching in the Learning Web for map reading curriculum.

You may want to develop your own curriculum based on maps of your city or area. Make it easy to read by gluing a map to a piece of foam core board and marking points of interest with push pins. Make sure that the students know how to: determine distance; understand cardinal directions; identify and use the map key; identify landmarks that they can use on the road (bodies of water, large buildings, mountain ranges, etc.); and apply their knowledge to biking in the city. You can choose to stick with street/bike maps or introduce topographical maps, and the very important concept that all roads are not created equal.

Of course, the true test is out in the streets. Our final mapping exercise is to give the group a route finding assignment, debate the merits of each individual's proposed route, come to a consensus, and then ride the route as the ultimate test.

During the summer of 2000, Brooklyn-RAB students researched environmental issues that affected their waterfront and explored relevant sites by bike. They produced a map and resource guide to share with the community.
Low air pressure is the number one cause of flats. Make sure everyone has properly inflated tires before leaving on a ride. 
Irving Estevez, Children’s Aid Society/LS, 218, 2002

In Brooklyn, RAB gets grants to run a summer program solely based on map making. Working with Green Map Systems, an environmental education group, 10 students research a topic and map relevant sites. These students earn a small stipend for their efforts, and learn about bike safety, their environment and how to create maps. To learn more about this international map-making project, visit the Green Map Systems website (www.greenmap.org).

B. Club Preparations
Selecting and Scouting the Route
First decide the endurance limits of the group and your program’s time constraints. If you are taking a group of 8 year olds out for the first time, do not plan to do 10 miles. Don’t even plan to do 5 miles! Make a realistic, educated guess on how far the group can go. If you are at all unsure of abilities, low-ball it. You can also plan your ride with a choice of routes midway. If you choose to take the more difficult route during the ride, make sure that everyone on the ride will be able to keep up. Don’t ask kids if they think they can do it. Make that decision yourself.

Now that you’ve decided how far everyone can go, you need to decide if it is possible to do that mileage given your time constraints. As a rule of thumb, plan at least twice the amount of on-the-road time that it would take you to complete the route at a leisurely pace. Then factor in breaks. Many kids have never ridden a bike more than a few blocks at a time and they will not be prepared to keep a steady pace for 20-60 minutes. Plan for frequent rest stops, “compression” stops that pull the group together, mechanical failures, water breaks, and bathroom breaks.

However, every time you stop for more than a few minutes, the group tends to unravel. Kids will start to get out their lunch or claim that they are too tired to go on or get in engrossing discussions about exactly what happened at every turn on the ride. You may have a hard time reassembling them. Defeat this inertia with a ride schedule that is both well-planned and flexible.

Even if you have ‘all day’ to ride, do not plan your trip so that it ends close to sundown. You have no idea how many flat tires you will encounter on a ride, and that fact alone can add hours to your otherwise Swiss schedule. Never get caught out riding in the dark. In most states it is illegal to ride without lights at night and even if it’s not, it is unsafe with a large group. In fact, don’t even get caught out at dusk. This is the most dangerous time of the day on the road because drivers are often commuting home from a hectic day, everyone’s eyes are in the process of adjusting to diminishing light, reaction times are slower, and visibility is reduced.

Plan to be off busy streets during rush hour. During the day, you will find many drivers who are courteous and supportive of your group, but come rush hour, it’s everyone for themselves. Stay clear of schools at dismissal time, especially high schools where there may be a lot of student drivers.
Now that you have an idea about the distance you can realistically cover in the time you have allotted, you want to plan the route. Rides can be about the sheer joy of getting on your bike and exploring your environment, or they can be about using your bike to get somewhere — or both! If you pick a destination that the kids are familiar with — like the beach, or a park, or the movie theater downtown — it gives the students a meaningful gauge to tell their friends and family how far they traveled by bike. Even if your ride does not have an official end destination, plan your lunch so it is the midway point and at a nice place where the kids can either run around or rest in the shade.

Getting from your home base to your destination via the safest, most interesting route can be a challenge. Here's where you want to consult your local bike club or your resident cycling fanatic. Locating and scouting a route is a non-trivial task for someone not extremely familiar with the area. You should seek advice from qualified cyclists. In fact, most ride clubs have their own ride cue sheets compiled into a book, or if you're lucky, on-line. For general point-to-point maps, visit the Mapquest website (www.mapquest.com).

Check local bike stores or the Department of Transportation to see if your city has an official bike map. This will indicate streets that have dedicated bike lanes and streets that are recommended routes (i.e. streets with low traffic and, possibly, bicycle signage). If you can't find an official bike map, look for books about biking in your area or contact your local bike club. Even when you are armed with bike maps, it is unlikely that there will be a dedicated bike path from your front door to your destination, so you will need to connect the dots. If you do not know the area well, plan two routes. When you are scouting one, you may discover that what looked like an innocent intersection on the map is actually the transfer station for the Sanitation Department's trucks.

If you are planning a trip outside the city, go through all the logistics of getting the bikes and kids out to the trail head. How will you transport the bikes? How will you get the kids there? Do you need a special permission slip for the children to travel by car? How long will it take to get there? Will you cross any time zones? Will you be traveling at rush hour? Is the trail currently open? Are there any park fees or restrictions? We have discovered that you can fit at least 12...
bikes in a large cargo van without passenger seats if you pack them tightly, facing each bike in the opposite direction of its neighbors. If you remove all the pedals and turn the handlebars 90°, you can fit at least 20 bikes. Remember that parents must be informed if their child is traveling by car or bus. Consult your insurance policy, or that of a partner organization to see if it covers transportation of children by a non-commercially licensed driver or vehicle.

Finally, you must scout the route, preferably on a similar day and time as the scheduled ride. Take notes. You may want to have kids walk their bikes at certain parts. Write down landmarks.

If you're really good, you can find out interesting facts about the places you will travel through and be a tour guide or make up a game to entertain the group. If you absolutely cannot do it by bike, drive the route slowly, thinking what riding the route would be like.

**Acquiring Equipment**

There are several methods for acquiring tools and supplies. You can speak with your local bike shop and explain your program to them. If they are not willing to donate tools (and thereby become an official program sponsor), ask if they would order your supplies and sell them to you at wholesale prices. If the shop has its logo on water bottles or other promotional material, ask for freebees.

You can also hold a tool drive. Make a flyer and compose an e-mail that specifies the exact tools and supplies you are looking for and list drop-off locations. If you want to provide clothes for the kids, this is also an excellent time to get donations. Use local riding clubs and bike shops as advertising platforms—distribute and post flyers through these channels. Find local cycling e-mail list-serves and post electronic flyers there.

You can try to contact national suppliers and manufacturers, but don't count on this as a sure-fire way to get materials. Usually companies already have pet projects and it's pretty hard to get through without personal contacts.

**Bike Maintenance**

If the club keeps a fleet of bikes to loan out for the rides, it is important that the bikes get checked before each ride by a qualified mechanic. This is important even if the bikes are new, because kids have ways of abusing them.

Set aside an hour or two after each ride to do routine maintenance and adjustments. You should be able to recruit at least one additional qualified volunteer for this job if none of the ride leaders have extensive mechanic experience. As you check in each bike, you can ask the kids if they had any problems with the bikes and make notes for the mechanic. It is always good to test ride a bike before giving it a final o.k. for the next ride.

If your club does not have a fleet of bikes, you may have a more difficult job ahead of you. It has been our experience that children, and their parents, do not maintain their bikes very well. Despite our sternest warnings, kids will show up with flat tires, no brakes, loose seats, bent forks, only three working gears, etc. If you allow kids to show up with their own bikes on the day of the ride without a prior safety inspection, expect to spend ten minutes to two hours doing repairs and adjustments.

Even when we required kids to bring bikes in for inspection a few days before a ride, we found they would inevitably create some mechanical problem in the interim. Alternatively, they might show up with a different bike on the day of the ride. At one of our sites, the bring-your-own-bike policy is that you must drop it off the day before the ride and it is confiscated for a safety inspection/internment period until the time of the ride.

**Review Permission Slips**

If at all possible, you should collect permission slips before the day of the ride so you have ample opportunity to review all of them and speak with parents about any questions or concerns you may have. Make sure all of the information is complete on all of the papers. Check for suspicious signatures and call any parents when in doubt. Perhaps most importantly, familiarize yourself with the medical history of every student and compile a list of those students who will be required to carry medicine on every ride. This is discussed in more detail in Handle Any Emergency, page 33.
Students' Preparation and Responsibilities

Club Requirements for Participation
The requirements for participation should be spelled out in easy language so that there is no confusion for the kids.

Consider the following:
- Does the child need to own a bike and helmet to participate in the rides?
- What level of riding skills must the child have?
- Is the enrollment limited to children from a specific group, and if a child wants to take rides, how does he or she get involved in that program?
- What are the age requirements?
- Does each child need a physical examination?
- Does the child have to attend any training sessions or complete any community service as a prerequisite for riding?
- Is the child required to make a time commitment, or can he or she just take a few rides?
- Is there a youth membership and governance structure in place, or is it an activity run by adults?

Follow the Rules
During orientation, the rules should be presented so that every child understands them. Then review the rules and consequences on a regular basis, perhaps before every trip.

Wear Appropriate Clothing
Kids will not know how to dress for a bike trip unless you instruct them in advance. Set your own rules. This could mean that every child must wear an orange safety vest, bright colored clothing, or the club t-shirt. If a boy shows up wearing baggy pants, instruct him to either secure his right pant leg with a rubber band or roll it up in such a way as to prevent it from getting caught in the chain. If you are riding in cold weather, don’t forget to tell the kids to bring gloves, dress in layers, and bring a back pack to put those extra sweaters in if they get hot. If it’s sunny, appropriate clothing includes sunscreen.

Bring Water and Appropriate Food
You cannot be too specific on this one. If you tell the kids to “bring a lunch and something to drink” some kids won’t bring anything to drink at all, others will bring a soda, and still others will bring two bags of chips and a candy bar for “lunch”. You must specify “bring at least 16 ounces of water or sports drink — no soda allowed” and a healthy lunch. Even then, you will see some pretty creative interpretations of “healthy”. If you partner with another organization, they may have access to a free lunch program. It may be necessary to add food as an expense item in the budget, to insure that everyone eats right and stays hydrated. Don’t forget to instruct the children to eat a healthy breakfast before the ride.

Any health professional will tell you that hydration is critical for physical activity, especially when exercising outdoors in hot weather. Everyone on the ride must carry a water bottle. If the group will not have a chance to refill the bottle on the ride, consider requiring two bottles per person. At every rest stop remind the kids to, at the very least, take a sip of water. By the time your body tells you it’s thirsty from overexertion, it is on its way to dehydration. Be pro-active and insistent by telling the kids to drink.

The Washington Heights' program provided two healthy snacks for each ride to augment the children’s own lunches. One of these snacks was always "dried mystery fruit". The kids loved to try to guess what they were eating and also loved the taste. If you don’t provide the lunches, you may want to pack a few snacks for everyone. Kids tend to a) eat their lunch at the first rest stop and b) do not pack enough food for a full day of exercising. Here are some suggestions: nuts, gorp, dried fruit, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, yogurt (don’t forget the spoons!), sunflower seeds, carrot sticks, granola bars, fresh fruit (heavy to carry, easy to squish), celery and peanut butter, string cheese.

The Demand Man is a cartoon character, designed by Mohammed Rashel, who talks about bike safety issues. North Brooklyn Project, 2001.
Ride Day

A What to Do Before the Ride

Make Orientation Announcements

The kids need to be prepared for the day ahead so let them know what to expect:

"Today we are riding to Central Park. Has everyone been to the park before? Has anyone ever gone there by bike before? The trip is 15 miles total — 4.5 to get there, six around the park, and 4.5 coming back. When we get to the park, we will bike half the loop and stop to eat lunch. Then we'll rest for a little bit and play in the sprinklers before we get on our bikes and return home. Does anyone have any questions?"

After you field kids’ questions, you can start in on your own. Ask everyone if they have everything they were told to bring, and be specific. Make everyone hold up their water bottles. Ask if everyone has lunch, or money to buy it. Ask if they all put on sunscreen. Ask specific kids if they brought their medicine. Ask if everyone ate a good breakfast. Ask them what they ate. And the most important question ... ask if anyone needs to go to the bathroom. Ask if they’re sure.

Distribute Essentials

Make sure the sweep, leader and chaperones have all of their tools and supplies. Do not rely on your photographic memory; consult a list like the one provided. [See Appendix, page 38]

Bike Safety Check

Once everyone is assembled with their bicycles, you should perform a group bike safety check. This safety check will alert you to major problems, but is not a comprehensive evaluation. Ideally, this will be your second-time-around-just-in-case check, not your only one.

Have everyone line up with their bikes facing the same direction and their helmets on. One of the leaders should face the group with a helmet on, standing next to his/her bicycle, waiting for everyone’s undivided attention. Each person will check his or her own bike.

See the Bike Safety Check on page 45 for a basic checklist of items to inspect. We have included a few quick remedies for the easiest problems. If some of the terms are unfamiliar to you, refer to your favorite basic bike maintenance book.

After your first bike safety check, you will truly know if your system for providing bikes is working or failing. If one kid has a flat, two seats need to be tightened, one brake lever is loose, and one bike makes "a noise" when shifting gears, you are looking at anywhere from ten minutes to two hours of work, using the Murphy’s Law of bike repair. Remember, hex nuts are always rounded out and barrel adjusters are always frozen tight. Keep an eye on the time so you don’t have to cut your ride short because of the preride repairs. But don’t skip corners and risk having a crash or major mechanical failure on the road.

The bottom line is that you cannot ride with any child who does not have a safe bike; period. This policy should be stated well in advance of the ride so you can quote it in such a circumstance.
Make arrangements for any child that cannot go on the ride because his/her bike did not pass inspection. If you do not provide all of the bicycles for the rides, you may consider keeping one or two loaner bikes around for this situation.

**Bike and Helmet Adjustments**

If the kids are not using their own bikes and helmets, or even if they are, there are always some last minute adjustments on seat height, handle bar position, and helmet straps. Mobilize all leaders and volunteers to help with the adjustments, lest you spend an hour doing it by yourself.

**Proper Seat Height and Bike Fit:** To check frame size, the rider should stand over the frame flat-footed. There should be about an inch clearance from the crotch to the top tube (on a men’s frame). If you are planning some serious mountain biking, the clearance should be greater. If there is less than one inch, the bike is too big and potentially dangerous. A child sitting on the seat, should not be able to put his or her feet flat on the ground. In this position a rider should balance on the bike comfortably with legs extended and feet pointed, but not over extended. However, if a child is not comfortable with that fitting, allow him or her to ride with the seat lowered for a bit, gradually increasing the height over the course of the ride or the season. If the seat is too low, the child may tire easily and possibly injure knees or legs.

**Proper Helmet Fitting:** Helmets should rest on the head so the front rests just above the top of the eyebrows. You should not be able to rattle the helmet on the head or push it off to expose the forehead when the strap is buckled. New helmets come with fitting instructions and most bike shops have brochures on how to get a good fit. If you walk into a wall while wearing your helmet, it should prevent you from bumping your nose.

Make it clear to everyone that buckles must always be snapped in place while riding.

**Review Checklist and Count Heads**

You should create your own checklist for what to bring and what to do before leaving. This list should be very specific and may include things like "leave copies of permission slips at the main office" or "tell security guard to leave the building open until we return". If you do not write it down, you will forget something. One of our ride leaders always forgets to bring her lunch.

Before you leave, make sure the number of heads matches the number of permission slips. Matching names helps too. Call the parent of any absent students to make sure you and the parent both know where that student is. The bike trip shouldn’t become the perfect cover for other activities!

**B. Flock Formation:** When riding on the streets, the group must ride in single file with one adult in the first position and one at the very end of the line. Any additional chaperones will help maintain order in the line and should be positioned at logical intervals.

Anyone who has ever ridden with children on the street can tell you to keep a much closer eye on them than if they were simply going to the museum on a field trip. In fact, because of...
the nature of this relatively high-speed, multi-variable activity, it is imperative that each child is monitored constantly, or near constantly during the ride.

An easy way of making sure that every rider has a pair of eyes watching over him/her is to divide the group and assign each bundle to an adult. You may want to consider the relative strengths and endurance of each rider in a group when forming a bundle.

Another way of monitoring the group is to assign a strong adult rider to sheep dog duty. That rider can make his or her way up to the front of the line and back down again as necessary to keep everyone in place and dole out advice about technique. Needless to say, this is a potentially exhausting position and should never be assigned to anyone who has not wholeheartedly volunteered.

Yet another technique is to let the group adjust to its natural pecking order by allowing kids to change positions at rest stops and have the chaperones maintain an even spacing throughout the line. It is not easy to predict which kids will feel comfortable in the front of the line at the beginning of the ride. The most eager and vocal riders often tire themselves out quickly or get frustrated and drop back because they're "not going fast enough". But after the first few rest stops, the riders should more or less settle into their relative positions in the front, middle, or back. Unfortunately, this doesn't mean that they won't continue to bicker about specifics for the entire duration of the ride ("I wanna be second! ... No, way! I'm not going to ride behind Carlos again! ... But Amanda was first last time!" ... and on and on and on.)

**C. Role of Each Leader:** In Chapter 1, we briefly discussed qualities to look for in your lead-

Encourage kids to bring a back pack so that the adults don't end up carrying everything!

ers. In this section we will spell out the responsibilities of each during the ride.

**The Leader**

**Know the Route** - The leader should know the route, the predicted traffic conditions at the time of the ride, any road construction or detours, the terrain, and difficulty level for the children. The route should accommodate regular, safe rest stops. In addition, the leader should have an alternate escape plan in case of rain or fatigue (i.e. some idea of how to shorten a 10 mile loop to 5 miles).

**Set Appropriate Pace** - What seems maddeningly slow to you may be pushing the kids' limits. Red traffic lights or parking lots are good places to stop and back pack so that the monitor how well the group is handling the pace. Do not allow the fastest kids to push you if it will string the group out, and never let any of the kids ahead of you in line. Once you know the group, set an appropriate pace and consistently follow it. For example, with teens, a good average is about 8-10 mph on urban streets.

**Follow All the Rules** - More eyes are on the ride leader than any other adult in the group, so it sets an especially bad precedent if he or she demonstrates poor, or questionable, riding skills on the road. It goes without saying that everyone "not going fast enough". But after the first few rest stops, the riders should more or less settle into their relative positions in the front, middle, or back. Unfortunately, this doesn't mean that they won't continue to bicker about specifics for the entire duration of the ride ("I wanna be second! ... No, way! I'm not going to ride behind Carlos again! ... But Amanda was first last time!" ... and on and on and on.)

**The Sweep**

**Mechanics** - The sweep carries the tools and must be able to fix flats, adjust breaks and derailleurs, re-rail chains, and be generally adept at bicycle trouble-shooting and doing minor repairs on the road.

**Monitoring Group Behavior** - The sweep has the perfect vantage point for catching any kids that
Instructor Ray Godwin, and students sport bright reflective vests to enhance visibility. The group has stopped to enjoy the view from the George Washington Bridge which connects Manhattan and New Jersey.

get out of line, literally. However, because the sweep is required to maintain position as the caboose of the line, any disciplining must be shouted (Oscar! Stop swerving!) or taken care of at red lights or breaks. Chaperones can jump in to do some of the leg work if the sweep spots a problem but can't deal with it from his or her position.

Coaching Techniques - The sweep stays in back because that is his or her job. Kids can stay in back because they are having difficulty keeping up with the pace of the ride. If a child is falling behind, the sweep can help. Sometimes just adjusting the seat to the proper height can make a big difference. Make sure the child is in the right gear and demonstrate how to use them. Have the child practice keeping a steady pace instead of pedaling hard and then coasting.

Motivating - There are many theories and tricks to keeping kids' spirits up when they are having a hard time meeting the physical or mental challenge of riding. See the "Provide Encouragement and Motivation" topic in the following section for a few ideas.

High Visibility - Because the sweep is in the last position, he or she will be the first rider that cars will see as they approach the group from behind. Therefore, the sweep needs to be as visible as possible. Light colored clothing, orange safety vests, bright colored backpacks, or even flags increase the driver's ability to spot the sweep.

Directing Traffic - In some situations the sweep or chaperones may need to instruct cars on how to behave so that the group stays together. Use common sense when doing this and never assume that anyone will obey your signals until they actually do.

First Aid - If you have only one first-aid kit, it should go to the sweep, but RAB recommends purchasing two so that the leader may also carry one.

The Chaperones

Basically chaperones have all of the same responsibilities as the sweep, but with more flexibility to move around in the line. There will probably be times when your group gets separated by a
stoplight. Your chaperones then become the acting ride leader and sweep until the group reunites. When your chaperones aren’t engaged in this brief promotion of responsibility, they are mainly working as monitors and motivators.

D. Dynamics of Riding as a Group

Staying Together

Adult ride clubs like the Five Borough Bike Club in NYC use the "Point, Drop, Sweep" method of keeping rides together. In this method, the ride leader (or "Point") selects a rider to stand as a "Drop" at all turns or deviations in the obvious route. The drop directs every rider until he or she is spotted by the designated sweep, at which time he or she rejoins the ride. This method is good for rural settings when the group can spread out a little more provided that there are lots of adult chaperones to act as drops. A more appropriate method for an urban environment is something that is almost intuitive, a "compression stop".

Compression stops are just small breaks initiated by the ride leader to give the slowest riders a chance to catch up. Before the ride, you should decide on an acceptable maximum length of your line (two stop lights, one block, half a mile, sweep and leader within eyesight, etc.) If your line exceeds your limit, make a compression stop as soon as it is safe and you have enough room to pull over. Make sure that you give the kids explicit instructions on what they are and aren’t allowed to do, and tell them how long you think you will be waiting. Take advantage of this break to keep the kids hydrated.

"We will only be here for about five minutes. No, you may not eat your lunch yet and no, you may not play tag here on the side of the road. Everyone should take a few sips of water while we wait for the rest of the group."

Now is an excellent time to break out your knock-knock jokes and riddles.

Know Your Kids

As your group develops, you will come to learn the physical, social, and emotional strengths and weaknesses of each child. This can be extremely important to preventing accidents or injuries and creating a safe, fun experience. Be proactive in creating a group structure that is tailored to those specific children. Perhaps the kid who habitually pushes his or her boundaries needs to be directly in front of (i.e. within clear view and speaking distance of) an adult chaperone to whom he or she responds well. This is not necessarily a punishment, but could be a good way to give immediate feedback on his or her riding skills and correct little problems before they become big ones.

Communication

People have been riding bikes together since the bicycle was invented and doing it well. It just so happens that we live in a time where it is affordable to own a cell phone or walkie-talkie. It is your own decision as to whether you want to carry one of these devices. They can be extremely convenient in the case of an emergency or to contact parents if the trip is running late. However, in all but
a few special situations—such as when you ride far from 'civilization'—they are not mandatory equipment. If you do carry a phone, remember to charge the batteries well before hand, and be aware that cell phones don't always work in remote areas.

Walkie-talkies are good for mechanical failures at the back of the line, or just to check in on location if the leader and sweep are out of sight of one another. However, they can also be distracting. There should be some discussion before the ride as to how the group will stay together, and when compression stops will be used. If the sweep has to stop to fix a flat and is not carrying a walkie-talkie, he or she should let the closest chaperone know that he or she is stopping with one of the kids. The chaperone could ride to the front and tell the leader to make a compression stop. Alternatively, the sweep could tell a student in the back of the line that he or she is stopping to fix a flat and ask that this information be passed up the line like the game Telephone.

Provide Encouragement and Motivation
Some of your kids will struggle with the rides, and you need to be there to cheer them on, or trick them into succeeding. Unless you have seriously miscalculated, the ride itself should not be outside the bounds of the students' abilities. However, it may be more than they think they can do, or more of an effort than they are willing to put in to it. Here it is o.k. to use white lies, old fashioned praise, exaggeration, distraction techniques, and outright bribery.

Landon Wickam, the director of the Urban Youth Bike Project in NYC, once led a ride with RAB students where everyone was "exhausted" and refused to climb the last big hill. Landon (to our horror!) offered to buy anyone who rode up the hill a hamburger at McDonald's when they got back to the city. Needless to say, everyone made it up the hill just fine, and faster than we ever would have expected.

Be sensitive to the fact that the ride will be much harder for some kids, especially those that are overweight or less developed than the others. If a child is overweight and struggling to keep up, this can be a critical experience for him or her. It can be the beginning of a new active, healthy lifestyle or it could be a defeating blow. Offer discreet praise for his or her effort and point out the accomplishments he or she has made so far on the ride. After an especially difficult ride, you may want to reach out to the student later in the week to offer individual encouragement, or call to personally 'remind' him or her about the next ride. These are the children that can benefit most from your program.
Set **Appropriate Pace/Keeping a Schedule**

Before the ride, the leader should formulate an itinerary that accommodates ample water/bathroom/rest stops as well as mechanical repairs and adjustments. If the ride is running ahead of schedule, you can always add another rest stop or game of tag in the park. If you're running late, it's a little more complicated.

Keep an eye on the time from the minute you set out in order to gauge the speed of the group. Be aware of how everyone in the group is performing, especially those who are struggling. Pay attention to changes in group energy as the ride progresses. At the first rest stop, note how long it takes to gather the troops up. You are trying to get a baseline reading on the kids, with the expectation that things will slow down later in the day (especially right after lunch).

If you detect a major schedule problem on the first leg of the ride, don't wait until you've gone half-way out to correct it. Make creative modifications to the itinerary as necessary, and always present it to the group as an improvement on the original plan. "I thought you might enjoy it more if we played an extra game of frisbee at this park instead of going over to the community garden." This is where it pays off to have a back-up plan in your pocket, even if it's just taking a long break and heading back in the direction you came from without ever reaching your intended destination.

If you notice that one kid is having a really hard time keeping up with the group, pair him or her up with the most appropriate adult who can be on full-time motivation duty. If he or she is making an honest effort to work hard, do not stress the fact that he or she is holding the group up. It will probably only make him or her nervous and less focused on the task of riding safely. On our rides, we expect that everyone looks out for each other's safety and that reaching a destination is a group effort. If appropriate, try to

![Image of a child riding a bike with a cartoon farm in the background.](image-url)}
involve the other kids in the process. See if someone would volunteer to carry his or her bag. Or maybe one of the kids can stay in the back to keep him or her company. Try to dispel any animosity before the ‘fast kids’ start to voice their frustrations in a negative way.

If you are running so late that you know you won’t be back in time (but you’re positive that you’ll be back before sunset) notify your home-base or break out the permission slips and find a phone so you can start calling parents. Parents will be especially anxious to know that their child is o.k.

E. Handle Any Emergency: You can avoid most accidents by instilling safe group riding habits in your kids and by making sure that each child has a safe bicycle and protective equipment. Nevertheless, it is essential that you are always prepared to deal with any type of accident that may occur on the road. There is nothing worse than feeling helpless if a child is injured.

Know Your Riders’ Medical Conditions

In addition to knowing the personalities of your kids, you must be aware of their physical limitations and medical conditions.

You should consider getting a doctor’s medical clearance for all of your riders. This may be a lot to ask of a child if he or she is only taking one ride with the club (especially if he or she does not have health insurance or a primary care physician) but there are several compelling reasons to require this step.

Most importantly, this gives you an accurate account of the child’s pre-existing medical conditions. Say for example, the child has a history of mild asthma, but the parent has let the inhaler prescription lapse because he or she does not use it very often. In fact, the parent and child may consider this condition so mild that they do not even note it on the permission slip. Bicycling, especially in the city, presents an unfortunate combination of factors that may put this child at greater risk for a serious attack. The combined effect of car exhaust, pollen, heat, and physical exertion may be just enough to provoke an asthma attack greater than one he or she has previously experienced. Asthma attacks can progress from shortness of breath to a life threatening situation in a matter of minutes and should not be underestimated by the ride leaders. Any child that has ever been diagnosed with asthma must carry a current inhaler prescription with them at all times, no exceptions. A doctor’s physical exam ensures that

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Bring everyone's emergency information on the ride and leave a copy with someone you can contact.

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Staff and volunteers prepare for a Brooklyn ride. They collect permission slips and waivers, do bike safety checks, and make sure everyone’s bike and helmet fit properly. There are fleet bikes for those who don’t own a bicycle.
staff are aware of the young person's health status and can be better prepared in the case of an emergency.

Another reason for requiring a doctor's clearance is for insurance purposes. At the time of the exam, the doctor should be informed by the parent that the child will be taking bike rides and under what conditions (a trip around the park, endurance rides, in the dead of winter, in the heat of summer, etc.) so that he or she can examine the child properly and withhold clearance if necessary.

If the child has a condition that you are unfamiliar with or do not understand fully, educate yourself before the ride by speaking with the parent, a physician, or school nurse. What would you do if a diabetic child had an insulin reaction ten miles out from the city? Should you encourage a child who has arthritis to try to ride up the hill or just let him/her walk it? Again, preparation is the best way to avoid an accident or injury.

If you do not choose to get a doctor's clearance from all of the riders, take the time to speak with parents specifically about their child's medical history. Explain to them that the rides will most likely be physically challenging to the child (even if it's literally a ride in the park for you) and that you need to be aware of anything that may affect the child's health. Do not just ask the child directly and expect to get an accurate response. Kids are not responsible for their own health — you and the parents are.

**Bring All Permission Slips**

Permission slips allow you to contact a parent or guardian in an emergency and can sometimes allow you to authorize medical treatment in the event that a family member cannot be reached. The leader and sweep should take all of the originals with them in a waterproof bag and leave photocopies with a reliable adult, preferably at the home base of the ride club. You may also want to give each adult chaperone a list of the kids' names and contact information in case you are separated.

**First Aid**

It is very important that someone who rides with the group have some formal training in first aid. Insurance policies may even require this. Red Cross classes cost money and must be scheduled well in advance, but they are worth it. The advantage of taking a course over simply reading a manual is that the class drills the operative steps of dealing with an emergency over and over. In addition to first-aid techniques, it teaches how to remain calm and follow a specific standard procedure. Most of the injuries we see are scraped knees and bloody palms. Nevertheless, we are prepared for the worst.

In addition to basic first-aid and CPR training, your group may seek out a more customized first-aid course. The best training would address acute trauma in-depth — what to do if a child is struck by a car or is thrown from a bicycle. We are lucky enough to have an active volunteer who is both a physician and professional cyclist who was more than happy to give us a two hour talk about on-the-road first aid. This was not a certified course, but all of the youth ride leaders in attendance were extremely appreciative of learning about first aid from an "insider" who could really focus his information on cycling injuries. Many hospitals have injury
prevention programs and this may be a good place to search for a professional who could tailor a first-aid course for your needs.

An important and perhaps little known fact that we learned in our training was that head trauma can cause a physiological change in the chemistry of the brain that can last up to several weeks after an accident. Because of this change, any subsequent trauma to the brain during this time can result in a severe reaction such as rapid swelling, and in some cases, herniation of the brain through the skull, both life threatening conditions. The long and the short of it is that if a child hits his head during the ride, he or she should not ride a bike for 1-4 weeks after the incident, even if it appears to be nothing more than a bump. Make sure to ask the attending physician exactly how long before the child can start riding again.

In the case of a serious accident you should always assign one specific person with the task of calling 911, before proceeding with any first aid. Your first-aid training will prepare you to deal with the situation until the police or paramedics arrive. They will also provide important documentation of the accident.

**Write down the facts of an incident as soon as possible and get statements from witnesses.**

In the case of a serious accident you should always assign one specific person with the task of calling 911, before proceeding with any first aid. Your first-aid training will prepare you to deal with the situation until the police or paramedics arrive. They will also provide important documentation of the accident.

**Have a Safety Plan (or Two)**

Any first-aid course should drill the fact that you must have an advanced safety plan (who does what and when) in the case of an accident. In addition to your basic safety plan it is good to sit down with the ride leaders and discuss some specific "what ifs" that may not fit in so easily. You should consider how different factors may effect your ability to deal with an emergency. Many of these "what ifs" can arise from a unique setting (country vs. city), a specific group of kids, or the distance out from your starting point. For example, when we ride in NYC, it is not always necessary to carry a cell phone because one can always find a pay-phone or a good Samaritan with a mobile phone. Yet in the country, a cell phone may be the only way to quickly contact an ambulance.

**Have a Post-Emergency Plan**

If an accident occurs, you must have a minimum of one adult that can attend to the child's needs and one adult to manage the rest of the kids. But this does not properly cover your group for what might happen after the accident. Here's an example: Let's say that a child hits his chin and requires a few stitches. You break out your first-aid kit, doctor the wound, call the parents and get the child to the hospital with an adult chaperone. Now what? You may have seven kids with bikes (and two extra bikes!) and only one adult to lead them home. Once the injured child has been dealt with, you must be prepared to continue, or not continue, with the ride. Three or more adults per ride is preferred for exactly this reason. But if you must lead a ride with only two, you should work out the details of an emergency situation in advance.

One way to prepare is to always bring at least one lock and cable. This gives you the peace of mind that if one child exits the ride, because of injury or fatigue, you won't compromise the rest of the ride just because you don't know what to do with the extra bike.

If you choose to abort the ride for whatever reason, now you must deal with getting home with everyone and their bikes. You can lock them up, store them somewhere nearby, or have them picked up (the bikes that is). As for you and the kids, it all depends on how good your local public transportation or networking skills are. If you opt to call a friend with a van to come rescue you, make sure that your insurance policy, or the policy of your supporting organization, covers transportation of the children by a non-commercially licensed driver and vehicle.

**Write an Incident Report**

This is a critical and often an over-looked step, especially if you are running the club without the help of a partner organization. You need to write down the facts as soon after the incident as possible, including as much detail as you are able to remember. The purpose of this document is to make sure that all parties present have the chance to document their side of the story.
Include the child's full name; time and place of the accident; names and numbers of adult witnesses; description of the events as seen by the witnesses; actions taken; necessary follow-up. Ask the child what happened and write it on the report, specifying that it is the child's account. Stick with the facts and do not conjecture about why the accident occurred unless it was witnessed by someone. Try to sort through all of the information you are given to create a clear picture of the events, but do not selectively edit the story or discount someone's eye-witness report. If you have called 911, get a copy of their report, as it is an official and unbiased account of the incident.

Have all of the adult witnesses read and sign it and, if appropriate, have the child review it. Present the report to the highest in command in your organization and/or the appropriate person in your partner organization and retain a copy for your records.

Writing an incident report is a difficult and time consuming task, but it must be done. Incident reports demonstrate that you are not trying to cover up the facts, and allows everyone involved to give their account of the events. Parents will want to know what happened to their child and if you have written an incident report, you will have honest answers for them.

F. Keep It Up: As bike advocates, we ride for many reasons: it's good for the environment; it promotes good health; we believe in sustainable transportation; we love the freedom of moving without creating noise or pollution; it is sometimes more convenient than public transportation; it's a wonderful way to experience the world around us; it's fun; it's empowering.

As youth advocates, we want to give children every opportunity to grow up healthy and happy, with a sense that they can accomplish anything if they dedicate themselves to it.

Living in an urban environment presents many challenges for a young person. The normal pressures of growing up may be compounded by living in a dense city, especially if there is little room to run, play games, explore, and call your own. For many kids, a walk to the corner store is their only exercise for the day.

By teaching kids how to ride safely in the city, we empower them to take control of their own destinies. Kids who are inclined to pass their summers watching the television, playing video games, or surfing the internet are learning that being healthy and active is fun. A trip that might have seemed outlandish at the beginning of the season becomes reasonable by the fall. Children who are provided with bicycles but have no practical instructions on how to conduct themselves are now armed with the knowledge and experience of riding safely on the street. No doubt about it, the work involved in putting together and successfully running a youth bike ride club is tremendous, but the payoff is great. The work that you do is important. Children cherish these types of experiences as stepping stones in personal development. Even by the wintertime you may have students reminiscing about rides and asking about the next trip. In the chaos that can sometimes feel all-consuming, do not forget to step back and get a full view. Take lots of pictures of your rides and post them up for all to see.

Our goal in publishing One Revolution at a Time is to inform and inspire adults to start clubs that will expose young people to the joy and challenge of cycling. We wish you great success!
Ride Leader’s Checklist

Tools

- Multi-tool
- 15 mm combo wrench
- Patch kit with tire levers
- Allen key set
- Pump (Presta/Schrader)
- Chain tool
- Screwdriver (phillips/standard)
- Spare tubes and tire boot
- Spare cables and cable cutter
- Electrical tape
- Rags or napkins
- Hand wipes or cleaner

First Aid

- Various size adhesive bandages
- Gauze and first-aid tape
- Surgical gloves
- Moleskin
- Antibiotic ointment
- Pain reliever
  (with parental permission only)
- Travel sewing kit
- Safety pins
- Matchbook
- Mini eyeglass repair kit
- Tweezers
- Small scissors
- Paper and pencil
- Soap
- Lip balm
- Sunscreen

Essentials

- Emergency information for all participants
- List of kids’ emergency contact information and trip route left with your organization’s home base
- Incident Report forms
- Extra water for the kids
- Locks and cables

Food and Fun

- Water
- Healthy snacks and/or lunch
- Frisbee, cards, hackysack
- Camera

Getting Around

- Maps
- Cell phones
- Quarters for the pay phone
Dear Parent,

Your child has registered for the Recycle-A-Bicycle/Children’s Aid Society Bike Ride Club. Every Saturday this summer, the club will take bike rides around the city to places like Central Park and New Jersey. Rides will be led by at least three staff, junior staff, and volunteers. Students will ride on city streets and on bike paths to reach their destinations. Every student must have a doctor’s physical exam on file to participate in the rides. All rides are scheduled from 9:00am–3:30pm, although some rides may end earlier.

Please read the following club policies:

**Bikes** - Students may bring their own bikes, or borrow one from the shop. If a child wants to use his own bike, he must bring it to the Recycle-A-Bike classroom by the Friday morning before the ride. If the bike does not pass a safety inspection, the child must borrow a bicycle for that ride.

**Food and Water** - Each child must bring his own healthy lunch and at least 16 ounces of water. No soda is allowed.

**Backpacks** - Every child must carry a backpack on the ride.

**Asthma** - If your child has asthma, he must carry his own prescription inhaler on the ride. He will not be allowed to participate in the ride without it.

**Helmets** - The Bike Ride Club provides helmets for every student.

**Clothing** - Students should wear comfortable clothing, sneakers, and sun block. No sandals allowed.

**Safety Policy** - If any child is riding unsafely, or refuses to cooperate with the group, he will not be allowed on future rides.

If you have any questions, please call me at 555-5555.

Sincerely,

Audrey K. Warren
Bike Ride Club Coordinator
Sample Permission Slip Package:
Parental Consent Form

I give permission for my child to ride with the ____________________________
I have read the club policies and understand that my child will ride on city streets during these chaperoned rides.

If my child is injured and requires medical attention, and I cannot be reached for instructions, I do hereby give authority to the ____________________________ to obtain necessary emergency medical treatment for my child with the understanding that the family will be notified as soon as possible.

Name of Child ________________________________________________

Name of Parent or Guardian ______________________________________

Signature of Parent or Guardian __________________ Date _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION
Please give the name and number of two adults that can be contacted on the day of the ride in case of emergency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Relation to child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 _______________________________</td>
<td>___________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 _______________________________</td>
<td>___________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Permission Slip Package: Inserts

What to Bring on Every Ride

- Backpack
- Healthy lunch
- Water
- Asthma inhaler

* If you want to use your own bike, bring it to school on the morning of the day before the ride.

Introduction Letter to Child

Dear Student:

Congratulations! You have been accepted in the Recycle-A-Bicycle/Children's Aid Society Bike Ride Club. First, let me answer some questions about the club.

Do I Have to do Community Service to be in the Club? Yes. Every week, students from the Bike Ride Club will participate in a community service project. For every ride you take, you must volunteer 2 hours with this community service project (before you go on the ride). That means if you want to go on Saturday's ride, you need to come in from 2-4pm on Monday or Wednesday afternoon to volunteer. The first ride is the only exception. Don't worry, the community service project will be fun.

Can I Bring my Own Bike? Yes, you can bring your own bike, but not if it has one gear (like a BMX bike) - mountain bikes and road bikes only. Also, you need to drop the bike off no later than the Friday morning before the ride so we can check it out. If it is not a safe bike, you will have to borrow one of ours.

What if I Don't Have a Bike? That's O.K. You can borrow one of ours.

Do I Have to Wear a Helmet? Yes. Any time that you are riding the bike you need to have a helmet buckled to your head. If you do not want to wear a helmet, do not go on the rides.

What Happens if I'm Messing Around on the Bike? At Recycle-A-Bicycle, we are fair people. If you are doing something that you shouldn't be doing on the bike, we will give you one warning. If you continue, we will stop the ride and have a talk while the whole group waits. If you absolutely cannot control yourself on the ride, you will not be allowed on future rides.

How do I Sign Up for Each Ride? Every Monday, I will post a sign-up sheet on the door for that week's ride. Once the sign-up sheet is full, I won't accept anyone else on the ride, so sign-up early.

There is a paper in this package that tells you what to bring for each ride. Tear it out and save it, and remember to check it before every ride. The first trip is this Saturday, July 14. We will explore the back trails of Van Courtland Park in the Bronx and hopefully do a little bit of mountain biking. I would like to see you there. Don't forget to sign up at Recycle-A-Bike this week. If you have any questions, you can call me at Recycle-A-Bike, 555-5555.

Sincerely,

Audrey K. Warren
Bike Ride Club Coordinator
Club Rules of the Road

From Recycle-A-Bicycle

1. Pay attention at all times.
2. Obey all traffic signals and laws.
3. Ride SINGLE FILE in a straight line unless otherwise instructed.
5. Always stay with the group.

From BICAS in Tucson, Arizona

1. I have to wear a helmet if I'm under 18.
2. I have a brain. I will use it when I ride my bike.
3. Cars are the most dangerous machines in the road. I must avoid them. Do you know what avoid means?
4. The most dangerous places for bicycles are intersections (get eye contact) and major streets.
5. If I get hit by a car, it will change everything for me and my family forever.

Sample Ride Club Budget

This is what a summer budget might look like. It assumes there will be 10 young cyclists for each of the 20 trips. Children's Aid Society covers the cost of instruction and RAB covers the other expenses.

I. Income
   Children's Aid Society 4,800
   NYC Dept. of Labor-Summer Employment Program 1,712
   RAB Bike Sales (20 bikes*$100) 2,000
   RAB Foundation Grant 2,000
   Total $10,512

II. Expenses
   A. Personnel
      Ride Leader (20 rides*8hrs.*$15/hr.) 2,400
      Sweep (20 rides*8hrs.*$15/hr.) 2,400
      Junior Ride Leader 1 (20 rides*8hrs.*$5.35/hr.) 856
      Junior Ride Leader 2 (20 rides*8hrs.*$5.35/hr.) 856
      Sub-total $6,512

   B. Other Than Personnel
      Bicycles (12 bikes*$250) 3,000
      Helmets (12 helmets*$15) 180
      First Aid Kit (2 kits*$20) 40
      Insurance (1 group*$50) 50
      Tool Kit (1 complete kit*$75) 75
      Floor Pump 30
      Patch kits (20 kits*$2) 40
      Tubes (20 tubes*$1) 20
      T-shirts (14 t-shirts*$5) 70
      Snacks (20 rides*$10/trip) 200
      Sub-total $3,705
      Total $10,217
Sample Ride Leader Job Description

Job Title: Ride leader

Time Period: July 12–August 18, 2001


Specific Duties: Planning, scouting, and leading five different bike rides for 10–14 middle school students of varying skill levels. Rides are twice weekly (Thursday and Saturday) with two separate groups of students. All rides originate at and return to I.S. 218 at Broadway and 196th Street. The ride leader is responsible for navigating and making sure the group stays together. The rides will be chaperoned by at least one other RAB staff, two junior staff (teenage assistants), and volunteers, bringing the student/staff ratio to 4:1.

Qualifications: Must be organized, experienced cyclist who can plan group rides and who knows basic first aid. Experience working with young people and ability to speak Spanish is helpful.

Ride Descriptions: Every ride originates and terminates at I.S. 218 at Broadway and 196th Street. Beginning rides should be approximately 2–4 miles total. Depending on the progress of the group, the final ride could be anywhere from 8–15 miles round trip. Possible destinations include Van Courtland Park, New Jersey, Central Park, public swimming pools, movies, museums, etc.
Incident Report Form

Injured Person
Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
Address ____________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State ______ Zip code ________________
Gender: M F Age _____ Parent's name ___________________________________

Emergency Assistance
Were police called? Yes No If yes, police report # ________ Officer badge # _______
Was ambulance called? Yes No If yes, EMS report #: ________ Attendant badge # _______
Was child hospitalized? Yes No If yes, give hospital name and address __________________
Could victim continue riding? Yes No

Describe treatment at scene (continue on back if necessary) _____________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Description of Accident
Time _______ Date _______ Exact location _________________________________
Was the occurrence due to: Accidental injury? Illness? Other medical injury?
If accidental injury, was the cause (check one):

Collision with another bicyclist? Name _________________________________
Collision with a motor vehicle? License plate # _________________________
Driver's name ____________________________ Telephone ______________________
Collision with a stationary object   A fall   Other
Description of details (continue on reverse if necessary) __________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Witnesses
1 Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
 Address _____________________________________________________________
2 Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
 Address _____________________________________________________________

Report Taker's Information
Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
Address _____________________________________________________________
Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Bike Safety Check

☐ Frame size - Have each kid stand over a bike and lift up the front wheel about 1 inch. If he can't do this without the top tube touching the crotch, see if you can play musical bikes until everyone has a bike with enough clearance.

☐ Handle bars/stem - Stand in front of the bike facing the seat. Pinch the front wheel between your knees and try to twist the handle bars from side to side and up and down. If they move, you need to tighten the stem bolt. Check the stem to make sure you cannot see the minimum insertion line.

☐ Seat - Make a fist and hit the seat hard from the sides and from the top. If there is any vertical movement, tighten the saddle bolt directly under the seat. If there is lateral movement, check the saddle bolt and the seat post clamp. Check the seat post to make sure you cannot see the minimum insertion line. The seat should be parallel to the ground.

☐ Tire pressure - Make sure all the tires are at the recommended tire pressure. Fill them up the night before so you can identify slow leaks.

☐ Brakes - Grab both brake levers to make sure the brakes are functioning. If you roll the bike forward slowly and grab the front brake lever hard and fast, you should be able to lift the rear wheel off the ground. If brakes are a little too hard or soft, fiddle with the barrel adjuster (the hollow "screw" on the brake levers where the cable housing enters, or the analogous screw at the junction of the brake and the housing). Screwing this barrel adjuster in will release tension on the cable. Unscrewing the barrel adjuster will tighten the brakes.

☐ Headset - Grab the front brake lever and try to rock the bike back and forth while the wheels are on the ground. If you can feel play in the fork and stem (i.e., the fork has room to jiggle in the head tube) then the headset is too loose. Check for tightness by holding the bike up and letting handlebars swing side to side freely.

☐ Hubs - Pick each wheel up off the ground and shake it from side to side. If there is lateral play in the wheels or if it is difficult to spin the wheels even though the brakes are not touching, you need a hub adjustment.

☐ Chain - Inspect the chain to see if it has proper tension, especially if the bike has coaster breaks (for these bikes, no chain = no brakes!) Rotate the cranks backwards and inspect the chain for any stiff or weak links.

☐ Bottom Bracket - Jiggle the crank arms back and forth to check for play (not in the direction of rotation — but into and away from the frame). This is especially hard to explain to kids. If you feel any lateral movement, your bottom bracket is too loose.

☐ Rims - Pick up each wheel and spin it. Keep an eye on one brake pad. The distance between the brake pad and the rim should remain constant, otherwise the rim needs to be trued.

☐ Accessories - Make sure that racks, bags, water bottle cages, etc. are fastened securely and will not get tangled in wheels or pedals.

☐ Pedals - Make sure pedals are screwed in tightly, spin freely, and are not broken.

☐ Reflectors - All bikes should have front, rear, and wheel reflectors.

☐ Visual Inspection - Stand back and make sure everything looks good. Are the forks on backwards? Does the seat look like it is in an uncomfortable position?

☐ Derailleur - If this can be accomplished without pandemonium, have the kids ride the bike a little bit and shift through all the gears. The chain should reach all the gears without derailing.

☐ Shoelaces - Check shoelaces to make sure they are tied with no long arms dangling.
I. BE PREPARED! This is the first step and will make group life so much easier.

A. Staff should know what they are doing for the day. You can't spend time preparing once the group is with you. Also, have back up plans and activities ready to keep the group going when things don't work out or you have to wait. HAVE A BAG OF GOODIES (uno, books, frisbee, hacks, cards, joke book, newspaper, Chinese jump rope, ball, etc.).

B. If possible, let kids have a say in the program. Gather a list of games and activities that they would like to do.

C. Make sure your room is ready and group friendly. E.G. chairs in circle, chairs removed if sitting on the floor, obstacles removed. Make whatever area you have yours, even if it is for the day. Do gimmicks — chalk it off, give boundaries, make a sign with the group name on it. If you are lucky enough to have a permanent space ... decorate it.

D. Start each day with a formal beginning. Welcome the kids! Ask them about their day, have them talk to each other, talk about any interesting or funny things that happened.

E. Begin the year with a CONTRACT. Develop the contract with the children. This can be updated throughout the year as needed. This development of a contract is an actual activity that establishes a structure for the group to work with. The process says as much as the content. The initial contract establishes the rules for the group and helps them understand how to problem solve. The contract can be signed by all and displayed. It should be positive.

II. EVERYDAY GROUP LIFE! These are some things to help the group function in a positive way throughout the year.

A. Group Identity Activities - These are some examples of activities that will help the group to function as a group:

1. Group name
2. Secret Santa/Special message day
3. Birthday celebrations
4. Garden
5. Competitions with other groups
6. Bulletin boards highlighting group activities
7. Group doing something for another group
8. Theme dressing day. (Group wears all the same color, or cartoon character, or sports emblem, or funny hat, etc.)

B. Work Assignments - Give the kids responsibilities in the group. The following are examples of some jobs, but certainly each Center will have their own ideas: juice monitor, cookie monitor, door holder, attendance taker, garbage and clean up, lost and found, messenger, supplies. Rotate the jobs each day or week.

C. Awards - Do weekly or monthly awards. Give the group an award or each individual. Examples are: most creative, cooperative, energetic, etc.

D. Transitions - Movement of the group can be disruptive. Before leaving an area, remember to alert the children. For example, “In five minutes we will be leaving the gym”. Have a routine for movement (partners, follow the leader, singing, etc.) When you get to a place take a moment to regroup.

E. Doing the Actual Activities - Explain the activity and begin. Kids will join in if they see the staff and other kids doing it. If someone really doesn't want to participate, try to find a way that they can stay in the room without being disruptive. Kids sometimes need some flexibility to join a group. Have them read, be a helper, just watch, give them some time limits.
F. **Endings.** Try to take a moment to quickly sit as a group and comment how the group functioned that day. Have them say goodbye to each other. Make sure that they take responsibility to leave the area cleaned up.

**III. THE GROUP IS NOT FUNCTIONING WELL!** The following are some ideas for you to keep in mind when you have prepared, tried to prevent, but there are still children disrupting the group or the group is just not working.

A. **Make Assessments about the Individuals** in the group. Be able to describe behavior. Decide who gets along with whom, who are your negative and positive leaders, know which activities may set off certain kids, know which kids have trouble at different times of the day. Then use all that information!

Pair off children for teams, or assignments based on this. Put positive kid with negative kid. Quiet kid with outgoing kid. Verbalize to children "I know arts and crafts is hard for you, but we only have it once a month" or "I'll sit with you" or "It only lasts 45 minutes. Here wear my watch". Bring a coloring book or crossword puzzle for kid having a difficult day. If you know beginnings are hard for a kid, then state that to the child and find something to make it easier (e.g. they have a job, they have no responsibilities, they sit next to you, etc.)

Work with small subgroups of the larger group to deal with issues if the whole group cannot handle the discussion.

B. **Problem Solve Through Use of Contracts** — Acknowledge the problem, get the children to talk about it, enlist their help and ideas, come up with some real strategies, get them to agree, move on.

C. **Behavioral Charts** — Set up behavioral chart for the group as a whole if there are problems such as lateness, messiness and poor sportsmanship, or for individuals in the group. The group and or individuals can get points and then rewards (pizza party, ice cream, stickers, extra gym time, etc.)

D. **Time Out** — If an individual is being uncooperative, use time out. Don't allow the child to disrupt the group. Don't sacrifice the group to work too long with an individual child. Time Out can be away from the group or a place in the group. Make it time limited. Give them your watch. Speak to your supervisor to see how Time Out is used at your Center.

E. **Talk To and Use Your Supervisor** — Keep a log of problems, talk to your supervisor. Ask the supervisor to sit in or observe the group so they can see the problem that you are talking about. When bringing a child to the supervisor, try not to give the child over in anger, but with an explanation to the supervisor and child. "Tommy is having a rough time listening today. He needs some time away from the group to regroup and I need to finish the art project. I will check up on him in a few minutes."

F. If your Center has the flexibility to move children to a different group, sometimes this is helpful. This should only be done with the approval of the supervisor. Some personalities in the group do not always get along and it is better to move kids around. Some kids work better with certain staff.

**IV. SOME EXTRA THOUGHTS** The group leaders' participation and attitude is key to the functioning of the group. Be clear, consistent, don't be afraid to talk to the kids about functioning, follow up, be a role model, participate, sit on the floor with them, admit when you've made an error, be fair, try not to scream, manipulate situations in the best interest of the group, ask for help. If you dread being with your group something is wrong. Have a sense of humor, have fun with the kids, and never lose sight that you have the responsibility to make the group work. Group Leader and Assistant must talk to each other and work as a team. Keep the program interesting and varied, because boredom breeds acting out behavior. And remember this does not happen by magic or wishing ... it is very hard work.
Spoke Flower Instructions

Supplies:
- Spokes
- Spoke nipples (two for each flower)
- 1cm x 1cm squares of inner tube rubber
- Tissue paper or newspaper ripped into strips or squares of varying sizes
- Paint (optional)
- Spoke wrench
- Pliers or small block of wood
- Used BMX grip

Approximate time:
3-10 minutes per flower

Directions:
1. Take a spoke and thread on a spoke nipple in the normal direction. Continue to over-tighten the spoke nipple until about ¼-½ inch of thread is showing. Sometimes this can be difficult, so you can hold the head of the spoke with pliers or lay it on a table and use a block of wood to prevent it from spinning as you tighten the nipple. RAB prepares this step in advance when tools are limited or when working with elementary school kids.

2. Spear the rubber square on the end of the spoke as if you were starting a bizarre shish kabab.

3. Start to skewer the strips of paper until you have 5-15 pieces on the end of the spoke. I like to layer the pieces so that the largest are on the bottom.

4. Screw on the second spoke nipple backwards, so that the notched head presses against the paper. Tighten it until the paper is held firmly.

5. Starting with the top strip of paper, crumple each piece around the top spoke nipple, one at a time.

6. When all of the pieces have been crumpled, gently reverse the process by pulling each ‘petal’ out.

7. If you used newspaper, you can paint the petals with tempera paint and let them dry.

8. To display your bouquet, take an old, yet aesthetically pleasing BMX grip and cut a small hole or ‘X’ in the end. Stand the grip upright on the table and shove as many flowers in it as you can before it falls over. Voila!