

A bike ride to remember

Event scheduled in June honoring the late Elliot Kaminitz encourages safer cycling

By Laura Damon

Staff writer

NEWPORT - Bicyclists are not uncommon on Aquidneck Island, but a summer bicycling event aims to encourage an even greater presence.

Elliot's Ride for Safety and Wellness, formerly the Elliot Kaminitz Father's Day Ride, encourages people of all ages and abilities to participate in a 2-mile loop around Brenton Point State Park on Sunday, June 11, from 2-5 p.m.

The event honors Elliot Kaminitz, a retired dentist from Middletown who died in 2012 after being struck by a car while bicycling on Memorial Boulevard near Easton's Beach. His wife, Renee Kaminitz, joined the board at Bike Newport and became an advocate for safer cycling.

"The family has been very involved with safer cycling initiatives," said Bari Freeman, executive director of Bike Newport.

Renee Kaminitz was joined by Thompson Middle School students at Bike Newport on Wednesday to officially announce Elliot's Ride. The students were accompanied by Jaime Crowley, principal at Thompson Middle School, and Colleen Burns Jermain, superintendent of Newport public schools.

Tristan Morris, a fifth-grader at Thompson, made a drawing for Bike Newport that inspired graphic designer Steven Sabo's artwork for the event's posters and other promotional materials. Morris and Sabo met at the celebration.

Damien Platt, a sixth-grader at Thompson, won a bike donated from Newport Bicycle in a raffle for the students.

Elliot's Ride is sponsored by BankNewport and the state Department of Transportation's Office on Highway Safety. The event is co-produced by Bike Newport and the Newport County YMCA and hosted by the state Department of Environmental Management.

Registration is free, but donations will benefit bike safety programs and will support joint programs by Bike Newport and the Newport County YMCA. These organizations encourage biking as a form of transportation and recreation.

Freeman said the goal is to round up as many participants as possible to take a ride by the ocean together. To accomplish this, Freeman said event organizers are working to "remove the obstacles" so "more and more people can experience the fun and the joy" of bike riding.

A bus will be available to transport participants and bikes to the event. The bus route includes stops at Oxbow apartments, Middletown Public Library, Coddington Naval Housing, Miantonomi Memorial Park, Newport Hospital, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center and Chapel Terrace.

"Elliot's Kid Zone" will be on-site at Brenton Point State Park and will feature safe cycling activities for kids such as helmet fittings, bike safety checks and a place to practice biking.

The event will also feature refreshments, music, yoga, kite flying and more.

For more information on the event and to register, visit elliotsride.org.

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Representatives from BankNewport, the Newport County YMCA, Bike Newport, the state Department of Transportation, Newport public schools, Newport Health Equity Zone, Housing Authority of Newport and the Kaminitz family were on hand Wednesday at Bike Newport to announce Elliot's Ride for Safety and Wellness. Below right, Damien Platt, a sixth-grader at Thompson Middle School, shows off a bike he won from Newport Bicycle. He is joined by shop employee Owen Pfeiffer. Below left, local designer Steven Sabo was inspired by Thompson Middle School fifth-grader Tristan Morris' drawing to create the artwork for Elliot's Ride.

Bike Newport photos

