

A Bike Ed Success Story



If at first you don't succeed by Cheryl Campbell

Dan's story shows us that even if there are obstacles to participating, perseverance and adaption mean all students can take part in and enjoy Bike Ed.

Dan is twelve and attends Bell Primary School in Preston, and I am Dan's aide. The sports teacher approached me to ask if Dan would like to attend bike camp and the six-week Bike Ed sessions. As Dan could not ride a bike, this was a great opportunity, and he would learn some basic road safety rules as well. I thought, we can do this, but in six weeks – not sure!

Week one: Dan was so excited to bring his bike to school for the first lesson on road safety, there was no way I could get him to remove his bike helmet. Dan was concerned he didn't have pedals. I showed him how to scoot along. This action was very hard for Dan to grasp so he walked the bike along with legs straddled either side of the bike.

Weeks two and three: Dan had Bike Ed once a week, plus two extra lessons in the school yard with no-one else around. Slowly but surely Dan started to coast very short distances. Once he has his balance and could steer, he started to go around cones and down slight declines with his feet off the ground. He was very excited to go from one side of the basketball court to the other.

During one of the lessons I called out to Dan to remind him to scan for anything coming, to which he replied, 'It's ok Cheryl, no trains'. Yes, Dan had been listening to the theory lessons.

Week four: Only two weeks left of Bike Ed and four weeks to the bike camp: it was time for the pedals to go on.. He had to concentrate really hard on his feet and legs to get it all co-ordinated. Dan was in tears many times and wanted to quit, but as they say, if you fall off the horse (bike) you need to get back on – we would wipe the tears and try again.

Weeks five and six: Everything came together and with a gentle push, Dan was off riding from one end of the school ground to the other. As he passed by he yelled, 'Look at me I can ride a bike!'

I showed Dan how to put the pedals in the right spot so he could push off himself: I had been made redundant.

The children in Bike Ed encouraged Dan all the way and showed their appreciation of his efforts by forming a guard of honour for him to ride through as they cheered and clapped. Watching Dan get his certificate at the end of the course along with everyone else and proudly showing it off was such a joyous occasion.

Dan had a wonderful time at camp and could join in the activities, but what brings him most pleasure is riding with his family on the weekends.

Dan now rides independently to high school.

This is an abridged version of an article which was first published in Voice: the Journal of Down Syndrome Australia in 2013.

CITY OF DAREBIN

274 Gower Street, Preston
PO Box 91, Preston, Vic 3072
T 8470 8888 F 8470 8877
E mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au
darebin.vic.gov.au



National Relay Service

TTY dial 133 677 or
Speak & Listen
1300 555 727
or iprelay.com.au
then enter
03 8470 8888



Speak your language

T 8470 8470
العربية Italiano
繁體中文 Македонски
Ελληνικά Soomalii
हिंदी Tiếng Việt

Contact Details:

Safe Travel Officer
8470 8506
safetravel@darebin.vic.gov.au