



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Ace Bollinger, Wenatchee Valley Velo Club, (509) 679-5003,
acebollinger@nwi.net

**Wenatchee Valley Velo Club and Confluence Health
to give away 500 bike helmets to kids at Apple Blossom**

WENATCHEE — Hundreds of children and teens in the Wenatchee Valley will soon be able to enjoy a much safer ride on their bicycles.

Wenatchee Valley Velo Club and Confluence Health will give away 500 bike helmets to kids and youth ages 2 to 17 during the upcoming Apple Blossom Festival.

The free helmet-giveaway will take place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday, April 26, at Memorial Park during the festival's Pepsi-Cola Youth Day. Memorial Park is located at Chelan and Orondo avenues in Wenatchee.

Kids and youth will each be fitted for a helmet — which reduce the risk of head and brain injuries in the event of a crash — during the April 26 giveaway in Wenatchee. A parent will need to be present to sign a waiver.

Wenatchee Valley Velo board member Craig Still said improving biking safety is a huge part of his group's mission, adding he and other club members frequently see kids riding without helmets.

"We know helmets save lives," Still said. "Usually when you hit pavement in a bike spill, you don't even have time to put your hands out. This (safety program) is a big push for us."

In 2010, nearly 800 bicyclists were killed in the United States and there were an estimated 515,000 emergency department visits due to bicycle-related injuries. Children (5-14 years), adolescents, and young adults (15-24 years) have the highest rates of nonfatal bicycle-related injuries, accounting for almost 60 percent of all bicycle-related injuries seen in U.S. emergency departments, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In a majority of the deaths, the most serious injuries were to the head, highlighting the importance of wearing a bicycle helmet. Helmet use has been estimated to reduce head injury risk by 85 percent.

Wenatchee-based Confluence Health is sponsoring the helmet-giveaway and is a partner in the event.

"These are really nice helmets," said Ace Bollinger, another Velo Club board member. "They are lightweight, a quality helmet. They are going to help keep kids safe.

"We hope to make it an annual tradition at the Apple Blossom Festival Youth Day at the park."

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