

# Bike rodeo tests kids' skills

By Krystle S. Morey

Rain didn't deter a group of about 100 kids from testing their riding skills on a bicycle obstacle course during Granville's Summer Recreation Program last Friday.

"I was definitely worried about the rain, especially with the kids riding their bikes," said program director Hunter Bassett. "Luckily though the rain wasn't too bad and they all had the opportunity to ride their bikes."

The Bike Rodeo, sponsored by the village and town as well as Centers Health Care, challenged kids with a number of obstacles including tight turns, a hard stop and speed straightaway.

Last Friday was Brayden Powers' first time riding a bike. Powers, 6, reported that he was brave and was "not scared" to tackle the obstacles, which were marked with plastic cones in the Granville Elementary School parking lot.

When asked how his round on the course went, he said: "Fun."

Some students brought bikes and helmets to share with those who either didn't have a bike of their own or were unable to bring a bike that day.

"Most of the kids were able to bring their own bikes and helmets which worked out perfectly," Bassett said.

The kids waited under a pop-up tent, sheltered from the drizzling rain, until it was their turn to maneuver the turns on the course.

"I can't wait to do it," said John Hampton, 6.

From July 5 to Aug. 17, some 160 children will attend summer rec each day, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Granville Elementary School. They alternate playing in the gym, on the playground, making on arts and crafts, and enjoying free lunches.

"The main thing I wanted the kids to learn is that safety is first priority when riding and that they always need to wear helmets," Bassett said.

Bassett, who works at Washington Center in Argyle, reached out to Centers Health Care for help with the Bike Rodeo because she remembers participating in a bike rodeo when she was younger.



**Jacob Hampton jumps with joy after he was informed he won a bicycle raffled off during the Summer Rec bike rodeo. From left: Kathryn Dennison, Kayla Nowicki, Hunter Bassett and John Hampton look on.**

"I was super excited to host it," she said.

The students learned left and right turn hand signals as well as coming to a complete stop at a stop sign before continuing riding.

"We care about the communities that we are in," said Will Wohltjen, Centers' field marketing manager. "Any way that we can help out ... we try to."

Centers, which operates the Granville Center and Slate Valley Center nursing and rehabilitation facilities, donated three new bicycles to the program. Each was raffled off to a child attending the summer recreation program that day.

Each kid's name was scratched onto a piece of scrap paper and drawn from a helmet at random.

Jacob Hampton, 8, won the bicycle for his age group.

"I did it. I won a bike," he exclaimed when his name was read aloud.

"My mom and aunt will be so happy. I won my very own bike," Hampton said.

Hampton immediately confirmed that he would share the bike with his

younger brother, John. Then he asked if he could take it for a spin. Off he went, around the cones again.

"It's awesome," he said.

The black and red Huffy bike featured racing decals, "Rock it" stickers and training wheels.

"I like that it's even red," Hampton said.

Last Friday was Hampton's first time riding a "big kid bike."

"I rode a three-wheeler until I was seven," he said.

Centers also donated four helmets and three bells that were raffled off. Elementary school teacher Carrie Arquette donated two bikes that were also raffled off to the children.

T.J. Zovistoski from the Granville Police Department supervised the bike rodeo throughout the day and he provided every kid at the rec program with a make-your-own Stewart's ice cream.

At the conclusion of each heat, Bassett asked the kids if they enjoyed challenging themselves on the course and if they had fun.

The consensus: "Yes!"