



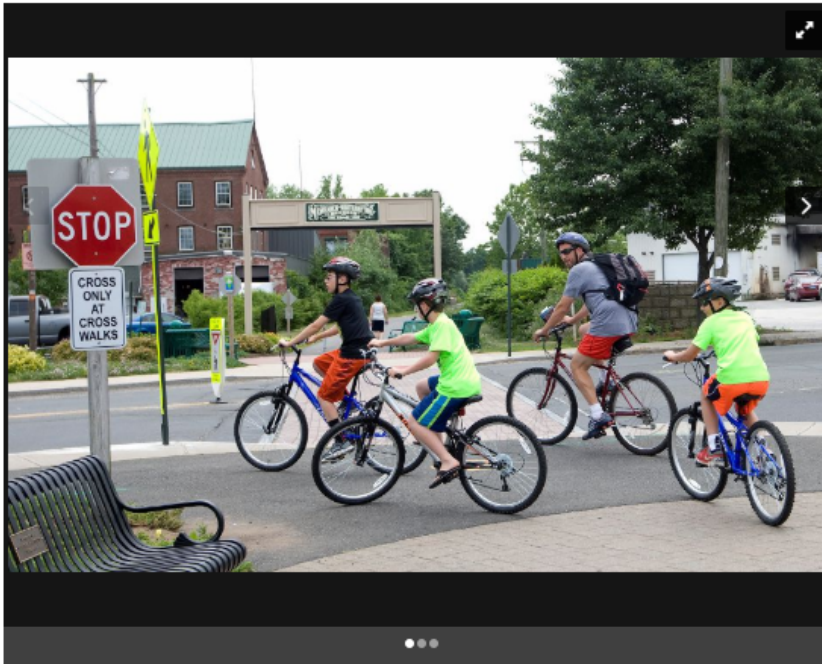
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Bicycle safety event scheduled for Tuesday in Southington



Left to right, Marco Fusciello, 12, Eric Orsini, 10, Tom Fusciello and Michael Fusciello 10, turn onto W. Main St. from the Linear Trail in Southington, Tuesday, June 24, 2014. All are from Southington. | Dave Zajac / Record-Journal

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August 06, 2018 04:19PM

By Jesse Buchanan, Record-Journal staff



SOUTHINGTON — Joanne Kelleher, director of a local children's education and wellness organization, wants to see more children on their bikes and organized a bike safety event to make kids and their parents comfortable on the road.

Bike Safe Southington will take place Tuesday starting at 5:30 p.m. at Derynoski School, 240 Main St. Children ages 5 to 12 can decorate their helmets, navigate through a bike course organized by Bike Walk Connecticut and have a mechanic to do a safety inspection of their bicycle. Information on safe biking will be available for accompanying parents, who Kelleher also invited to volunteer for the bike course.

In addition to safety lessons for kids, Kelleher also wants to reassure parents that safe biking is possible.

"You don't see as many kids riding their bikes anymore. I think parents are afraid to let their kids out on the street," she said.

Parents can register for the program at www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/events/.

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The safe biking program is funded through the Bradley Henry Barnes & Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust, administered by the Main Street Community Foundation. The trust was established to improve health among local residents.

State law requires children under 16 to wear a helmet. Kelleher said decorating helmets personalizes them for kids who are then more likely to actually wear them.

Instructors with Bike Walk Connecticut will take children through a bike course set up like a road with simulated hazards such as sewer drains, pedestrians, and volunteers holding signs that say, "I'm a car."

Bill Young, president of Bike Walk, said children are often "turned loose" with bikes rather than taught the rules of the road and safe biking habits.

"A lot of kids want to bicycle, but there aren't necessarily instructional places available for them to do it safely," Young said. "That's a real issue."

Bike Walk is an advocacy and educational group for cyclists and walkers.