

# THE RECORDER

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## CYCLE Kids teaches safety savvy

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GREENFIELD — Ten-year-old Marcellus Ortiz rode a black mountain bike with green and yellow stripes at the back of the middle school Tuesday, learning about hand signals and bike safety.

“My dad taught me how to ride a bike, but now I’m learning things I never knew,” said Ortiz, who is one of 12 students in John Hickey’s physical education class this year learning about bicycling safely, nutrition and more, all thanks to a \$20,000 grant from CYCLE Kids.

The nonprofit is a prevention program based in Cambridge, which aims to reduce the rates of childhood obesity through the education of children and their families about the importance of maintaining a physically active lifestyle and making good nutritional choices, doing it through the bicycle.

Sheala Arce, 10, who is also a fifth-grader in Hickey’s class, said she also knew how to ride a bicycle, but didn’t know how to adjust her helmet, provide hand signals when she was turning, or use her brakes without falling. “This is my favorite time of the week at school,” she said. We do this twice a week every few weeks. Now we won’t do it until spring. I can’t wait.”

The town’s recreation and school departments applied for the grant for the middle school. It was enough to purchase 10 mountain bikes, 20 bicycle helmets and workbooks for all physical education and health classes at the middle school.

“The kids spend six weeks with me learning how to ride, as well as learning bike and road safety,” said Hickey. “Then, they spend the next six weeks in health, learning about nutrition and eating well, as well as exercise. It’s a great opportunity for many of them who don’t have bikes.”

Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore said her department will most likely use the bikes and

helmets during summer camps.

“CYCLE Kids is a great program,” said Moore. “It’s keeping our kids fit and happy at the same time.”



Brianna Miller, 10, a student at Greenfield Middle School, reaches out to high-five Ashley Schwabe, 10, as she circles the bicycle course behind the school during one of the CYCLE Kids classes taught by physical education teacher John Hickey Tuesday. CYCLE Kids, a nonprofit from Cambridge, gives schools bikes and helmets along with in-person training and workbook-based lessons through its grant program.

Recorder Staff/Matt Burkhartt

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