

THE RIDE FOR MISSING CHILDREN 2015

Friday, MAY 29, 2015

FRIENDS OF MISSING CHILDREN INFORMATION MANUAL

“Making our Children safer ...one Child at a time”

*National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
New York/Buffalo
610 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202
716-842-6333*

THE RIDE
FOR MISSING CHILDREN



THE AWARENESS
CONTINUES...

The Ride for Missing Children Buffalo, New York

Friends of Missing Children – Information Manual

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

On behalf of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), we would like to welcome you to *The Ride for Missing Children*. There are three purposes of “The Ride”: · To honor the memory of all missing children · to raise public awareness of the plight of all missing and exploited children and the need for child safety education · to raise funds to support the missing children poster distribution and mission of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – New York/Buffalo (NCMEC-NY/Buffalo).

Please read this information carefully. It will help to prepare you for our 100 or 45-mile Ride, and will give you valuable information on the work we are doing for missing and exploited children, and your new role as a member of *The Friends of Missing Children*.

We know that your experience will be a challenging, and rewarding one. Together we will work toward our mission: *to make our children safer ...one child at a time.*

Gratefully,

The Ride for Missing Children – Executive Committee

THE RIDE FOR MISSING CHILDREN – 2015

The Ride for Missing Children Buffalo – 2012 will be held on **Friday, May 29 2015**.

The Ride began in 1997 with 43 Riders who rode their bicycles from the steps of the State Capital in Albany to Utica.

The goals of *The Ride for Missing Children* remain the same as when it first began:

To honor all of America’s missing and exploited children

To promote awareness of the plight of all missing and exploited children, and the need for child safety education

To raise funds to support the mission of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children—NY/Buffalo office.

The Ride has grown steadily each year. There are now six Rides for Missing Children in New York State: Central New York, Rochester, Auburn, New York Metro, Albany and Buffalo.

It’s Not About a Bike Ride

We ride 100-miles in one day, as one long, unified team of Riders, riding 2 x 2 escorted by The New York State Police and local law enforcement of the jurisdictions through which we ride. We have incorporated at 45-mile “half-ride” for those who want to join the group at lunch and finish the Ride. The Ride stops at schools along the way for educational Rest Stops, and we “Ride-By” other schools along our route. At each school we visit, we bring our message of child safety and abduction prevention. Before the Ride we reach out to schools “beyond our borders” with our educational and awareness programs. Our bicycles are the “vehicles” we use to make our journey, however they merely provide us with a visible means to spread our message about the plight of missing and exploited children and to educate and communicate to those we ride by, and to those that we visit, on child safety education.

The Ride for Missing Children is not about personal challenge or achievement – it is about our mission “to make our children safer ...one child at a time”.

YOUR THREE COMMITMENTS

As a member of *The Friends of Missing Children* we ask you, the members of the team, to make these three commitments:

1. To ride the 100-mile or 45-mile bicycle route and to work as part of the Team of Riders and maintain an average pace of 14 mph (15 – 17 mph on the flats).
2. To help NCMEC in its mission to promote awareness of the plight of all missing and exploited children, and the need for child safety education.
3. To raise a minimum of \$300 to support the mission of NCMEC-NY/Buffalo.

How you can fulfill your commitments

The 100—Mile Ride

It is important to think of The Ride as an *awareness event* – not a race or endurance event. Although we encourage everyone to train properly for this distance, you are not required to ride the entire route. Each Rider will have the opportunity to take a rest break in our Rider's Bus, if necessary. This way you will be able to ride safely and enjoy our ride back home. Riders can also choose to ride the 45 mile half ride.

Awareness – Education – Helping NCMEC

The Ride for Missing Children is not just a one-day event. Our mission for promoting awareness begins months before the Ride. You can fulfill your awareness commitment in a number of ways.

- ü Join one of our Committees to help organize The Ride.
- ü Participate in the "Adopt-A-Rider" Program. Our School Committee works with schools across the State in our *Pennies for Posters* campaign. School children collect pennies to put up posters of missing children. A school or class can adopt you and their pennies count towards your fundraising goal. This also gives you an opportunity to visit or correspond with the students to tell them of our safety rules.
- ü NCMEC Speaker's Bureau. We train people to speak to school groups, parents, community service groups, et al, on issues about missing and exploited children, and child safety education. If you are interested in joining our Speaker's Bureau, please contact NCMEC-NY/Buffalo office at 716-842-6333.

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

As the nation's resource center for child protection, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) spearheads national efforts to locate and recover missing children. NCMEC also raises public awareness about ways to prevent child abduction, molestation, and sexual exploitation. A private nonprofit organization, established in 1984, NCMEC operates under a Congressional mandate and works in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. NCMEC is a vital resource for families and the approximately 17,000 law enforcement agencies throughout the United States in the search for missing children, and the quest for child protection.

NCMEC has disseminated millions of missing children's photographs. One in seven of these children are recovered as a direct result. NCMEC believes that "somebody knows where each missing child is located," and seeks to reach every home with these photographs.

Every day 2,000 missing children are reported to local police, and entered into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center computer system. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is dedicated to recovering these missing children, and preventing other children from becoming victims of abduction and sexual exploitation. NCMEC receives thousands of leads about missing children that are forwarded to police investigators. NCMEC also operates the national child pornography tip line, in conjunction with the U.S. Customs Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The tip line has produced leads resulting in many successful investigations.

NCMEC also works to improve legislation to protect our children. NCMEC was instrumental in the efforts to require each State to have a clearinghouse for missing and exploited children – now, all 50 States have such a clearinghouse. Whether a police officer needs case assistance, desperate parents are seeking help to find their child, or a citizen is asking for information on child safety, all it takes is one call to the High-Tech Search Network of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

Photo Distribution

NCMEC's photo distribution program, established in October 1985, has continued its role of involving a network of private-sector and federal partners in distributing photographs of missing children on an international, national, regional, statewide, and local level. Using methods such as ADVO®'s direct-mail advertising cards; Choice Point for Faxing posters, Wal-Mart; and hundreds of magazines, newspapers, trade journals, cable television, telephone directories, and online computer services—the photo distribution network has been instrumental in the recovery of missing children.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – New York/Buffalo

NCMEC-NY/Buffalo was opened in March, 2006, as a satellite office of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – New York Regional Office. The Center's primary mission continues to be to providing prevention education programs to the Western New York community.

During 2011, NCMEC/NY distributed over 630,000 posters of missing children, assisted in the recover of 2,078 children through poster distribution and case assistance, and, in Western New York alone, provided 1928 education programs for 26,260 children and adults in the community.

FUNDRAISING – RAISING “POSTERS”

Some people feel uncomfortable raising funds – asking other people for money. Here are some ways of making your fundraising easier, more organized, and more comfortable for you. People who have initially been intimidated by fundraising have found it to be a very rewarding experience. Think ahead to how you will feel after you have raised 2,000 posters of missing children – 2,000 more chances to bring a missing child home.

Fundraising – The Basics

Step #1: You “CAN” do it!!!!

People DO want to support you and the work that you are doing.

ü Contributing money to a cause is a powerful way for a person to get involved when they cannot give their time.

ü Make people aware of what their donation will do. Share with them that we have distributed over 6.5 million posters on 5,670 children and that now 4,016 of these children have been *successfully recovered!*

ü It is important for everyone to know that all community donations to The Ride for Missing Children support our mission. All expenses for The Ride and Community Events are paid by our Corporate Benefactors. Explain how every \$0.24 they donate distributes one more poster of a missing child.

Step #2: Make a Plan

Ask yourself "...what is the best way for me to do the fundraising"? You may be comfortable talking directly with people and asking for a donation. Or, because of your time constraints, you may feel that a letter-writing campaign is more efficient. Maybe you work at a company that will match funds you raise. Don't go it alone. Think of ways to get other people to help raise funds for you – you will then be riding on May 29th for all of these people. Get people enthused about the work you are doing for missing and exploited children and people will want to help you to reach your goal. Not only does this broaden your fundraising efforts, but look at the opportunities you will have to speak with people. Tell them what you have learned about the problem of missing children, child exploitation, and safety rules for their children.

- ü Contact groups at work or within your church. Can they do a bake sale to help you? Can a CYO to hold a fundraising dance to help you meet your goal? Just make sure to call the Center at (716)842-6333 and have your event approved.

- ü Do you belong to or know someone in Kiwanis, Rotary, Elks, Moose, Optimists Club or other organizations? Ask to speak at one of their meetings (we suggest you bring along a member of our Speakers Bureau or our Community Educator). Tell them of The Ride and your goal to raise more posters of missing children. Ask for their help.

- ü Hold a "Jeans Day" at work. Put up posters and spread the word that you are holding a "Jeans Day" on a certain date to raise money to raise posters. By paying \$5 each participant earns the right to wear jeans on a particular day. Don't stop there! Consider holding a 50-50 raffle to raise further funds. Maybe a bake sale could be held on that day as well at your office.

Step #3: Set a time table

Things always take longer than you think they will.

Start your fundraising EARLY. Time will pass quickly and all of a sudden the Ride will be right around the corner. As the Ride approaches your schedule will be crowded with meetings, training rides, etc. Don't leave your fundraising to the last minute.

Ask your donors to send in their donation as soon as possible. People get sidetracked and forget.

Step #4: Set a Goal – How Many Posters Do You Want to Raise?

This is one of your most important steps. Think positive, but be realistic.

Set a Goal in "numbers of posters", not "dollars".

Give the donors a goal – together let's raise another 2,000 posters.

Let your "donating partners" know what their donations will do. Each poster we send out is one more chance to bring a missing child home. Tell everyone that you have set a goal to raise "x" amount of posters. Ask for their help in obtaining this goal.

Set your personal goal and share it with them – let them know YOUR GOAL, YOUR PERSONAL COMMITMENT to raise a specific number of posters of missing children.

Remember, your commitment is to raise a minimum of 2,000 posters. Can you think of ways to get 30 people to donate \$10.00? If so, you have met your goal.

Step #5: Use The Ride promotional brochure

This will be available in early March.

Step #6: Keep Donation Pledge Logs

Available online is the Donor Pledge Form. Each Rider is responsible for collecting all of their own donations and sending them into the NCMEC-NY/Buffalo office with the completed Pledge Form. Our address is 610 Main Street, 2nd floor, Buffalo, NY 14202. Riders can also create an online fundraising page through Active.com.

- ü All donations collected by Riders must be into the NCMEC-NY/Buffalo office by May 10th so that we will have time to process them before The Ride.

- ü Send your donations in as you receive them so they are easier to process.

- ü Each Rider is responsible for tracking his or her own donations. Due to the volume of checks that we have to process, we are not able to give you immediate updates.

IRS acknowledgement letters are sent by NCMEC-NY to donors to The Ride for Missing Children for their tax purposes.

Step #7: Give Feedback

Your “donor” list is also a mailing list for Thank You notes, etc. Before the Ride, let people know how you are doing with respect to the goal that you set. If you have not met your goal, people may want to give more to make sure you beat the goal you told them of when you first explained to them about The Ride. When you’ve made your goal, letting people know is an important step. Tell them how many posters you actually raised and how many posters all the *Friends of Missing Children* raised from our Ride.

WHERE DO YOU SEND THE DONATIONS?

We ask all Riders to have their donors send the individual donations directly to the Rider so you can collect and tabulate all your donations. Pledge Forms are available online at Active.com so you can enter and track all the people making donations to you. When you have compiled these, send or deliver your donations for The Ride for Missing Children to the Buffalo office. If your donations are sent to headquarters or other NCMEC offices it is possible that they may not be properly credited to the Ride and your fundraising commitment.

*National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
New York/Buffalo Office
610 Main Street, 2nd floor
Buffalo, NY 14202*

Make sure your donating supporters put your name in the memo section of the check so we can credit you for their donation.

FUNDRAISING GUIDELINES

As a member of The Friends of Missing Children, you are representing the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. NCMEC does have several guidelines that you must follow.

- 1) The funds collected by the Friends of Missing Children go **directly** to support our poster distribution on missing children, and the mission and educational programs of NCMEC/NY. Your donations are *not* used for the expenses of the Ride.
- 2) Donations should be in the form of a check made out to NCMEC-NY/Buffalo. Checks should be sent directly to YOU, The Rider. Enter the donation information onto the Rider Donation Receipt Log. Periodically send the log and donations to the NCMEC/Buffalo office at 610 Main Street, 2nd floor, Buffalo, NY 14202. All donations must be sent to or dropped off at the office by May 20, 2012 so we can announce our “posters-raised” during the Ride. There will be a donation drop off table at each of the Rider meetings. Send or drop off your collected donations in as early as you can. Send your donations in to us you receive them. Do not hold your checks until the Pledge Form is filled or you have a large number of checks.
- 3) The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charity and a publicly supported organization as defined in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Federal I.D. # 52-1328557. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
- 4) Independent Fund-Raising Events: Many Riders conduct various fund-raising events to achieve their fund-raising goal. We encourage these events; however NCMEC cannot officially endorse or support these events. Please contact the office with your fundraising idea, so that we are aware of what is being done and to be certain that the money you raise is credited to your poster commitment. When seeking in-kind service donations from companies for these events, you must distinguish that the donations are to your individual event and are not directly to The Ride or NCMEC-NY.
- 5) NCMEC does not conduct general phone solicitation for funds. In your fund-raising for The Ride, please do not make unsolicited phone calls seeking donations from people you do not know well. It is acceptable to call people you know (close friends, relatives, and people who will know

you personally), and who are familiar with you, to tell them of the Ride and ask for their support by giving donations.

6) Exercise discretion when speaking of Missing Children and fund-raising. Carefully explain the goals of our Ride, and that the funds you raise will go directly to the distribution of posters of missing children and the mission of NCMEC-NY/Buffalo. If you make up your own letters or mailers, please be aware NCMEC does not allow the use of the likeness of any missing child to be used with fund-raising materials.

7) Have the donors put your name on the memo area of the check. We will keep records of all donations made in your name. If your Donors do not, please write your name in the memo area of the donor's check.

8) Keep a copy of all of your donation receipt logs for your own records. If you are keeping a computer record, be sure to start a fresh page (file) every time you submit a log, numbering the pages as you go.

9) ALL RIDERS MUST SUBMIT A DONATION RECEIPT LOG/LOGS. If you have United Way contributions/employer matching funds, pennies for posters, are adopted by a school, or are a rider for a Corporate Sponsor, this MUST be written on your pledge log and submitted to the office to assure we can track your donation.

10) ALL RIDERS MUST RAISE A MINIMUM OF \$300.00 regardless of age, occupation or scholastic status. If you want to "team up" with a family member you must inform us of this prior to April 15th. The funds will then be pooled and divided equally. Each name must be on every Rider's Log.

11) If you have concerns about meeting your donation obligations, please contact the Buffalo office at 716.842.6333 prior to the Ride to assist you with ideas to increase your donations.

Independent Fundraising Activities for Riders

We encourage Riders to come up with creative ways to support your fundraising. To be consistent with NCMEC fundraising guidelines, there are some rules that you must follow.

1) Your event must be approved by the NCMEC Program Director. The National Center looks at these events as third-party fundraisers and they need to have local approval.

2) **Announcing your personal fundraising in the public media:**

a) If you choose to announce your individual activity in the print or radio media, **our Ride Media Coordinators must place these press releases for you.** This will allow us to review and approve your media announcement to make sure it follows NCMEC guidelines. Our Media Committee has many contacts in the local media and can work to get you the publicity you seek. Please contact the office at 716.842.6333.

3) Statement regarding the "use of proceeds" of your fundraising activity

a) Your announcement **must** contain the following statement to follow NCMEC guidelines:

i) **"All proceeds from this event will be used to fulfill my personal fundraising commitment to The Ride for Missing Children and will go to support the missing children poster distribution and mission of the Buffalo office of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children."**

Rules Regarding the Use of The Ride or NCMEC logo for Your Personal Fundraising Efforts

1) If you wish to use The Ride for Missing Children logo on any letters or materials you make to support your personal Ride fundraising, you must obtain permission to do so. Please contact the office at 716.842.6333.

2) Riders are **not** allowed to use the NCMEC logo on any printed materials you make for your personal fundraising.

Some Fundraising Ideas

Fund-Raising Ideas Description Hints

Adopt-A-Rider

Pennies for Posters

Our School Committee will help you get in touch with classes and organize the Pennies for Poster program. Contact the office at 716.842.6333 to find out more about this program. Take a member of our Speakers Bureau and visit the class that adopts you. This is a great way to tell them first hand of our safety rules and what we are trying to accomplish with The Ride.

Active.com Online Fund-Raising

ACTIVE.COM is an online fundraising service that will allow you to easily set up your own personal web page, and accept credit card payments directly on your web site that will go directly to NCMEC-NY/Buffalo and count toward your fundraising commitment. For further information, contact the office at 716.842.6333.

Letter Writing Campaign

Send letters and donation forms to friends, business acquaintances, and people to whom you've given donations. We have sample letters to get you started. In each letter invite people to our SafetyFest so they "welcome" us back from the The Ride. Organize your addressed envelopes by zip code. If you have 200 or more we can take advantage of our bulk-mail rates. Have a "family night" so your family can help address and stamp the envelopes.

Work with Church Groups

Ask organized groups within your church to help you with bake sales, Youth Group dances, car washes, etc. Place a note in the weekly bulletin letting people know that you will be doing The Ride for Missing Children and what your goal is for raising posters of missing kids.

Contact Service Organizations

Kiwanis

Rotary

Elks

Moose

Optimists Club

Service organizations want to help. Contact them and ask to go to one of their meetings to ask for their help. Bring a member of our Speakers Bureau. The service organization may have a fundraising event already planned and be looking for a charity to donate the proceeds to.

Corporate Dress Down Day

Get a company to help you by having a "Dress Down Day". People will donate a set amount to be able to dress down.

Corporate Matching Gift Program

Many companies have gift matching programs. See if your company will match a certain amount of the donations you raise.

Fund-Raising Ideas Description Hints

Garage Sale Have a family or community garage sale, with the proceeds going to The Ride. Make signs so every buyer knows where the garage sale money is going, have a donation jar so people who don't buy can still contribute.

Hang-A-Bike NCMEC-NY/Buffalo will be designing "paper bikes" that schools can "sell" to raise funds.

Sample Fundraising Letters

Date _____

Dear _____

I have made a commitment to help missing and exploited children by riding my bicycle in The Ride for Missing Children on May 29, 2015. The Ride raises funds to support the missing children's poster distribution program and prevention education programs throughout Western New York. My goal is to raise a minimum of \$300 to aid NCMEC in fulfilling their mission.

Every day over 2,000 children are reported missing. One in six girls and one in ten boys will be the victim of sexual exploitation before their 18th birthday. One in seven children will be sexually solicited while online.

NCMEC is the Nation's leading resource on issues of child safety. I am proud to support this organization and hope you will join me.

Please help us with your donation by making out a check to NCMEC-NY/Buffalo and send it directly to me <<Rider Name>> at <<Rider Street Address – City, State and Zip>> so that I can add it to my total and forward it on to NCMEC-NY/Buffalo with any other donations. A letter from NCMEC will be sent to you as an IRS acknowledgement of your donation.

Thank you for your support, and for helping us in our mission: *To make our children safer ...one child at a time.*

Sincerely,

<<Rider Name>>

BICYCLES AND EQUIPMENT

Bicycles for The Ride

If you are going to buy a new bike to use on this Ride, please consider buying a road bike. We are aware that many of our first year riders who haven't ridden a bike in many years will need to buy a new bike. While there are many different types of bikes to consider, including road bikes, hybrids and mountain bikes, we have found that Riders working to prepare for and ride 100 or 45 miles, have been most successful on a road bike. Riding a mountain bike or a hybrid will take more effort to keep up the pace, particularly over long distances and are discouraged for all but very strong Riders.

If you have any questions regarding an appropriate bicycle for the Ride, please contact the Ride Committee at 761.842.6333.

You will find that most of the Riders do use road bikes. They have thinner tires that require less effort over the long course of the Ride.

Tires

Mountain Bike Tires

If you are going to ride a mountain bike on The Ride for Missing Children, we **strongly** suggest you replace the knobby tires with smooth "slicks". These are available at most bike stores. You do not want to ride 100 miles on knobby mountain bike tires.

Bicycle Maintenance

Prevent Problems by having a tune-up BEFORE the day of The Ride

Please make sure your bicycle is tuned up and ready prior to the Ride. The last thing you need to deal with is equipment problems — get ready in advance. If you are in doubt about your tires and tubes — replace them with new ones.

Don't tune up the bike the day before the Ride — local bike shops will be very busy in the month before the Ride — get it into the shop in February or March!

We will have bicycle mechanics with us the day of the Ride, but they will be there to fix flat tires **ONLY**.

If you have a bike problem

On The Ride, if you have a problem with your bike (i.e., a flat tire) and have to stop, here is the proper procedure.

1. Alert all the Riders around you of your problem — Yell out "Flat tire!!!!!"
2. Drift to the far **RIGHT** shoulder of the road away from traffic and out of the line of Riders. Other Riders should steer around you and give you the right-of-way.
3. **DO NOT stop immediately in the middle of a group of Riders — you will cause an accident.**
4. When you are safely on the side of the road, stop your bike and dismount. **Keep your hand raised so you can be seen.**
5. The Bike Mechanics in the Sag Wagons will assist you with your bike problem.

6. The truck and van at the back of the escort will take you and your bike to the next rest stop where your bike will be repaired. In order to keep our uniform pace, we cannot fix flat tires or do repairs “on the road”.
7. **All other Riders KEEP ON RIDING. Do not risk creating more of a hazard by trying to stop quickly and lend assistance.** Keep on riding. The “Shepherds” will move to the side and lend assistance to the Rider.

Biking Clothing and Accessories

- 1) An ANSI/SNELL approved BICYCLE HELMET is mandatory for all riders on training rides and The Ride for Missing Children.
- 2) Biking Shorts. **DO NOT wear shorts with a seam in the crotch - this will be very dangerous after several miles. Bicycle shorts are a very good investment.**
- 3) Biking gloves – these make your hands comfortable on the handlebars – good investment.
- 4) Mirror – helmet, sunglasses or handlebar mount. We are riding in a group and it is always good to see who is behind you and where.
- 5) Be prepared for all kinds of weather!!!! On the day of the Ride, bring ALL your gear – warm weather, cold weather, rain gear – all of it. We have learned from past years that the weather can change dramatically during the day. Be prepared!! You can store your gear in one of our trucks, so you don’t have to worry about bringing too much gear. Rider gear bags are limited to 20 lbs in weight.

BIKE EQUIPMENT

Essentials

The following are good ideas to take with you on each training ride, or make sure that your partner has them.

- o Frame pump (pump that attaches to your frame). Make sure the pump fits the type of tire valves you have on your bike - -presta or schraeder.
- o Spare tubes - check the correct size for your tire.
- o Tire irons (plastic) for taking your tire off the rim.
- o Patch kit - for fixing small leaks in the new tube you just put in.
- o Water bottles and cages (2).

Nice “Extras”

These are some things that make bike riding more interesting, but are not essential.

- o Cyclometer - gives your speed, (some show cadence) and distance covered.
- o Biking Shoes. Special bike shoes have stiff soles to deliver more power to the pedals and prevent foot fatigue.
- o Pedal cages. If your bike doesn’t have cages or “clips”, we recommend getting them. Without the clips you are only pushing down on the down stroke. Clips let you pedal in “circles” and pull up on the pedal on the upstroke. They are great on long rides and very useful for riding up hills. Just 2 or 3 rides and you’ll get used to them.
- o Clipless Pedals. These are like “ski bindings” for bike pedals.

CLOTHING AND THE WEATHER

Mid-May in Upstate New York, as we all know, can bring a variety of weather -- rain, cold, snow, heat, humidity, and a combination of all of these in one day. The key to a comfortable 100(+/-) mile ride is *preparation* – having the right gear, the right clothing, and the right *training* for the conditions that day. Those of you who are not year-round bicyclists will be glad to know that you don't have to go out and spend a lot on a new cycling wardrobe. You probably have most of what you need right now!

There are some things to keep in mind:

1. In rain, keep your head, feet, hands, and body – DRY.
2. Buffer your body from the wind.
3. Bring several layers of light-weight clothing.
4. Do **not** bring bulky clothing.

1. Pack your gear and clothing in a duffle bag. This bag will be kept in one of the sag wagons and will travel with us on The Ride. Our bicycle mechanics will have floor pumps for you to use the day of the Ride. Due to the number of riders and the amount of space that we have available to us in the Sag Wagons, please do not bring a floor pump in your gear bag. Also, we have restricted the maximum weight of each Rider gear bag to 20 pounds.

Clothing You Should Bring

For the Rain & Cold

The Ride for Missing Children is an all weather ride. The key to keeping warm is ...keeping dry.

1. Rain jacket – cycling jackets are nice, but not necessary. If you have a running jacket, it will do just fine.
 2. Caution: If your bike does not have fenders, and you ride in the rain, the wheel will spray dirt and mud up on your back.
 3. Gloves. If it is very cold (in the 30's) and windy, a pair of ski gloves will be very "handy". If it's in the 40's or low 50's, a light pair of glove liners over your regular bike gloves work well.
 4. For the rain and cold – some Riders bring thick rubberized gloves like painter's gloves, or dishwashing gloves. This is a great idea!!!!
 5. Foot coverings. The cold wind will go right through your shoes. Some people have special neoprene or nylon covers for their shoes – but a good home remedy is to bring a few plastic sandwich bags (not zip-locks). Put these over your toes (under your shoes) and they will keep you warm.
 6. A polypropylene shirt under a rain jacket will keep you warm in cold weather.
 7. Extra, Dry Socks!!
 8. Extra, Dry Socks!!!! Helmet Liner. A thin ski cap can be put under your helmet to keep you warm in the cold morning air. Try it on first so you are sure your helmet won't be too tight.
 9. Full-Length Wind or Rain Pants. Again, lightweight nylon pants you use for running, etc., should be fine. If it is really cold and windy (in the 30's), a light pair of long underwear will keep you warm.
- NOTE: If the pants cuff on your right leg is loose it will get caught in the front chain ring - use a Velcro strap or something to wrap the pant cuff material tightly around your ankle.

TRAINING/COMMITMENT RIDES

The goal of the training rides is to *learn how to ride together in a large group over a long distance at a uniform pace*. We will practice during our training rides by having the Shepherds set the pace and keep a uniform line as we go up and down hills.

Training/Commitment rides will begin as soon as the weather permits (hopefully in mid-March). We do have training rides in all kinds of weather so we will be prepared for whatever weather we get on the day of The Ride. Announcements about the Training/Commitment Rides will be made on our website at www.therideformissingchildrenbuffalo.org and in e-mail notices.

Training Rides are held on Saturdays and Sundays. All first year Riders are expected to attend a minimum of 4 training rides and returning Riders at least 2 training rides. These are the absolute minimum and we strongly encourage you to make at least one ride per weekend to assist us in our group riding skills and to train to effectively ride 100 miles in one day.

You will find the training rides a lot of fun – even in bad weather. A lot of our greatest memories from past years have been from our training rides where we all got "wet" and "muddy".

Times and starting points will be announced in our newsletters. Routes will be determined based on prevailing winds, etc.

Please note: On our training rides, we will not have a police escort. It is extremely important to follow the rules of safe riding.

q Do not ride more than two by two, and ride single file when there is not a wide shoulder.

q When a car is approaching from the rear, the Riders in the back of the line will holler out “CAR BACK”. This is a signal to get into a single line. DO this quickly!!!

q The cars have the right of way – they are bigger, heavier and will cause you more damage than you will cause to the car.

(1) The Yellow Line Rule: Under no circumstances, in training rides or on the day of The Ride, are Riders to ride outside of the designated lane and cross over the yellow line into the opposing lane of traffic. Crossing over the yellow line puts you, oncoming drivers, and other Riders at risk of severe injury or death.

(a) Riders should be aware that on the day of The Ride, NYS Police and other members of the Police Escort will be driving in the opposing lane. They are there to bring traffic past our Ride or to go quickly ahead of the Ride to take a position for traffic control. They drive *very* fast and it is important for everyone’s safety to stay in our own lane.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Riding as a Group

The Ride for Missing Children is NOT a race. Our goal is to ride as a TEAM. As we go through the towns on our route we want people to see us riding as a team – a long line of bicyclists riding together. Everyone must understand that we will have Riders of different abilities and we must stay together in a continuous line. This is something that most Riders (including experienced racers) are not used to doing.

The “Shepherds”

We will have our more experienced Riders designated as “Shepherds” for our group. These Riders will be wearing something (depending on weather conditions) that will let you know who they are. The Shepherds will be working with the NYS Troopers and Police Escort to keep us riding at a steady pace and in a uniform line. The Shepherds will be wearing differently colored jerseys so you can know who they are. On the day of the Ride the Shepherds will also be in two-way radio contact with the New York State Police Escort Director to maintain our pace and keep together as a uniform, unbroken line. **You must follow the instructions given to you by the Shepherds.**

Setting the Pace

We will have two Shepherds at the head of the Ride. These Shepherds will set the pace – **DO NOT pass these Riders or try to push the pace faster than the pace they set.** The front Shepherds will be in touch with the Troopers at the front and the back of our escort to maintain a pace that will keep us together. It will be necessary for the Lead Shepherds to slow the pace from time to time and allow us time to regroup, closing up “gaps” that have formed in the middle or back of the line. This will be particularly true as we pass through turns or special “tribute” points on the Route.

We will ride as a TEAM

As we go along the route, we want everyone to see us as a unified Team. This means we will keep a steady and even pace.

We ask our experienced riders to work with us at keeping a slower pace than you are capable of riding. **NO BREAK AWAYS!!!**

If you are having trouble keeping the pace – drop off for a while and get in the sag wagon. Pull over to the far right-shoulder of the road and **GET OFF YOUR BICYCLE** – do not keep riding or you will make it more difficult for the Pick-Up Crew to assist you.

Riding in a large group is very different from riding in a race or riding in a small group. Stronger Riders have to gauge their pace going up hills – if they charge too aggressively then they will leave the back of the group behind as they crest the hill. The result will be a huge gap in the middle of our line.

Keeping the Pace

Overall, we will be keeping an average pace of 15 – 17 mph on the flats. Do not allow large gaps between groups of Riders. Stay with the pace. Follow the pace set by the Shepherds. **DO NOT** push the pace. If you are having problems maintaining the pace – pull off to the right side of the road and wait for the sag wagons.

Pick Up Speed Going Down Hill – the pace slows down going uphill

As we go down hills we will allow the pace to pick up slightly. For safety reasons, when riding in a large group we cannot pick up too much speed. We will keep the momentum going as we come up a hill and gradually slow the pace down as we reach the top.

Braking

You will be using your brakes constantly during the Ride and on all training rides. Keep your speed as uniform as possible. Keep your hands near your brakes at all times. As in most bike races, we discourage the use of aerobars so that your hands are accessible to the brakes at all times.

Experienced Riders – be patient

The Troopers may slow down the pace as we crest a hill and keep it slow as we continue in order to let the back of the group catch up. Please keep your pace even and follow the Troopers instructions. Although many of you can take the hills at a faster pace, remember – we have to keep the group together. Assist the slower riders. Ride alongside of them and give them encouragement.

The Yellow Line Rule

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Riders should be aware that on the day of The Ride, NYS Police and other members of the Police Escort will be driving in the opposing lane. They are there to bring traffic past our Ride or to go quickly ahead of the Ride to take a position for traffic control. They drive *very* fast and it is important for everyone's safety to stay in our own lane.

For your safety and that of all the Riders, do not under any circumstances ride to the left of the yellow line.

2 -- 1 Riders Abreast

One of the keys to safe riding in a large group is to keep organized and keep a safe distance between you and the other Riders.

On The Ride, we will be using the “2 – 1” system – all at the direction of the New York State Troopers escorting us:

2 abreast -- our standard riding configuration.

1 – single file -- we will ride single-file when we have to go on a narrow shoulder.

Important!!!! At no time must we ever ride more than 2 abreast unless directed to by the Troopers or when passing a single Rider. Having more than three Riders side-by-side can make it impossible for the middle Riders to move out of the way in the event of an obstacle or a crash. **The only Riders who are to** *Figure 2: Riding 2 abreast. Keep a bike length between you and the rider a head of you.* **be riding 3-abreast are the designated Shepherds as they are assisting Riders, giving directions or repositioning themselves in The Ride line.**

Riding Pace

We stress again that we must keep an even pace on the Ride and there are some simple rules we must follow:

1. Inexperienced Riders must take rest breaks in the sag wagon, if you cannot keep the 15 – 17 mph pace on the flat portions.
2. Experienced Riders. DO NOT push the pace.
3. There will be three of our “Shepherds” leading the Riders. DO NOT PASS THESE SHEPHERDS or try to get them to change the pace. They will be in direct contact with the State Police and will be working with the State Police to keep the pace uniform and the group together. The lead Trooper car will set the pace. We will have experienced Riders alongside of them to gauge the pace as we accelerate on the down hills, and slow down as we crest a hill.
4. REMEMBER – a long line of Riders is like a train—the front Riders have to wait for the Riders in the back of the pack. When we start we have to start out slowly and build up speed so we can stay together.
5. Follow the directions of the “Shepherds”. If you are falling off the back of the group, you will be directed to get in the rear sag wagon.
6. **Keep your hands near your brake levers.** You will be using your brakes frequently to adjust the pace – **this is not a race** – we must keep the line uniform.
7. We will pick up the speed going downhill, but will not be racing the downhills. Brake to control your speed.

Rules for all Riders

These rules are important for all Riders to ensure a safe, enjoyable ride for everyone. We need your cooperation. Anyone not following the rules will be dropped from the rest of the Ride.

- 1) Do NOT pass the Shepherds in the front of the line or push the pace faster than the one they are setting.
 - 2) Follow all directions of the NYS Troopers in our escort and the Shepherd Riders.
 - 3) Do not overlap your front wheel with the rear wheel of the bike in front of you.
 - 4) All Riders MUST wear ANSI/SNELL approved bicycle helmets on ALL training rides and on the day of The Ride.
 - 5) DO NOT make sudden stops.
 - 6) If you drop something – DO NOT stop to pick it up!!!! Shout out “... dropped water bottle (or what ever you’ve dropped). One of the Shepherds at the back of the line will pick it up and give it to the back-up wagons. Stopping to pick something up will cause a crash with the Riders behind you.
 - 7) **Cell phones are NOT to be used when riding on training rides or the day of The Ride.**
 - 8) Riders are required to keep hands on the handlebars – Riding “no hands” is not allowed.
 - 9) Use hand signals when you are slowing, turning or stopping. Inexperienced Riders – we recommend “calling-out” the signals until you are proficient at hand signals.
 - 10) **Railroad Tracks!!! SLOW DOWN!!!** Cross RR tracks at a perpendicular.
- If you cross at too much of an angle your wheel may be pulled out from under you and you will go down hard.

11) DO NOT use your aero bars!!! This is a rule enforced even in races since when you are down on your aero bars you cannot reach your brakes quickly in an emergency.

12) **Keep the pace!!!!** If you find that you cannot keep the pace, you must drop back and take a rest. The Shepherds in the rear of the line will assist you getting into the sag wagon and putting your bike in the trailer.

13) The Yellow Line Rule. Under no circumstances, in training rides or on the day of The Ride, are Riders to ride outside of the designated lane and cross over the yellow line into the opposing lane of traffic. Crossing over the yellow line puts you, oncoming drivers and other Riders at risk of severe injury or death.

a) **Riders should be aware that on the day of the Ride, NYS Police and other members of the Police Escort will be driving in the opposing lane. They are there to bring traffic past our Ride or to go quickly ahead of the Ride to take a position for traffic control. They drive very fast and it is important for everyone's safety to stay in our own lane.**

b) **For your safety and that of all the Riders, do not under any circumstances ride to the left of the yellow line.**

14) Point out and call out obstacles in the way. Remember – Riders behind you cannot see in front of you. Point to obstacles in the road and shout out to let them know.

15) There are no points given for riding at the head of the pack. Spread out, enjoy the day. This is not a race.

16) Pay Attention! It is so important for all of us to pay careful attention to what is going on in front of us. Never turn around to look behind you as you ride forward. As important as it is for you to ride carefully, it is equally as important for you to be aware of your surroundings at all times.

SAG WAGONS AND SUPPORT VEHICLES

We will have support vehicles with us on the day of the Ride, but cannot be guaranteed on the training rides.

On the day of the Ride, we will be followed by a truck and van to pick up any Riders who have mechanical failures or who want to rest for part of the Ride. To keep our uniform pace, if you have a flat tire or mechanical problem, the bike mechanics will put you and your bike in the van (truck) and make the repair at the next rest stop.

Refreshment areas will be set up ahead of time at each rest stop.

OUR POLICE ESCORT

The Ride for Missing Children is a very unique event in which over 100 bicycle Riders ride in a line 2 x 2 as one unified team. This creates a great deal of community awareness and is a great thrill to the children at the schools we visit along the way.

*The Ride for Missing Children is made possible only through the support of the **Erie and Niagara County Sheriff's offices** that coordinates the police escort with the many law enforcement agencies along our route.*

We also wish to express our deep gratitude to our law enforcement partners:

New York State Police

Buffalo Police Department

Amherst Police Department

Cheektowaga Police Department

Niagara Falls Police Department

Orchard Park Police Department

East Aurora Police Department