

St. James Children Ride for Bike Safety Awareness

For more than 15 years, Sue Ellen Bennett, Director of the St. James Children's Center in Islamorada has included the Trike-A-Thon Bike Safety program into the summer activities. Sponsored by St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Trike-A-Thon is a special program developed for early childhood educators and childcare centers to teach children riding safety tips while helping to continue St. Jude's efforts of eradicating childhood catastrophic diseases. "What started as a fun educational event has become a staple of the summer program. We have children return summer after summer just for the Bike a Thon - they really love it and look forward to it," said Sue Ellen Bennett about the program's popularity. The program is a week-long

activity involving young children, their parents and teachers. Trike-A-Thon introduces key concepts of riding safety, and concludes with a fun-filled event where the participants bring their riding toys from home and show off the skills they have learned. In addition to learning how to stay safe, the children also learn about helping others through gaining sponsorship from friends and family for St. Jude. This year's pledge money is still coming in, but over the last 15 years, St. James Trike-A-Thon has raised \$17,255 for St. Jude's Hospital. "People don't believe me when I say these children ride at least 50 laps each!" On the Friday of the Bike Safety Awareness week, the children bring their own bikes and

helmets to St. James. Indeed parents arrived to find a veritable parking lot of bicycles and tricycles on the front porch of the Children's Center. "For some children, that's enough. For others, it's just the beginning. Some will ride non-stop for hours if you let them." St. James Dad and Monroe County officer Matt Koval brought his Police Bike and talked to the children about the tools on his bike and the importance of bike and road rules for safety. St. James Mom Stephanie Scuderi coordinated with Brenda Denson from the Monroe County Health Department, to bring the benefit of the County's Free Helmet program to the St. James summer kids. Brenda arrived Friday morning with 25 new helmets and a few

hours of time to properly fit each student. "I saw the Health Department at the Healthy Kids Day a few months ago at the Key Largo park - giving away free helmets as part of a county grant program," said Stephanie Scuderi. "I thought, what better timing to make sure every child has a strong and properly fit helmet, courtesy of Monroe County? We're really grateful to Brenda and the Monroe County Health Department for participating in the St. James 2010 Trike A Thon." In addition to the helmets, the children also received a Centennial Bank goodie bag with stickers and a piggy bank. The Trike a Thon program is sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC),



St. James children line up with their bikes for bike safety awareness.



Alli Beth Wilson, who celebrated her 3rd birthday the day of the Trike-A-Thon, received a new pink helmet, from the Monroe County Health Department.

the world's largest early childhood education association. NAEYC currently has more than 100,000 members and a network of nearly 450 local, state and regional affiliates. Over 8,600 preschools and daycare centers across America participate in

the Trike-A-Thon program. Their efforts contribute more than \$7.7 million to St. Jude every year. "St. Jude Trike-A-Thons are a remarkable learning experience for young children," said David L. McKee, chief operating officer of ALSAC, the fundraising

organization for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. "The program is a wonderful way to teach bike safety, while also instilling in children the important lesson of helping others." For more information about coordinating or participating in the Trike-A-

Thon program, please call 1-800-626-BIKE (2453). For more information on the free helmet program, please call the Monroe County Health Department at 853-3240. For more information about St. James Children Center, please call 305.852.2161.



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Allan Truesdell

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Truesdell nearly 2 years to fully recover but he is back in full swing with his hectic schedule playing public venues and private parties. You can find him at Gilbert's, Sharkey's, the Big Chill, The Mutineer in Florida City, Key Largo Hilton and Rumrunners in Islamorada.

While you are catching the show you may want to meet Truesdell's 2 1/2 year old dog Rocket, a Czechoslovakian

shepherd that is smarter than a lot of people I know. Although Truesdell has not yet begun to give Rocket guitar lessons he has managed to teach him how to use a urinal. Truesdell is proudly involved with animal rescues and rarely goes anywhere without Rocket. For more information on Truesdell's schedule go to www.allanspage.com or call 305-896-0574 to book your party. Truesdell has graciously volunteered to play for the benefit for Deputy Power's family.

