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BICYCLING

Helmet law largely ignored, patrol finds

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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So far this summer, the weather could not be more perfect for taking the bike out for a ride around town.

But it appears local cyclists are not doing all they can to be safe or courteous.

This year's Helmet Patrol program, which ran from mid-May to the end of June, found that just slightly over half — or 59 per cent — of children under the age of 12, who were spotted by the patrollers, wore a helmet.

Meanwhile, most of the teenagers and adults spotted by the patrollers rode around town with their heads unprotected, according to Barb Armstrong, fitness supervisor for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The example set by the adults and teens raised some concerns.

"You have to think of all the people watching you, you're (the children's) idol," Ms Armstrong said.

The law in Ontario requires anyone under the age of 18 to wear a helmet while cycling.

After two seasons of focusing on rewarding cyclists of all ages for wearing helmets and encour-

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FEATURE: Lifesaving courses, drowning prevention class make swimming a life skill, not just a pastime



Andrea James teaches (clockwise from bottom left) Chloe West, Thomas Dunlop, Paige Mangel, Nicole Wilson, Sarah Carlton, Blake Frost and Jamie Smith. The Grade 3 Ballantrae Public School students took part in the Swim to Survive program at the Lebovic pool.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Water safety know-how saves lives

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Puck handling, dribbling, or home-run hitting are all great athletic skills, but they won't save any lives, as one local resident discovered last summer.

Will Green and his family were in the midst of their annual vacation at Algonquian Park's Kearney Lake when they heard screams coming from the beach.

Will, 15, and his father William, ran to the water, which was about 20 feet away. They saw one man flailing in the water and another jumping out of a canoe swimming towards him.

The Greens got into their canoe and started paddling towards the men.

"The first guy couldn't swim and the second guy could barely keep his head above water," Mr. Green said, adding when the second man reached the first, he was pulled under despite cries from Will to keep his distance.

The Greens threw the first man a life jacket and the second a tow rope. With the two men clinging to each other, the Greens pulled them to the bow of their canoe and brought them back to shore.

"They were fine, just exhausted," Mr. Green said. But had Will not heard the screams "they would have been dead".

The two men found themselves in this situation, according to Mr. Green, by walking out onto a sandbar that had an unexpected drop. They were not wearing life jackets.

"He took two steps and was in deep water and couldn't swim," Mr. Green said. "The Algonquian water up there is so deceiving because it's so dark."

Earlier this year Will received a Rescue Award of

See **BACKYARD**, page 2.

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