

The Ride for Missing Children Greater Capital District

Friday September 29, 2017

Friends of Missing Children Information Manual



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

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National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
New York Branches in Rochester, Buffalo, Utica, Saratoga Springs

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Introduction and Welcome

On behalf of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), we would like to welcome you to the 10th annual *Ride for Missing Children - Greater Capital District*.

Please read this information carefully. It will help to prepare you for our 100 (+/-) 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

The annual Ride for Missing Children - Greater Capital District is held on a **Friday in late September**. This ride is much like The Central New York Ride which 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 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 poster distribution for missing children and mission of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children-NY.
- ✓ To provide personal and online safety education programs from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children—NY/**Saratoga Office**

The Ride CNY has grown steadily each year, currently with over 500 Riders. There are now five Rides for Missing Children in New York State – The Ride here is now called The Ride for Missing Children - Greater Capital District (GCD). In 2000 The Ride for Missing Children Rochester came to be and by 2002 The Ride for Missing Children Finger Lakes in Auburn (now Syracuse) was formed. In 2006 The Ride for Missing Children -- New York Metro and in 2007 The Ride For Missing Children Buffalo, and 2008 The Ride for Missing Children – GCD.

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. 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 bicycle route on Ride Day 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 our poster distribution program of missing children, the safety prevention education programs, and the mission of NCMEC-NY.

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.

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.

- ✓ Join one of our Committees to help organize The Ride
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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 would like more information please contact Fred Alber at (518) 368-3872 or rfgmcgdexecutive@gmail.com.

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 5,122 missing children.

ADVO's "*America Looking For Its Missing Children*" program, distributes missing children's photographs to as many as 73 million homes nationwide each week. This initiative alone has led to the recovery of 108 missing children.

NCMEC – New York/Mohawk Valley

NCMEC-NY/Mohawk Valley was initially formed in August of 1993 as the Sara Anne Wood Rescue Center, a group of volunteers who developed a unique system for distributing posters to aid in searching for Sara. In four months the Center distributed over 4,000,000 posters of Sara across the US and several foreign countries.

On September 14th, 1995, the Sara Anne Wood Rescue Center became the Mohawk Valley office of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – New York Branch. The Center's primary mission continues to be to distribute posters to specific target areas.

Targeted Poster Distribution

The specialty of the Mohawk Valley office is to target a specific area of the country with posters of a missing child. NCMEC-NY/Mohawk Valley distributes posters of missing children to sites specific to each case.

When one of our Case Managers gets a lead on a missing child or an abductor they often ask for our assistance in sending posters to a specific area. The targeted areas, and the specific sites where we mail posters, are selected based on leads in the case and information on the child and/or the abductor. Individual posters of the missing child are sent to businesses asking them to place the poster where people will be most likely to see it. We most commonly mail to convenience stores and truck stops. We also send posters to hospitals, physician's offices, and a variety of other high visibility sites.

One of our assignments was a child abducted by a man who had a history of working for dry cleaners. We sent posters of the child, and the abductor, to dry cleaners in a region recommended by our Case Manager. Soon after, the owner of a dry cleaning store called our hotline (1-800-THE-LOST) to say that someone resembling the abductor was working for him.

We received another assignment to send 8,100 posters to Convenience Stores in three states trying to find ENDANGERED MISSING Amanda N_____. One week later Amanda saw her own poster. This gave her the courage to call our Hotline and ask for assistance. Amanda was returned home—SAFE.

In another case, the torso of a young girl was found in Long Island. On the chest was a unique tattoo. We sent posters to 640 tattoo parlors in the Northeast asking if they recognized the tattoo to help us identify this young girl. This resulted in the family learning what had happened to their Missing Child.

NCMEC-NY/Mohawk Valley also works closely with the New York State Missing Persons Clearinghouse in Albany.

Since September 1995 NCMEC-NY/Mohawk Valley has sent out millions of posters on thousands of missing children. Most of these children are now listed as “successfully recovered”.

NCMEC – New York/Capital Region

The tragic abduction and murder of 6-year-old Adam Walsh in 1981 brought national attention to the issues faced by the families of missing children each year. Local business and community leaders responded by forming the Adam Walsh Child Resource Center in 1984. Located in Rochester, New York, the Adam Walsh Center merged with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in 1990 to become the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children/ New York Branch Office.

In 1995 the Sara Ann Wood rescue center located in Utica, NY merged with NCMEC/NY to become the Center’s Mohawk Valley office, and in 2006, NCMEC/NY opened its Buffalo Office with support from the New York State Attorney General’s Office. NCMEC/NY now has an active Advisory Board for Eastern New York State and has successfully built the necessary infrastructure to staff an office in Saratoga Springs, NY servicing the children, families and professionals of the Capital Region.

NCMEC/NY/Capital Region Office offers

- Abduction and Sexual exploitation Prevention education programs for parents, children, law enforcement, and other professionals
- Netsmartz Internet and Real World safety education programs for children (grades K -12) and parents, as well as, state of the art “train the trainer” program for educators
- Expert training for law enforcement and professionals serving missing and sexually exploited children and their families

Fundraising – Raising “Posters”

Many people feel uncomfortable raising funds – asking other people for money. This is particularly true when you are not giving a product in return for their donation, like a raffle ticket, popcorn, etc. We hope to show you some ways of making your fundraising easier, more organized, and more comfortable for you.

Most 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 1,200 posters of missing children – 1,200 more chances to bring a missing child home.

Fundraising – The Basics

Step #1: Think Positive!!!!

Don't start out with the attitude that most people don't want to give. People DO want to support you and the work that you are doing.

- ✓ Contributing money to a cause is a powerful way for a person to get involved when they cannot give their time.
- ✓ Make people aware of what their donation will do. Share with them that we have distributed over 10 MILLION posters on 10,401 children and that now 7,125 of these children have been *successfully recovered*.
- ✓ People want to support YOU.
- ✓ It is important for everyone to know that all community donations to The Ride for Missing Children support our poster distribution program for missing children. All expenses for The Ride and Community Events are paid by our Corporate Sponsors. Explain how every \$0.25 they donate puts up 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 or social media 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 the 100-miles on Ride Day 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.

- ✓ Contact groups at work or within your church. Can they do a bake sale to help you? Can a CYO hold a fundraising dance to help you meet your goal? Just make sure to call the Center at (315)732-7233 and have your event approved.
- ✓ 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 (you can 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.
- ✓ 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 1,200 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 a specific number posters. Ask for their help in obtaining this goal.
- Don't tell people you are “required” to raise a certain number of posters. 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 1,200 posters. Can you think of ways to get 50 people to donate \$10.00? If so, you have met your goal.

Step #5: Make sure your contribution form is accurate

When checks are turned into the Center we will keep a record of all contributions under the name of each Rider. Into our database we enter the following information:

- Name and full address of the donor
- Check #
- Amount
- Date received
- Name of the Friends of Missing Children Rider for whom the donation is made

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

Step #6: Keep Donation Pledge Logs

All Confirmed Riders will receive a Pledge Log and a list of Fundraising Guidelines. Each Rider is responsible for collecting all of their own donations and sending them to Veronica Frear, the RFMC-GCD treasurer, with the completed Pledge Log. Veronica's address is

- ✓ Send in your donations early – do NOT wait until the day of The Ride.
- ✓ All donations collected by Riders should be into the treasurer by September 15th so that we will have time to process them before The Ride.
- ✓ Send your donations in “small batches” so they are easier to process.
- ✓ 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.

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?

This year 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. You will find a Pledge Log on the website 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 Veronica Frear, the RFMC-GCD treasurer. 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. Make sure your donating supporters put your name in the memo section of the check so we can credit you for their donation. Send all checks with your donation log to:

Veronica Frear, Treasurer, RfMC - GCD

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. Your donations are *not* used for the expenses of the Ride. Our Corporate Benefactors underwrite the Ride expenses.
- 2) NCMEC does not allow the use of the likeness of a missing child or our logo on fundraising literature or advertisements.
- 3) All donor contributions will receive a letter acknowledging their gift as required by US tax law. All donors will receive a Thank You letter from NCMEC-NY acknowledging their gift.
- 4) The National Center for Missing Children – New York, is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charity and is a publicly supported organization as defined in sections 509 (a)(1) and 170 (b)(a)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Our Federal ID number is 52-1328557. Nothing of tangible value will be returned to the donor; therefore the entire donation to NCMEC/NY is tax deductible.
- 5) NCMEC does not conduct blind, general phone solicitation for funds. In your fundraising for The Ride, please **DO NOT** make blind telephone calls to people you do not know for the solicitation of donations. It is OK to call people you know, close friends, relatives, co-workers, and other people who are familiar with you, to tell them of the Ride and ask for their support by giving donations.
- 6) When speaking or writing with people regarding the fundraising, use the fundraising explanation letter that we have written for you.
- 7) **CASH DONATIONS:** Please do not send cash donations to the NCMEC office. If someone gives you a cash donation, we recommend that you then write your own personal check to NCMEC-NY for that amount. If your “cash” donor requires a tax deduction acknowledgement letter, this should be stated as so on your Donation Log Form, where you can include the cash donor’s name, mailing address and amount of cash donation. All donations should be in the form of a check made out directly to NCMEC-NY. Checks should be sent to Veronica Frear, RFMC-GCD treasurer.
- 8) Exercise discretion when speaking of Missing Children and fundraising. 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 for education programs for child safety and abduction prevention.

- 9) **IMPORTANT** – make sure your donors put your name on the memo area of their check. We will keep records of all donations made in your name so that you and your donors can know how many posters of missing children you raised.
- 10) Further detailed instructions are include on the donation log sheet.

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.

- 1) **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 Coordinator 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 our committee for more information.
- 2) Statement regarding the “use of proceeds” of your fundraising activity
 - a) Your announcement should 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 Mohawk Valley 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.
 - a) 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	Our School Committee will help you get in touch with classes and organize the Pennies for Poster 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.
✓ Pennies for Posters	Fred Alber at (518) 368-3872 or rfmcgdcexecutive@gmail.com to find	

Fund-Raising Ideas	Description	Hints
	out more about this program.	
✓ Letter Writing Campaign	Send letters and donation forms to friends, business acquaintances, and people to whom you've given donations. Social media.	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.
✓ 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.

Fundraising with a Letter Campaign

Many of *The Friends* find that writing letters/emails or using social media is the most reliable method for fundraising. If this is your first time doing fundraising, you may feel uncomfortable “asking” people for money. Writing a letter asking for help in achieving your goal is a great way to contact a large number of people and you may find it is the most efficient use of your time.

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 September xx, XXXX. The Ride raises funds to support the missing children’s poster distribution program and the mission of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Central New York.

My goal is to raise _____posters of missing children to aid in their search and recovery.

According to the FBI, there are between 900,000 – 1,000,000 reported cases of missing children each year. The Mohawk Valley office of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children sends posters of missing children to targeted areas across the United States and Canada asking businesses, hospitals and United States Post Offices to display them in the hopes that someone will identify the child and lead authorities to the safe recovery of that child.

One of every seven children profiled in the National Center’s photo campaign is eventually recovered. Since becoming part of NCMEC in September 1995, the Mohawk Valley office has sent out over **10 million** posters of **10,401** missing children. As of December 2016, **7125 of these children have been successfully recovered.**

The Center estimates that it costs them \$0.25 to send out one poster of a missing child – every dollar you donate is four more posters – four more chances for a missing child to be recovered.

A letter from NCMEC will be sent to you as an IRS acknowledgement of your donation.

Please help us with your donation by making out a check to NCMEC-NY, 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 the RFMC-GCD treasurer with any other donations.

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 100-mile 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 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 training ride coordinator of any Executive Committee Member.

Tires

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

If you are going to ride a hybrid or 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 tires.

Bicycle Maintenance

Prevent Problems by having a tune-up BEFORE Ride day!

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 – get it into the shop at least a week or two before so that you have some time to make sure any problems are corrected. Keep in mind that there are probably 100 other Riders who may also be bringing their bikes in for a tune up!

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 a crash.**
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.**

Helmets are mandatory for all Riders

All Riders are required to wear a SNELL or ANSI approved bicycle helmet when riding in The Ride for Missing Children or any of its training rides.

We are bringing a message of safety to all children and we must set a proper example by wearing our bicycle helmets whenever we are on our bikes.

Bike Equipment

Essentials

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

- 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 Schrader.
- Spare tubes - check the correct size for your tire.
- Tire irons (plastic) for taking your tire off the rim.
- Patch kit - for fixing small leaks in the new tube you just put in.
- Water bottles and cages (2).
- Eye protection. Wear sun glasses in bright conditions, clear or yellow lenses for overcast or rainy weather

Nice "Extras"

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

- Cyclometer - gives your speed, (some show cadence) and distance covered.
- Biking Shoes. Special bike shoes have stiff soles to deliver more power to the pedals and prevent foot fatigue.
- 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 achieve a much efficient pedal stroke. 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.
- Clipless Pedals. These are like "ski bindings" for bike pedals.

Clothing and The Weather

September 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. Avoid cotton. Use wool blends, fleece or other synthetics instead, because they will keep you warm even if they are wet.
4. Do **not** bring bulky clothing.
5. Pack your gear and clothing in a duffle bag. This bag will be kept in the gear wagon 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.
 - (a) 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.
- (2) 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.
 - (a) For the rain and cold – some Riders bring thick rubberized gloves like painter's gloves, or dishwashing gloves. This is a great idea!!!!
- (3) 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.
- (4) A non-cotton shirt under a rain jacket will keep you warm in cold weather. When cotton fibers get wet, they stay wet and suck the heat out of your body. Use fleece, polyester, or wool/poly blends that dry quickly and keep you warm even if they are wet.
- (5) Extra, Dry Socks!!
- (6) **Extra, Dry Socks!!!!**
- (7) 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.
- (8) 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 commitment rides by having the Shepherds set the pace and keep a uniform line as we go up and down hills.

Commitment rides will begin in July. Announcements about the Commitment Rides will be made on our facebook page and website in addition to e-mail notices.

Commitment Rides are held on Saturdays and/or Sundays. All first year Riders are expected to attend a minimum of 3 weekend training rides and returning Riders at least 1 weekend 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 commitment rides a lot of fun. Times and starting points will be announced on our website and facebook pages. 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 and the directions of the shepherds.

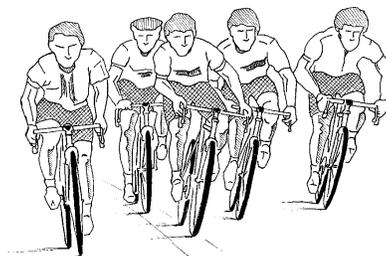
- ❑ Do not ride more than two by two, and ride single file when there is not a wide shoulder.
 - ❑ When a car is approaching from the rear, the Riders in the back of the line will holler out “CAR BACK”. This is a signal to get into a single line. DO this quickly!!!
 - ❑ The cars have the right of way – 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.

Figure 1: The WRONG way to ride in a group. These rider’s wheels are overlapping and they are too close together. The middle riders have nowhere to go if there is a crash or obstacle up ahead.



The “Shepherds”

We have a number of 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.

Do you remember John Wayne in *Fort Apache*? The Calvary was really impressive as they rode 2 x 2 in a straight line. This is how we are trying to look as we go along the highways and into the towns. If we’re all bunched up with everyone trying to be at the lead – we’ll look sloppy and disorganized.

Keeping the Pace

Overall we will be keeping an average pace of 14 – 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 aero bars 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

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.

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, NEVER 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:



Figure 2: Riding 2 abreast. Keep a bike length between you and the rider a head of you.

- ✓ **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. 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 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 14–17 mph pace on the flat portions you must take a rest break in the sag wagon.
2. Experienced Riders. DO NOT push the pace.
3. There will be two 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) Use hand signals when you are slowing, turning or stopping.
- (8) **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.
- (9) 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.



- (10) **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.
- (11) **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.**
- (12) 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.
- (13) There are no points given for riding at the head of the pack. Spread out, enjoy the day. This is not a race.
- (14) 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 Ride Day, 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.

The New York State Police

The Ride for Missing Children would not be possible without the cooperation, participation, and teamwork of the New York State Police. We gratefully acknowledge this support and thank all the Troopers of the New York State Police for joining us in our mission:

“to make our children safer ...one child at a time”.

Our Police Escort

The Ride for Missing Children is a very unique event in which over 50-bicycle Riders ride in a line 2 x 2 as one unified team. The line of Riders and support vehicles will extend over a 1/2 mile in length. 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 New York State Police who coordinate the police escort with the many law enforcement agencies along our route.