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KELOWNA

New adaptive bike program rolling out this fall

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Kelowna's biking trails have become even more accessible this season with new adaptive biking equipment and programs now available.



Mom, Karen and 22-year old Kai try out one of the new adult bike trailers available through the City of Kelowna's Access Services this fall.

"We are thrilled to be able to roll out our first adaptive bike program this fall, a new barrier-free activity and an affordable way to access this specialized equipment tailored for people with permanent disabilities," said Ali Westlund, Community Recreation Coordinator.

Adaptive programming for adults at Parkinson Recreation Centre (PRC) is funded through Community Living BC (CLBC) and the Ministry of Children and Families, including the new adaptive biking program which will see two bikes with adult trailers and six adaptive tricycles available.

"Kelowna is the perfect city to be able to provide a service like this with an incredible bike and trail system that we feel everyone should be able to explore, despite any physical limitations they may have," said Tom Myatt, Quality Services Analyst with Community Living BC. "Our goal is to help break down those barriers."

Myatt says the idea came from Karen St. Pierre, mother of 22-year-old Kai, whose experience and perspective on the challenges of adaptive bike ownership helped pave the way for the program.

"There are real challenges when it comes to personally owning adaptive bikes - transporting it, the cost of specialized equipment and these bikes are very heavy too," says St. Pierre. "This new community service will be a huge benefit for not only my son but for anyone with disabilities that is seeking that extra independence and opportunity to explore the outdoors."

Philip Hotzon, a 35-year-old who suffered a traumatic brain injury 10 years ago, is playing a key role in inspiring other PRC members with *DiverseAbilities* to give biking a go, stating that biking can provide a real sense of freedom.

"Loving where I live and being able to explore it has been a huge piece of my rehabilitation," said Hotzon. "Biking has given me an appreciation for life and I treat each day like a video game, trying to level up and unlock better and better versions of myself."



Philip Hotzon, 35, has joined the adaptive biking program as a volunteer to encourage others to 'level up' and get moving with the new program.

Those interested in trying out the new adaptive bikes are welcome to attend a community demonstration session as part of fall GoByBike Week on Oct. 7 at Parkinson Recreation Centre from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Anyone can drop in during the demo session, which will be held behind the recreation centre to try out the biking loop and equipment. Attendees are recommended to bring their own helmet.

While CLBC has provided funding for initial program start-up costs, the City of Kelowna is currently seeking interested sponsors to help offset ongoing program costs. Sponsorship opportunities are

available to enhance initiatives like these, as well as facilities, programs, and resident services. To learn more about becoming a sponsor, visit kelowna.ca/sponsorships.

For more information



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