

# THE CITIZENS' VOICE

Eric Mark

## A parade of smiles as children ride new adaptive bicycles

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*Former Gov. Tom Corbett leads a parade of bike recipients Monday in the parking lot of Lighthouse Academy. Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer*

PLAINS TWP. — Bright smiles defied gray skies as happy young people rode bikes around the parking lot of Lighthouse Academy on Monday morning.

Some grown-ups, including former Gov. Tom Corbett, rode with them. They smiled, too.

The parking lot parade followed a brief program during which children with special needs received custom-made adaptive bicycles and strollers through the My Bike program of children's charity Variety, sponsored by AllOne Charities.

The My Bike program allows children who are unable to ride standard bicycles to enjoy the same fun and freedom as other children, said Charles LaVallee, chief executive officer of Variety, based in Allegheny County.

"It's overwhelming, seeing the joy in the faces of not just children, but parents," LaVallee said.

The adaptive equipment allows families to safely take children to places they could not go before, he said.



*Scarlett who is one of the recipients of the Custom Made Adaptive Bike raises her arms as she joins the parade for a ride around the parking lot of the Lighthouse Academy. Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer*

Corbett said he has served on Variety's board of directors for many years and travels across the state to help distribute adaptive bicycles and other equipment to children.

"Everybody smiles," said Corbett, who said he enjoys seeing children and their parents enjoy a newfound sense of freedom.



*The bikes being presented by the AllOne Foundation and Variety have been assembled and the child's name attached. Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer*

One of the children who took part in the parking lot parade was Jocelynn Moon, 15.



*Jocelyn Moon who is one of the recipients of the Custom Made Adaptive Bike smiles after her parade ride around the parking lot of the Lighthouse Academy.*  
Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer

She rode in an adaptive stroller, accompanied by her grandmother, Wendy Gehr, and her nurse, Maura English.

The device is a big improvement over the wheelchair Moon had used to get around before, Gehr said.

It will be much easier to fold, store and transport in the family car, she said.

“Now we can take her to family picnics,” Gehr said.

English said she first learned of the opportunity to obtain the stroller about a year ago, from a physical therapist.

The wait was worth it, she said.

“She’s been smiling as soon as we put her in it,” English said.



*Former Gov. Tom Corbett pumps his fist as he leads the parade of bike recipients presented by the AllOne Foundation and Variety at the Lighthouse Academy.*  
Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer



*Faith joins the parade for a ride around the parking lot of the Lighthouse Academy on Monday.*  
Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer



*Haven who is one of the recipients of the Custom Made Adaptive Bike waves as she parades around the parking lot of the Lighthouse Academy.*  
Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer



*John Cosgrove, CEO AllOne Foundation, addresses the attendees on identifying more children in NEPA who can benefit from the Programs. Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer*



*Jeff Rukas, Blackburn's Medical Supply explains the various features of the bikes. Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer*



*Charlie LaVallee, CEO, Variety the Children's Charity, addresses the attendees about the Custom Made Adaptive Bike presentation at the Lighthouse Academy. Frank C. Lauri / Contributing Photographer*