



The Arden Way

On Monday, March 19th students from Arden Elementary school made a presentation to Courtenay City Council. These young students, known as the Arden Ambassadors, pitched a case to mayor and council for a side walk and bike lane along Lake Trail Road. They wanted to see this absorbed into the developing Transportation Master Plan that will provide direction on transportation infrastructure for the next 20 years. Councillors were seeking public input about issues and challenges to be considered as part of the long-term transportation network.

Arden Ambassadors who represent the entire school population want to share their input and concerns in order to make Lake Trail Road safer for bicyclist and pedestrians. To gather information regarding vehicle traffic, these students stood outside with clipboards in hand and counted the number of motorist commuting along the road and travelling to the school during morning drop off and afternoon pick-up. Their findings were included in the presentation.

The behind-the-scenes development of this presentation is a wonderful story that Lucinda Wolters, vice principle of Lake Trail school shared with the coalition. Apparently, staff and parents of students have been concerned



about Lake Trail Road for several years due to speeding cars and the narrow curb area. Parents are generally not comfortable with their child(ren) riding or walking to school as a result. One of the Aboriginal Support Workers, Liz Harris suggested a petition to increase awareness about concerns and to possibly get a sidewalk and/or bike lane installed on Lake Trail Road. They received nearly 100 signatures. Brian Goodwin, the principal, saw it as an opportunity for the school's leadership students, The Arden Ambassadors, to promote the school's request for a sidewalk/bike lane to city hall.

The Arden Ambassadors as a leadership group is a new initiative this year. Teacher, Phebe May, went to Australia on a teacher exchange last year and came back talking about leadership students at her school there. She and Lucinda Wolters have been working on ways Arden Ambassadors can model the way in connection to what we call "The Arden Way." We meet weekly with our Ambassadors to plan contributions. The "Arden Way" is a tool that was developed several years ago by then principal Kevin Reimer. Staff have continued to use the phrase to help kids and our community understand what being a good citizen looks like. This year with our Arden Ambassadors and a new Arden Way poster, we have been promoting positive choices.

The Arden Ambassadors are asked to apply for the position with a reference and given a term to be in the role if they are selected. When the ambassadors are invited to make a presentation, we use our weekly meeting time to plan what will be said and who will say what. We use a script so students can build their confidence with speaking in front of others.

Ms. Wolters concluded that the school is, "thrilled that the students were able to so successfully have their voices heard. We think our Arden students are pretty amazing!"

We Are Pleased To Announce...

The Comox Valley Cycling Coalition is pleased to announce that we have nominated Lauren Lan as for the Coach of the Year Local Hero Award. These awards were created in 2016 as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of individuals in the community. Coach(es) is one of a dozen different categories and recognizes someone who has been "exemplary in developing skills and confidence in participants, inspires youth, and who encourages a high level of athletic achievement and commitment."

Lauren is a Professional Coach who has chosen to focus on the grass roots, new to sport, entry level students rather than the already successful elite athletes - Lauren is not in it for the glory! Through Cycling BC Lauren was instrumental in bringing the iRide program to the Comox Valley. This program focuses on students at all the elementary schools in SD #71, providing students with the experience of learning cycling skills in a safe and fun program.

The students receive 3 days of excellent coaching and skills development. Many of these children would not otherwise have the opportunity to quickly gain skills and confidence on their bicycles. Lauren has initiated the purchase of some mountain bikes along with a storage trailer so children who do not own bicycles can participate with their peers.

Lauren inspires children! Her coaching skills are impressive and she is inclusive and encouraging. Her skills and demeanor result in many happy, confident young cyclists just enjoying riding their bikes and being healthy in the outdoors.

Some of these students go on to pursue more competitive cycling but whether they do that or just go on to enjoy riding their bikes with their friends they have often discovered their skill and passion with Lauren's iRide program. The skills they develop are lifelong skills that encourage good health and lifestyle habits.