

Woodford, Norton 21 students take a crack at "Buckle Up Your Brain" contest

With summer vacation just around the corner, downtown Akron law firm Scanlon and Gearinger knows bike riding season is coming.

For the past four years, the law firm has sponsored a safety program in 10 area schools to teach children and parents the importance of bike helmets. They started this program after one of their attorneys had a bicycle accident, in which he would have been seriously injured had he not been wearing a helmet.

Students from Woodford Elementary and Norton 21 learned about helmet safety at an assembly last spring and were invited to write a poem, rap or paragraph for the "Buckle Up Your Brain" writing contest.

Entries were judged by members of the law firm on creativity, content and originality. At each school, helmets were awarded to one student in each grade level, and one of the helmet winners also won a bike.

Attorney Maura Scanlon announced the Woodford Elementary winners at an assembly May 19. There was a tie for helmet winners in the fifth grade. The winners and their entries are as follows:

Kindergarten — Stephanie Makinson (who also won the bike): Like to keep my head safe after I get off school. I open my bookbag and get out papers, give them to mom. Then I get my bike out and sit on my helmet and knee pads, elbow pads. Then I ride my bike till mom calls me in to eat.

First grade — Melissa Nagel: When I ride my bike, I always wear my bike helmet. Mom said she can fix a lot of things but she can't fix my brain.

Second grade — Eddie Pierce Jr.: You think that you will be safe without a helmet—think again. Some people are real good bike riders and won't fall far but you could get hit by a car. So be cool and stay safe and wear your helmet every place.

Third grade — Scott Warrington: I was riding my bike on the road. I ran over a toad. The helmet I wore on my head, kept me from getting a headache and going to bed.

Fourth grade — Kailin Kaiser: Put on your helmet! Accidents happen, don't you know. Don't kick yourself. They can happen to you no matter how much caution you can take. You can suffer from your mistake. Put on your Helmet! When you, your friend, and family get on bikes, you should put on your helmet! Give the ones you care about some good advice even if you got to tell them twice. Put on your Helmet!

Fifth grade — Bethany Robinson: You and your friends are riding bikes, and suddenly... Yikes! You're in the dirt, and you're badly hurt. You hit your head, you

could have been dead! You realized when you looked in the mirror, you should have been wearing some safety gear. You talked to your mom and dad, they thought the idea wasn't bad, so they bought you a helmet and safety pads. Now, when you ride, you're safe, and you're glad!

and Fifth grade — J.T. Starc: I think it is very important that I wear a helmet. I may think it is dumb, for babies, or I don't need one because I'm too good, but I do! A helmet could save my life. I never know when or if I will crash. I could not possibly know where every rock or crack is. I could easily fall on my head; and the helmet would save me. That is why I think it is important to wear a helmet.

Norton 21 students found out the winners of the contest May 12 when Attorneys Pat Hart and John Hill visited the school. The winners and their entries are as follows:

First grade — Enk Wells: I wear a helmet, it's so cool. If you don't you're a fool. It protects your head, that's all to be said. So get in the game, do the same! Wear your helmet.

Second grade — Cara Greer (who also won the bike): Helmet, helmet, on my head, please stay up there to protect me from dead. If you don't, I might crash and split my head open just like that, so helmet, helmet on my head, please don't come off my head.

Third grade — Emily Tremmel: Hopping on my bike, my dear old Momma said, "Better wear your helmet, don't wanna bump your head." Cruising down the road, come upon a hill, Glad I won't end up like poor old Jack and Jill. When you're out bike riding and happen to fall down, better a broken helmet than a broken crown. So go ahead and wear it, don't complain or whine, or you could end up looking just like Frankenstein.

Fourth grade — Hope Buckland: You've got a head on your shoulders, with a brain inside, so wear a helmet each time you ride! When you wear a helmet, hold your head up high, wear it for safety and wear it with pride!

and Fifth grade — Kristen Fearer: You should wear a helmet on your bike; it doesn't matter if you're a teen or a lunk. There could be an accident where you land on your head, if you didn't wear a helmet you could be dead. This is very important what I'm saying to you, before you ride your bike, tie your shoes. So remember, if you don't wear a helmet and swerve for a cat, you'll be on the road, SPLAT!

Scanlon and Gearinger offers the following tips for helmet safety:

• A helmet designed for another sport should not be substituted for a bike helmet. Do not use a

football helmet or riding helmet for biking.

• A helmet should rest level on your child's head with the front rim just across the eyebrows, not tilted forward or backward.

• Check the strap adjustments: with the chin strap fastened, try to roll your child's helmet backward enough to expose the forehead or forward enough to block the vision. If you can, the straps are not properly adjusted or the helmet fits too loosely.

• A helmet should be replaced after a crash (helmet liners absorb serious impact only once and

won't protect you again); when it doesn't fit; and after three to five years, as normal wear and tear gradually reduce a helmet's strength and protection capabilities.

• The law requires bike helmets to meet at least one of four existing safety standards. Look for a helmet with a label inside that says it conforms to ANSI, ASTM, SNELL or CSA standards.

• Set a rule that a helmet is worn every time a child rides his or her bike, even for short trips.

• Set a good example for your child and wear a helmet yourself.



Woodford Elementary winners of Scanlon and Gearinger's "Buckle Up Your Brain" helmet safety contest. Front row (left to right): First-grader Melissa Nagel, second-grader Eddie Pierce Jr. and third-grader Scott Warrington. Back row (left to right): Attorney Maura Scanlon, fourth-grader Kailin Kaiser, fifth-grader Bethany Robinson, bike winner/Kindergartner Stephanie Makinson, fifth-grader J.T. Starc and Woodford principal Jerry Mattingly.



Norton 21 winners of Scanlon and Gearinger's "Buckle Up Your Brain" helmet safety contest. Front row (left to right): Fourth-grader Hope Buckland, fifth-grader Kristen Fearer, bike winner/second-grader Cara Greer, third-grader Emily Tremmel and first-grader Enk Wells. Back row (left to right): Attorney John Hill, Norton 21 principal Karen Wilson and attorney Pat Hart.