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## Calgary charity Two Wheel View ‘changing kids lives from the seat of a bike’

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PHOTO: Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald

Riders on the Badlands to Banff expedition by Two Wheel View take a break on Highway 1A near Cochrane earlier this year.

There was the time they rode, unprepared and inexperienced, through New Zealand for two months. After that came the 25,000-kilometre two-year bicycle trip around the world. Later, they took off from Calgary and rode around the United States, Mexico and back to Canada along with their three kids, aged 10, eight and six. Those are but some of the epic cycling adventures under the belts of Rick and Tanya McFerrin, but it's the smaller rides that seem to keep them really going. The ones where they head out with a small group of kids who have rarely been on bikes before, who might be too poor to have ever owned one, and may rarely let down that protective veneer of teenage aloofness that drives most adults crazy.

This is the work they do with [Two Wheel View](#), their charitable and educational group that offers a number of bicycle programs for kids in a unique blend of cycling, charity, mentorship and adventure.

"Part of our mission is to change kids lives from the seat of a bike," McFerrin says. "We really see that we are making a difference with these kids."



*Riders on the Badlands to Banff expedition by Two Wheel View take a break on Highway 1A near Cochrane earlier this year. The group of volunteers and youth from the Duke of Edinburgh program in Drumheller spent 6 days on the road.*

The couple started the group back in 2005, after casting about for an idea that could blend the love of cycling they had nurtured on their around-the-world trip with their desire to help out kids in need. Today, Two Wheel View offers earn-a-bike programs in which students work to fix up a used bike and earn it for keeps. They also run group rides, going everywhere from Drumheller to Argentina, all with the idea of giving kids a goal, offering some positive adult role models, and teaching new skills.

"I feel that these kids are part of my family," Rick says. "I do hear back from them years after. This can be life changing for them."

Through the years, not every kid has been profoundly changed by getting on a bike, but some of them sure have. Rick, Tanya and a dedicated group of volunteers have helped out recovering meth-addicts from urban American cities kids by riding through North Dakota, they've taken kids for group rides in Norway, and they've taught dozens of Calgary teens their first mechanical skills en route to earning their own bikes.

"I started this out of my garage with \$5,000 and five bikes or something like that, and now we have a number of programs that are making a difference," he says.

Such programs don't come free. Many of the trips offered to kids are subsidized — Rick says he thinks when participants raise part of the money themselves they are more invested in the trip — so fundraising is a constant worry. Much of Two Wheel Views' funding comes from individual and corporate donors, as well as foundations and grants. But he's also forced to be creative in raising money.

The group is currently recruiting adults to take part in a [cycling trip to Argentina](#), something the group does periodically as a way of raising awareness of their programs and to raise money. The trip isn't intended for troubled kids, just adults interested in a unique cycling trip that benefits Two Wheel View. Such adventures help fund the good work the group does the rest of the year.

Plus, like a lot what Two Wheel View does, from days-long tours to after-school earn-a-bike programs, it's enjoyable.


"(Many kids) want something to do after school, but they realize it's really fun," Rick says. "They get their hands dirty and work with tools, and and hang out with cool people. Some of them say it's the most fun part of the day."

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