

UDAILY

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Tara Bustard rides the adaptive adult tricycle donated to Bellevue State Park. The donation was coordinated by Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities, a program of the Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware, in collaboration with several nonprofit organizations and state agencies.

11:04 a.m., June 17, 2009----With the sun peeking out from the clouds on Tuesday morning at Bellevue State Park, 27-year-old Tara Bustard rode a bike for the first time.

Bustard, a member of the Down Syndrome Association Self-Advocate Committee, was riding an adaptive tricycle, designed for Delawareans with disabilities who do not have the balance to ride a standard bike. The tricycle was presented at the park Tuesday morning, June 16, in front of a group of people with disabilities and their families.

“I love it,” Bustard said shortly after her maiden voyage, with a smile on her face.

The tricycle was donated to the park's bicycle program by Rifton Equipment in New York, and the donation was coordinated by Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities, a program of the [Center for Disabilities Studies](#) (CDS) at the University of Delaware, in collaboration with several nonprofit organizations and state agencies.

The tricycle now joins the fleet of bikes for adults, young adults, and children that can be borrowed, free of charge, at the park, during its operating hours.

Parents say the donation of the bicycle allows their children to be both physically and socially active. Pat Maichle, Tara's mother and senior administrator at the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council, said, “We are very ecstatic for her to come to the state park and be able to ride a bike. Now, we can bike together as a family.”

Terri Hancharick, a research assistant at the CDS, member of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC), and parent of a child with severe disabilities, said the addition of the bike at the park marks great progress for those with disabilities.

"People of all abilities can now come out to this park and ride bikes or go on the accessible swings. They can be physically active to the best of their ability, and most importantly, they can make friends here," she said. "Having a disability shouldn't prevent people from exercising and recreation."

Wendy Strauss, executive administrator of the GACEC, said the donation is a great way to improve lives of those whose needs are unmet.

"We are excited that the disability community and the State Parks are working together to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families," she said.

With the donation of the bike at Bellevue State Park, Hancharick said she hopes that this donation will help people realize that people with disabilities need opportunities for recreation as much as people who do not have disabilities.

"It's a big start, and I'm hoping other parks do this as well," she said. "The parks are very open and very excited at the prospect of making parks more accessible."

Delaware Lt. Gov. Matt Denn spoke at the presentation and said the federal stimulus package will be providing more opportunities for schools and parks to buy physical equipment for people with disabilities in the near future.

Hancharick said maintenance and repairs on the tricycle will be done free of charge, courtesy of the Urban Bike Project of Wilmington. The Delaware Office of Highway Safety has donated several bicycle helmets to the park for its bicycle program.

As for Bustard, she said she can't wait for another chance to ride the tricycle at the park so she can continue to be healthy and meet some new friends on the paths.

Article by Jon Bleiweis
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<http://www.udel.edu/udaily/2009/jun/tricycle061709.html>