

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE



Cycling Without Age (CWA) is a non-profit organization established in Copenhagen Denmark in 2012. It is a volunteer program that takes the elderly and less able citizens out for free bike rides in specialized bicycles called trishaws. CWA has grown rapidly worldwide expanding to 55 countries with more than 2,200 chapter locations globally. There are more than 3,000 trishaws in use around the world with thousands of volunteers involved – and the numbers are still growing. The original dream of founder, Ole Kassow, was “... *creating a world together, in which the access to active citizenship creates happiness among our fellow elderly citizens by providing them with an opportunity to remain an active part of society and the local community. We do that by giving them the right to wind in their hair, the right to experience the city and nature close up from the bicycle and by giving them the opportunity to tell their story in the environment where they have lived their lives.*”

Dr. Lauren Lypchuk (MD), the driving force behind the Vernon & Coldstream CWA program, was prompted to bring this program here by her lifelong work with the elderly and less able. She found this population group tends to be marginalized and isolated in society and knew this program would provide a welcome opportunity for those participating to experience life in a very positive and joyful way regardless of age or ability. Spearheading the program with assistance from her husband Dr. Ward Strong (PhD) and with support from Schubert Centre, it started June 3, 2019. Over the next 4 months, our volunteer pilots took over 500 passengers for rides on the Trishaw covering more than 4200km! Our 2nd Trishaw bike arrived in February 2020. Both Trishaw bikes were funded by grants (Community Foundation of North Okanagan) and through private donations.

CWA is based on generosity and kindness that starts with a volunteer ‘Pilot’ taking one or two passengers out for leisurely rides on the Trishaw through designated routes within Vernon and Coldstream. The double seat offers wonderful opportunities for social interaction between passengers as well as with the Pilot. Equipped with a removable hood and clip-on blanket, passengers can remain comfortable in changing weather conditions. Many passengers have enjoyed riding bikes in their younger years so this is a wonderful opportunity to get back out in the fresh air. The experience of cycling is about freedom, joy, adventure and purpose. Passengers feel valued. As several passengers have stated: “It’s the best thing since sliced bread!” “ It’s been the highlight of the past several years!” “I feel like the Queen!”

We were very excited and looking forward to starting our second year in May, 2020 with 2 Trishaw bikes and with over 60 volunteer Pilots however we have been unable to run our program this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are planning to resume our CWA program when it is safe to do so... hopefully in 2021. In the mean time for more information about the program, in regard to volunteering or donating please email: cyclingwithoutage.vernon.bc@gmail.com

Pilot Lauren Lypchuk.
Passengers Aurea Demers (right)
& Marg Sabine

