

# DADS AND KIDS ARE ON A ROLL



On a recent, chilly, Saturday morning, dads from across the city, from Brooklyn to the Bronx, came to P.S. 142's school yard in Manhattan's Lower East Side to make history. Yes, history.

NYC DADS and Bike New York teamed up for its second "Learn to Bike" event, and, once again, there were children who will never forget this day. Because it's the first day that they learned to ride a bike.

"I'm trying to slow him down," said Michael, a Brooklyn public school teacher, as he walked doggedly behind his five-year-old son, Michael, who had a giant smile on his face as he kept well out of range of his dad, speeding around the track.

Young Michael is a spark plug; one of those kids brimming with energy, always moving, running, falling, jumping. But he needed to focus to learn the Bike New York way—taking the pedals off the bike so that the kids learn the proper balance. "We're making history right here," proud Michael, Sr., said. "It feels great being here for his first time without the training wheels." This father-and-son team is on a roll; at the last NYC DADS event, our March Dadness basketball clinic, Michael made his first basket on a regulation hoop. (What's next? Skydiving?)

Izzy, a local dad whose seven-year-old son, Giovanni, goes to P.S. 142, was very excited to see his child achieve this "new level of freedom," he said. Being a lifelong bicyclist himself, Izzy is looking forward to rides with his son up along the East River. "This is a whole new adventure."

As the sun came out and the day warmed, Bike New York volunteers gave close individual attention to their young charges; and one after another, children broke through, soon peddling on their own, without support, for the first time. "I'm not going to forget you," one young girl crooned to the volunteer who kept with her for close to half an hour.

20-year-old Mike, originally from Queens, but now living in the Lower East Side, is pretty much still a kid himself, but he's got a man's heart; he brought his step daughter, Raylyn, 10, to ride for the first time. "She's a quick learner," said Mike, who was happy to see Raylyn outside, away from her computer games.

Indeed, it didn't take Raylyn long before she was cruising around on her light blue bike. "She was all scared," Mike said, while giving her a thumbs up as she rode by. "It feels great to try to help steer her in the right direction," Mike added. "She's still so innocent. Like a dove."

"These are the memorable moments we cherish," said the City's Fatherhood Services Coordinator, Alan S. Farrell, beaming at the sight and sounds of the smiles and hollers coming from the families as their respective children crossed this significant milestone.