

Massachusetts and Vermont State Police escort custom made bike for special needs teen

This heart-warming story begins with 16-year-old Sierra Fletcher, a special needs teen with down syndrome that lives in Vermont. We all know the value of fresh air and exercise and during a pandemic where we are all stuck at home or limiting our social movement, it is more important than ever.

A recent article by the Boston Globe highlighted the increase in depression and suicide rates in not only adults, but children during the pandemic. Weekly emergency department visits for suicidal ideation in youths 24 and under averaged 333, and there were 55 weekly suicide attempts.

Our kids are in dire need of social interaction and exercise. One man, "Bob the Bike Guy" Charland runs an organization called Pedal Thru Youth" that builds bikes for free to kids with special needs. He was contacted by a friend of the Fletcher family and they let him know that Sierra was in need.

Once the community found out that the bike would need to cross state lines to be delivered, they jumped at the chance.

"On Friday, March 26th B Troop Community Police Liaison, Tpr. DeShawn Brown, C Troop Community Police Liaison Tpr. Farrah Gray, along with Tpr. Andrew Canata and Tpr. James Carmichael assisted Hampden County Dep. Sheriff Robert "Bob the bike guy" Charland escorted a custom-made bike from Springfield to Bellows Falls, VT for 16-year-old Sierra Fletcher.

The escort also included Lt. Stephen Rose of the Hampden County Sheriff's Office, Troopers from the Vermont State Police, along with Chief Bemis and Ofc. Tuttle of the Bellows Falls PD.

Tpr. Brown adjusted Sierra's helmet to the proper fit, and gave her a brief bike safety lesson before she went on her first ride!"-Massachusetts State Police.

All photos by the Massachusetts State Police:

