



# WINDHAM INDEPENDENT NEWS

## SHOWCASE

### ADAPTIVE CYCLING ON THE WINDHAM RAIL TRAIL

"It changed my life completely," said Stuart Goldberg of Salem. Ed Perkins, from Dover explained, "I can't walk from my car to my house, but I can bike over 11 miles."

Several times a summer, Northeast Passage, a program out of UNH for physically challenged individuals, hosts adaptive cycling group rides at the Windham Rail Trail. Their team includes licensed, certified therapeutic recreation specialists (CTRS/L) and UNH students in training. Bikers meet at the trail on select Wednesdays from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM for adaptive cycling. Cameron Forys, Program Specialist explained, "We bring a trailer packed with adaptive trikes and handcycles. From there we get everyone fitted on the bikes and go out and ride!"

Stuart Goldberg, who lost his ability to balance, was told by his doctor, "Use your legs until you can't anymore." Stuart in turn called a paralyzed friend to find out what was available and he told him about the Northeast Passage program. Stuart said through the trail system he is now able to cycle from Salem to Windham, even over the section of the trail not paved yet. Stuart, who has been participating since 2009 said, "My legs are stronger than ever. My neurologist cannot believe it!"

Ed Perkins, who just started the program this summer said, "I never thought I could do this. Every new activity scared me. This is the best group of people. They fit me out and now I'm not scared. They are totally supportive. They pushed my ability which I needed." He agreed with Stuart saying, "This changed my life as well. It is a different way of doing things. I can succeed on my own terms." Ed said, "On the days I bike I feel good. On the days I don't, I don't." He also participates in other adaptive programs including kayaking and skiing. As a veteran he was able to acquire his bike with the help of Northeast Passage through the Veteran's Administration.

Caregiver for Pelham resident, Greg Major, Ronnie Tomanio, explained that Greg suffered a brain injury while in the Navy from an accident and he has participated in the program all summer. He rides a tandem bike with an instructor in the back. On this day, Melanie Berreondo, was in control of the braking, while Greg had control of the pedaling, and stirring. It was amazing to watch the strength and speed in his legs as he pedaled.

While the group is on the trail, staff members are also on the trail to help with chains, tire issues and provide any support a biker may need.

The Northeast Passage program was developed 26 years ago by founder and Executive Director Jill Gravink, M.S., CTRS/L. Growing up with two cousins with muscular dystrophy, she gained the compassion to want to help everyone participate in activities despite any obstacles.

Not only do participants have the opportunity to take advantage of the trail, but Cam explained, "We host our adaptive golf program out of Windham Country Club. We are there every Wednesday night during the summer. We have a fleet of 4 adaptive golf carts that Windham Country Club lets us store at the clubhouse. We alternate between range nights (we stay on the range and work on swing mechanics, pitching, and putting along with teaching the game of golf as a whole) and course nights (we get out on the course and play) each week. Windham Country Club is Awesome! The course always looks great and the staff are all awesome."

Wayne Morris, one of the original founders of the Rail Trail said, "The Rail Trail Alliance is excited to see the trail being used by this group of physically challenged cyclists as well as senior citizens and young families with children either in tow or on bikes with training wheels. We are proud of the wonderful asset the rail trail has become, not only to Windham but the entire region. Residents will see another section of trail from Roulston Road to just short of the pedestrian bridge over Rte. 111 completed by the end of October. With any luck, the trail by the end of next summer should extend into Salem to the southern end of Old Rockingham Road. One day we envision the Granite State Rail Trail running from the Massachusetts/New Hampshire state line to Lebanon."


For more information on the UNH Northeast Passage program you can visit their website at: <http://nepassage.org>.

For more information on the Windham Rail Trail you can visit their website at: [www.windhamrailtrail.org](http://www.windhamrailtrail.org).

The NE Passage programs are limited so they request you sign up in advance. They accept participants that have any disability and can benefit from their programs.



Amanda Zedon-CTRS/L-Program Specialist; Cameron Forys - CTRS/L - Program Specialist and Aggie Halliday - CTRS/L who came on board in May and has done undergraduate work with the program.



**Northeast  
PASSAGE**  
LIVING BEYOND DISABILITY

**603.862.0070**  
**[www.nepassage.org](http://www.nepassage.org)**



Stuart Goldberg, ready to hit the trail!



The team sets up each of the riders before they head out.



Greg Major gets ready to head out with Melanie Berreondo.



Ed Perkins, rides hands free.

*Photos/story Mary Ann Horaj*