

Eighth Grader Rides for Electric Vehicles

by Winslow Eliot

If you go to the Ride for Renewal website (www.rideforrenewal.org) you'll find this pronouncement:

"I am Liza Stoner, I am 14 years old. I am hoping to be a very active environmentalist. Since the spring of 2007 I have wanted to ride my bike to Washington, D.C. to raise awareness about the need for electric vehicles and to deliver a petition asking for tax credits and incentives for companies who produce or purchase electric cars."

A student at the City of Lakes Waldorf School, Liza was deeply moved by the documentary "Who Killed the Electric Car?" She became frustrated that the technology to produce electric vehicles exists, yet remains unavailable to most of us. Last spring she made the decision to ride her bike to Washington, D.C. to deliver a petition to lawmakers asking for tax incentives for producers and purchasers of electric vehicles.

As part of Liza's eighth grade project (a self-directed, self-chosen project), Liza will bike more than 1500 miles to try to garner awareness of the efficacy, beauty, and practicality of electric vehicles.

"My teacher, Ms. Ouellette, started the whole thing by telling my class about the documentary," says Liza. "And then this year (my eighth grade year) she was just amazing! She agreed that I could plan my ride as my eighth grade project. She has helped me, and she has gone light on the homework, and given me extended due dates. She has been with our class since first grade and is the first woman teacher to bring her class all the way through at CLWS. My class just graduated and we cried non-stop at our graduation and then the next day at the festival. So we were a very close class. My classmates have been amazingly supportive and at one point they all wanted to come with me!"

Liza will be riding a bike accompanied by her mother, Amy Stoner. Her father, Jeff, will drive the support vehicle along with her younger brother, eight-year-old Christopher. Corriell, Liza's sixteen-year-old sister, was accepted to the Leadership Development Program at camp so she will be sailing/backpacking/kayaking on Lake Superior for a month and will catch up with the rest of her family in Washington, D.C.

Amy Stoner, a parent of Waldorf kids at City of Lakes Waldorf School for the past 10 years, states: "I believe that her optimism, activism, and her strength of will, result from the Waldorf curriculum."

Liza's ride, which she has named "Ride for Renewal" begins June 16 from the Minneapolis, Minnesota State Capitol building and ends about a month later in Washington, D.C. "We are leaving Minneapolis and going east to Wisconsin, then through pine forest of northern Wisconsin, then down to Manitowoc (south of Green Bay)," according to Amy. "We cross Lake Michigan via ferry to Michigan, then south to Monroeville Indiana. Then we'll head

almost straight east to Ohio, Pennsylvania, and south into Maryland and on to D.C. Averaging 14 MPH should be a great way to see the country.”

It’s also a great way to meet new friends. If you’re a Waldorf (or like-minded!) family who lives along their route and you’re interested in sharing a dinner and hearing about their adventures, you can contact them at amystoner@mac.com.

You can also follow their progress on their blog on the Ride for Renewal web site. Liza created the logo herself, with the help of a graphic designer.

We asked Liza what she ideally hopes her ride will inspire to happen. Her reply: “My dream outcome is getting thousands of signatures and having tons of electric cars on the road within a year.”