Association of
Wisconsin HMOs

William L. Carr
President

Nancy J. Wenzel
Executive Director

2 East Mifflin Street • Suite 701 • Madison, Wisconsin 53703 • 608-255-8599 • Fax 608-255-8627

September 23, 1999

To: Members, Senate Human Services and Aging Committee

From: Julie A. Daggett
Director of Government Affairs

RE: SB 87, Bike Helmet Mandate

Wisconsin HMOs are advocates for the safety of children riding bicycles. Wisconsin HMOs, who care for more than 1.6 million Wisconsin patients, support SB 87 in concept, because it complements the work the industry is already doing to encourage bicycle helmet use.

Wisconsin HMOs have dedicated significant resources to this important public safety issue. Sample activities include:

- Holding special bike safety events where participants receive free bike helmets.
- Providing monetary grants to organizations that repair and make used bikes available to low income children who pass a safety test.
- Donating bike helmets to local schools.
- Providing coupons for purchasing bike helmets at a reduced price.
- Waiving emergency room copays for accident victims who wear bike helmets or safety belts.
- Regularly communicating the importance of helmet use in health plan newsletters.

Over 500 children die each year in bicycling related accidents in the United States. Up to 80 percent of those deaths are due to head injuries, according to the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Because the goal of SB 87 is to ensure the safety of children by requiring helmet use, HMOs support the bill.

Mandatory Bicycle Helmet Legislation for under age 18 - Pros and Cons
Prepared for Bob Cook on 9-3-99 by JoAnne Pruitt Thunder
Testimony "positive Information" for 9-23-99 (postponed from 9-9-99), 10:00 AM hearing on S.B. 87

Major Point 1: DOT and the legislature should encourage everyone, regardless of age, who rides a bicycle to wear a helmet on every ride. Head injury is most common serious injury in bicycle crash. Encouragement does not equal mandate.

Major Point 2: Bicycle helmets do not prevent crashes, they lessen the severity of a head injury in a crash or fall. Bicyclist education, motoring public information and enforcement for the violations that cause 90% of the bicycle v. motor vehicle crashes - this is for both bicyclist and for motorist - is the way to prevent both child and adult bicyclist injuries. Adult crashes are different than children, with the motorist error being cause in majority of adult bicyclist crashes. Children generally make first error in their crashes. Both are at high risk of head injury in crash with a motor vehicle. Community and state resources need to be directed at these crash prevention activities.

Major Point 3: We have just published the "Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020" which asserts our state's intention "To establish bicycling as a viable, convenient and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin." This includes the following goals:

> Increase levels of bicycling throughout Wisconsin, doubling the number of trips made by bicycles by the year 2010 (with additional increases achieved by 2020).
>
> Reduce crashes involving bicyclists and motor vehicles by at least 10% by the year 2010 (with additional increases achieved by 2020).

The Plan's objectives focus on engineering and planning, education, enforcement and encouragement.

DATA

Note: data covers only estimated 10-20% of all bicycle injuries in Wisconsin since available DOT data is bicycle crash involving motor vehicle in operation only, not falls, or other bicycle crashes, even on roadway.

6 of 11 bicyclist fatalities with motor vehicles were under age 18 in 1998

107 of the 178 incapacitating bicyclist injuries were under age 18 in 1998

Most serious injuries occur in the age 5-9 and 10-14 groups

Age 15 and above may be bicycling less, rather than riding safer

Research from Oregon indicates that in a study of injured bicyclists brought to hospital emergency rooms and where slightly more than half were wearing their helmet, there was significant evidence that helmets prevent head and brain injury. Findings included:

Helmets decreased risk of head injury by 69%, brain injury by 65% and severe brain injury by 74%. This used emergency room controls, not population controls which may have yielded rates more like 85% for head injury and 88% for brain injury of a previous study

Helmets were equally effective in crashes involving motor vehicles and those not involving motor vehicles

Involvement in a motor vehicle crash was the most important risk factor for serious injury

The major site of helmet damage was to the rim in the frontal region

note: incorrect helmet positioning or poor fit can cause helmet to shift from forehead where frequent damage occurs - this can account for some of the head/brain injury for those who were wearing a helmet.

Most children and many adults observed in Wisconsin do not wear their helmet correctly.

Arguments for and counter-arguments against mandatory helmet law:

Mandatory helmet law for under age 18 would . . .	but . . .
Support parents efforts to make children protect themselves with helmet use. Parents need to set rules for safe activities and community agreement can be helpful. COMMUNITY STANDARDS	Is a weak argument - young children think parents rules are the law and older children are learning through rule testing and rebellion; if law can't or won't be enforced, it is worse than leaving rules in parents control, and the penalties will be paid by the parents, not their child, who refuses to wear a helmet. Some parents support helmet policies, but would not want mandatory law with penalties. Parents may be concerned that courts will erode parental role on this issue, and at same time not support other parental authority issues.
Make reluctant or uninformed parents buy and require their children to wear helmet. PUNISH AND EDUCATE	Has resistance from some adults/parents who believe helmet decision should be individual or family controlled - ABATE; and puts parents in jeopardy for child's behavior when child is not in their presence - parent pays fine, not child. Fine waiver - Purchase of a helmet in 30 days does not mean it will be worn. Helmet promotion programs now offer free or low cost helmets and fit helmet as parent/guardian looks on/helps. Some communities reward their children for wearing helmets. Legislature hasn't tried strong statewide helmet information and promotion effort as yet.
Passage of a mandatory helmet law in other states has increased observed helmet use. OTHER SUCCESSFUL MANDATORY LAWS	Reporters say little enforcement is done and wide range of increased use seems to have more to do with degree of positive initial publicity for the mandatory helmet law - creating a public standard and expectation for safety. Systematic studies have not been completed.

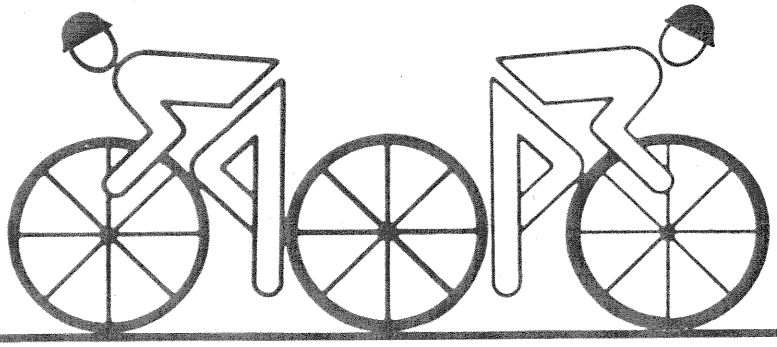
Rely on helmet as THE bicycle safety solution to keep children safe. Correct helmet use can prevent up to 85% of the head injuries that lead to brain damage, but only if worn correctly and on every ride. Motorcycle data (CODES) would indicate helmet use saves lives and health care dollars. BE A QUICK FIX AND REDUCE HEALTH CARE INJURY INVESTMENT	Thus far, bicycle data from states with mandatory helmet laws have not been compared to see if indeed severe and fatal injuries were reduced v. states with only helmet education activities or with no helmet activities. Requirement does not guarantee use, and not correct use. Helmet does not prevent all bicycle related injuries - some fatal. **Problem 1 not addressed in legislation:** Helmets worn improperly: too far back on head, not securely fastened, or too small or too big will not offer protection intended - wear level with the ground, just above the eyebrows. **Problem 2 not in legislation:** Enforcement of a helmet law could divert enforcement from the traffic violations which are a primary cause of serious bicycle crashes. Educational programs that teach children the skills (4-7 common mistakes made by children) to avoid 90% of the child bicyclist with motorist crashes are needed in every community to go with a helmet promotion program - whether voluntary or mandatory. Adult instruction and motorist instruction about bike safety also needed, especially for violators. Combination of good street design, educational programs, parental and school rules/policies and law enforcement to remind of and correct unsafe behavior and the need to wear helmet correctly are the effective combination to make bicyclists safer. Gov's Bicycle Coordinating Council would support this bill if education component were added.

Send message to families that legislature cares about child safety. CHILD PROTECTION	Tells them that once they are old enough they do not need protection, that parents and other adults do not need protection of helmet. Age 18 better than some past bills with age 12 or 14 which are the ages of testing authority and acting older than the child is, encouraging rejection of helmet. Age 18 is legal adulthood and as a society we have said most personal decisions are now up to the individual. Adult modeling of correct safety behavior more likely to get compliance from all ages of children and young adults.
Be consistent - Wisconsin has a mandatory motorcycle helmet law for under age 18 and while on learners permit - mandatory bicycle helmet law would be consistent with MC law. There is a strong foundation of governmental interest in protection of those who may not know to protect themselves - the young in this case. CHILD SAFETY MESSAGE CONSISTENCY	Even though this is the strongest argument combined with the number of head and brain injuries that could be prevented or severity lessened, bicycles do not reach speeds of motorcycles and many more thousands of bicyclists fall or otherwise crash every year without serious injuries than do motorcyclists.

Makes point of sale/rental of bicycle where helmet requirement communication can do most good. Message, if worthy one, is that all bicycling community is responsible to make sure child bicyclists have and wear helmets. SELLER RESPONSIBILITY	Some are concerned that individual sellers of bicycles would be liable under this law just as are bicycle dealers and other bicycle sales businesses. Could amend to create an exemption to that section, but then lose opportunity to communicate helmet need to first bicycle buyers - at garage sales and from individuals who buy and sell used bikes.
Following are other counter arguments:	Opponents fear mandatory helmet law would discourage bicycling, especially at the ages when bicycling for health and fitness, and environmental well being are most important. Cite Austrailian study.
	Law enforcement not comfortable enforcing any law with very young offenders. Many have not been trained yet in Bicycle Safety Enforcement to prevent crashes and see helmet enforcement as too negative in the scope of what is important to enforce. Officers would like wider latitude for bicycle safety violations, not just helmet use or non-use: Short term impoundment of bicycle to get parental and youth rider attention to violation, waiver into appropriate safety education program, and others.
	Some who support helmet use feel use decision should remain with bicyclist or be mandatory for all, not just children. Gov's bicycle coordinating council would not support universal mandatory helmet law, but would accept Sen. Risser's bill for the protection of children.

Bike Helmets and Traffic Behavior

A Study of the Behavior of Helmeted Cyclists in Monroe, Wisconsin



MONROE AREA SAFE KIDS PARTNERSHIP 1992

Bike Helmets and Traffic Behavior

A Study of the Behavior of Helmeted Cyclists in Monroe, Wisconsin

MONROE AREA SAFE KIDS PARTNERSHIP 1992

Research Compilation: Gaida Vickerman

Observers: Gaida Vickerman, Robert P. Vickerman

Technical Assistance:
City of Monroe Police Department
Monroe Area SAFE KIDS Partnership

Funding Provided by:
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Office of Transportation Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Questions may be referred to:
Monroe Area SAFE KIDS Partnership
Beth Kindschi, Coordinator
1811 12th St.
Monroe, WI 53566
608-325-4122 FAX 608-325-4128

Table of Contents

Purpose 1

Local Regulations 1

Location 1

Focus 1

Method 2

Analysis ..... 3 - 5

Interrim Observations ..... 5 - 6

Recommendations 6

Possible Ways To Reach Teens 6

Positive Observations 7

Negative Observations ..... 7 - 8

Equipment Difficulties Observed 8

New Glarus Bike Trail Observation 9

Conclusion 9

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to observe the behavior of bicyclists in the town of Monroe, Wisconsin during June, July, August and September of 1992. Monroe is a town of 10,000 located 45 miles south of Madison. Since 1990, Monroe has employed a college student as a Summer Safety Officer. The Summer Safety officer presents safety programs on varied traffic issues and is visible around town as a reminder of proper practice of bicycle rules.

Local Regulations

Bicycle riding is permitted on sidewalks except on the square, which is the business center of the town and surrounds the County Courthouse, plus a one block radius from the square.

Location

Children were observed on sidewalks, as well as, on the streets. Teens and adults were observed only on streets. Observations were made at intersections with 4-way or 2-way stops.

Bicycle helmets are available in Monroe for $15. No child who wanted a helmet would be denied it for lack of money as several service organizations underwrite this program.

Focus

Major focus of the study was children and their bicycling behavior comparing helmeted and non-helmeted riders. The survey also recorded teen and adult behaviors, as they are the role models for children. Special notice was given to teens who seem to be caring for children of working parents during the summer months.

Method

During June, July and August, 185 people were observed in situations where bicycle safety rules applied. In September, after school resumed, 87 students were observed in similar situations. Riders were categorized by gender, age and helmeted/ non-helmeted. Ten areas of safety were observed:

1. Stopping at stop signs
2. Use of hand signals
3. Looking both ways at intersection
4. Looking back when changing lanes
5. Riding in a straight line
6. Yielding to cars when entering road from a driveway
7. Riding with traffic
8. Correct size bicycle for rider
9. Control and balance
10. Hands on handle bars

Stopping at stop signs had two criteria. To be considered a stop, children had to have a foot on the ground. For teens and adults, stopping was either a foot on the ground or both wheels stopped.

Riding in a straight line was considered to be using no more than one half of the width of the traffic lane.

The method of evaluation of the data collected was done by the use of elementary mathematics and a hand calculator thus making this study easy to replicate by counting the subjects, noting behavior and calculating percentages.

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

(All figures represent percentages)

Helmeted/Non-Helmeted

Chart I	Stopping at Stop Signs	Hand Signals	Looking Both Ways at Intersections	Looking Back When Changing Lanes	Riding in a Straight Line	Yielding to Cars When Entering Traffic	Riding with Traffic	Correct Size Bike	Control & Balance	Hand on Handle Bars
HC Sidewalk	59	NA	88	NA	84	NA	NA	100	95	79
NHC Sidewalk	33	NA	47	NA	90	NA	NA	90	90	100
HC Road	68	33	70	83	83	NA	89	94	100	100
NHC Road	32	20	47	50	76	NA	88	98	83	88
HT										
NHT	32	0	63	43	92	0	95	92	92	100
HA	70	80	100	100	100	NA	100	100	100	100
NHA	38	14	73	0	88	NA	100	100	95	100

September (School Started) Helmeted/Non-Helmeted

Chart II										
HC Road	35	NA	47	100	94	100	75	100	94	100
NHC Road	20	0	38	0	89	0	83	100	93	95
H Teen										
NH Teen	9	0	17	0	83	0	100	100	58	100

Summer & Fall All Children Helmeted/Non-Helmeted

Chart III										
Helmeted	56	33	62	86	87	100	85	98	98	100
Non-Helmeted	25	14	42	38	84	0	85	99	89	92

HC = Helmeted Child (Elementary)

NHC = Non-helmeted Child (Elementary)

HT = Helmeted Teen

NHT = Non-helmeted Teen

Overall behavior of helmeted riders is higher in compliance with bicycle safety rules the non-helmeted riders.

Analysis of CHART I - Behavior of bicyclists during June, July, August

	Helmeted	Non-helmeted
1. Stopping at stop signs		
Children on sidewalk	59%	33%
Children on road	68%	32%
Teens	non-helmeted	32%
Adults	70%	38%
2. Hand signals		
Children on sidewalk	NA	NA
Children on road	33%	20%
Teens	non-helmeted	0%
Adults	80%	14%
3. Looking both ways at intersections		
Children on sidewalks	88%	47%
Children on road	70%	47%
Teens	non-helmeted	63%
Adults	100%	73%
4. Looking back when changing lanes		
Children on sidewalk	NA	NA
Children on road	83%	50%
Teens	non-helmeted	43%
Adults	100%	0%

The safety behaviors of helmeted bicyclists are consistantly higher than that of the non-helmeted riders.

Analysis of CHART II - Behavior of student bicyclists in September

	Helmeted	Non-helmeted
1. Stopping at stop signs		
Children on road	35%	20%
Teens	non-helmeted	9%
2. Hand signals		
Children on road	NA	0%
Teens	non-helmeted	0%
3. Looking both ways at intersections		
Children on road	47%	38%
Teens	non-helmeted	17%
4. Looking back when changing lanes		
Children on road	100%	0%
Teens	non-helmeted	0%

Interrim Observations

The safety behavior of student bicyclists dropped after school started. There are several reasons which might explain the change of behavior of the bicyclists as seen in Chart I and in Chart II. Summer Safety Officer's job ended in August. School started with crossing guards at major intersections near the schools. Children were waved through those stop signs by the crossing guards. Possibly the children felt that since they were waved through some stop signs it might be alright to go through the other stop signs. Some grade school children were observed slowing down for stop signs but then a high school student passed them and went through the stop sign. The grade school student followed the lead of the teenager. Whatever the reason, the bicycle safety behavior of students in September is poorer when compared to their behavior during the summer months.

Analysis of CHART III - Behavior of all children riding on the road

	Helmeted	Non-helmeted
1. Stopping at stop signs	56%	25%
2. Hand signals	33%	14%
3. Looking both ways at intersections	62%	42%
4. Looking back when changing lanes	86%	38%

Helmeted children observed safety rules more than non-helmeted.

Recommendations

1. Teach traffic safety in school.

2. Practice traffic safety in school.

3. Attempt to teach parents their responsibilities regarding traffic safety rules, helping child choose proper equipment and learning how to use it, and recognizing that a bicycle is a vehicle and not a toy.

4. Somehow get the message to teens that they are the role models for younger children. Children do watch them and follow their lead—right through stop signs.

Possible ways to reach teens

1. Have a Junior High math class do bicycle safety survey covering the four main points of stopping at stop signs, hand signals, looking both ways at intersection, and looking back when changing lanes. The students would compile the results. The study could be published in the local newspaper. The teens would benefit from observing how dangerous it is to be on a street riding a bicycle.

2. Have young teens hold neighborhood bike safety rodeos. Students who have taken a traffic safety course in school, might be offered extra credit if they designed and held a neighborhood tricycle/bicycle rodeo. Nothing elaborate but fun and informational.

Positive Observations

1. Helmeted family of mother, father, baby and little girl were going home from the public swimming pool. The parents were teaching the little girl bicycle safety rules. They all stopped, looked both ways, walked their bicycles across the road and then proceeded to ride on the sidewalk.

2. A boy approached the stop sign as a city truck approached from the bicyclist's right. The truck didn't have a stop sign but the driver stopped. The truck driver and the bicyclist sat for a time each waiting for the other to do something. Finally the bicyclist went through the intersection. The truck then slowly continued on its way.

3. A helmeted older elementary girl was with a helmeted younger male. She appeared to be teaching him safety rules. They rode on the sidewalk, stopped at the intersection, looked both ways and then crossed.

4. Observed three cases of helmeted mothers teaching their helmeted children hand signals.

5. A helmeted girl was teaching bike safety to a non-helmeted friend. She said, "Stop here. We have to look both ways. Okay, now we can go."

Negative Observations

1. Observed two helmeted pre-school children ride their bicycles off of the sidewalk, make a large U-turn in the intersection and then proceed to ride on the sidewalk on the other side of the street.

2. Observed that whenever a high school student "cruised" through a stop sign, the younger children followed even though they appeared to be starting to slow down for the stop sign.

3. The 25 children who were observed riding against traffic were either talking with their friends or simply goofing off for each other.

4. Three elementary school bicyclists stopped at a stop sign, looked both ways and then proceeded to ride right in front of an oncoming car. They were not able to see the car because of cars parked along the street.

5. Observed no-hands riding done by boys as a cool thing to do. Great balance!

6. Observed a helmeted group of children with a helmeted father not stopping at stop sign. When asked why they had not stopped, the father answered, "No traffic".

7. A non-helmeted woman led 4 boys on bicycles through an intersection without stopping nor looking. A boy on roller skates was being pulled by a bicyclist in the same group.

Equipment Difficulties Observed

1. Observed three riders having a hard time pedaling. Chains may have been rusty due to the 2 weeks of rainy weather prior to this observation.

2. Observed that children as well as some high school students don't know how to use the gears on multi-speed bicycles. They were standing up and pedaling with effort while riding up a small incline. Why do parents buy multi-speed bicycles for their children and fail to have children learn the proper use of the gears?

3. Observed 5 out of 11 children at an elementary school with helmet straps loosely fastened.

4. Observed 4 children and 3 teens were on improperly sized bicycles.

5. Observed 1 adult and 2 children riding without shoes.

6. All children observed carrying items (books, etc.) on the roads used back packs or bike baskets to carry belongings. Children/teens riding with musical instruments and other bulky items were seen riding on the sidewalk.

New Glarus Bike Trail Observation

Ten years ago, a helmeted bicylist on the New Glarus bicycle trail was a rare sight. In 1992, helmeted bicyclists are present on the trail. While riding a 12-mile stretch of that trail, 14 men, 19 women and 19 children were observed wearing helmets. This represents about 25% of the total number of riders.

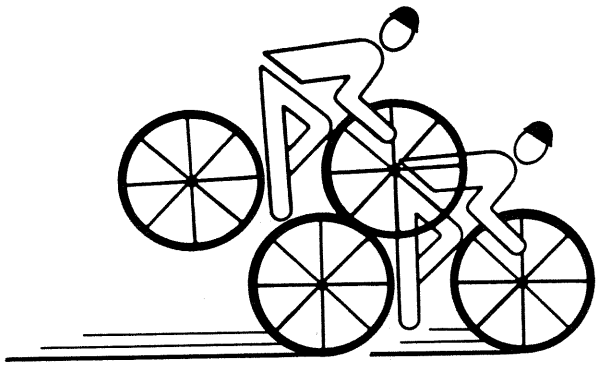
Observations were made at the places where the trail crossed a road with a stop sign on the trail. People slowed down when approaching the road, they looked quickly both ways, then crossed. Nobody stopped unless there was a car coming.

People did stop at the stop sign on Highway 69 where the trail crosses but that is a very busy highway.

This trail observation was made in an attempt to compare trail (i.e. serious) riders with casual street riders. This trail is the closest to Monroe that was complete at the time of observation.

Conclusion

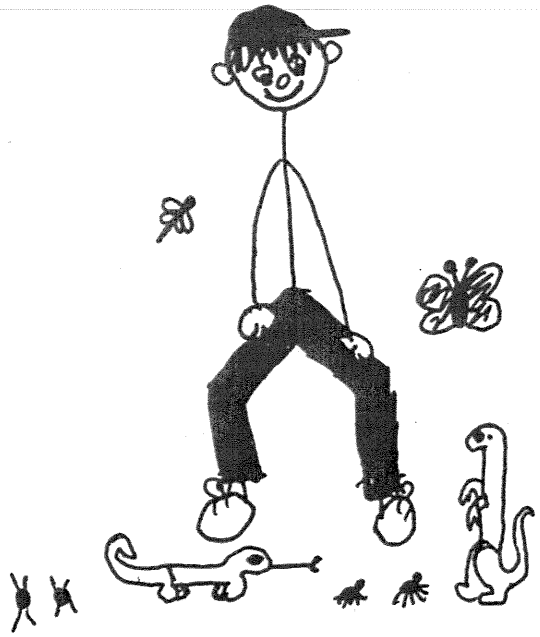
If this small sampling of cyclists observed over 80 hours is indicative of the behavior of helmeted child bicycle riders, then helmets should be readily available to and required for these children. Every behavior category observed was closer to the expected behavior for helmeted children than for those without helmets. Teens and adults who wear helmets also seem to observe traffic law more faithfully. One theory suggested to us before this study took place is, that a properly worn bicycle helmet appears in the riders' peripheral vision, thereby possibly reminding the rider that he/she is on a vehicle rather than playing with a toy. Whatever the reason, the wearing of a bicycle helmet and observing traffic law while riding do go together.



I support Senate Bill 87 mandatory Bicycle Helmet Legislation

Jeane M. Carlson 9-23-99
1694 Kong RD
Stoughton, WI 53589

IE LITTLE BOY WHO GREW



A STORY ABOUT

'ONATHAN GARRETT MUTCHIE

OCT. 21, 1988 - MAY 18 1998

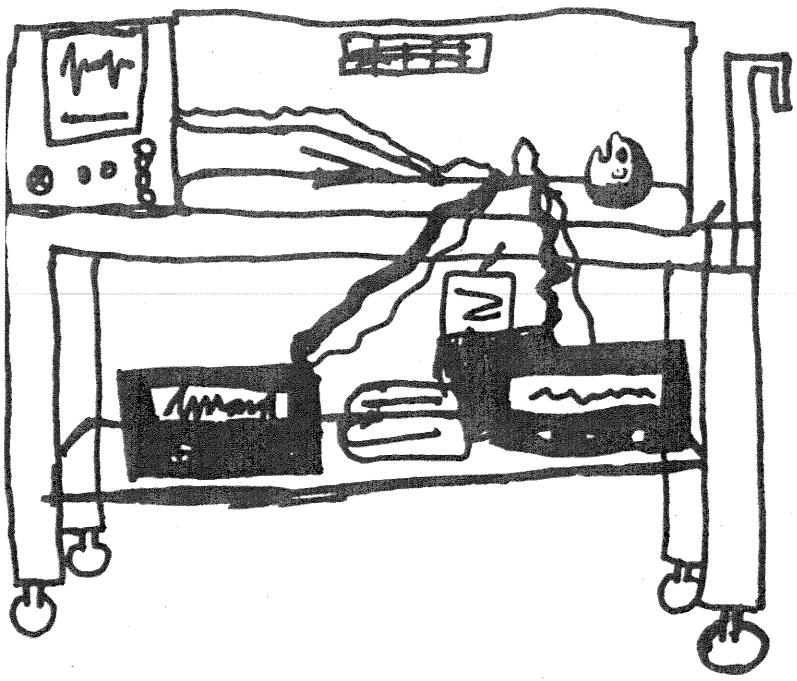
written by Maggie Melendez
illustrated by Joleen Mutchie

THE LITTLE BOY WHO GREW

written by Maggie Melendez
illustrated by Joleen Mutchie

f Jonathan dedicated and depicted by artist Jane Hobbs-Cascio

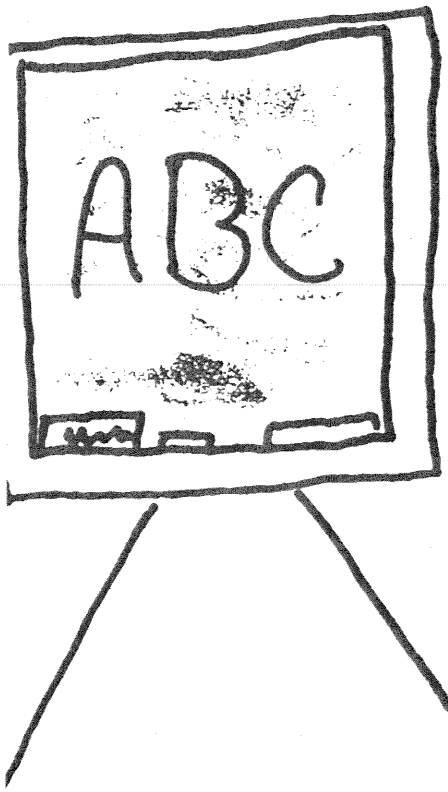
Melendez, Racine, Wisconsin
rmation call (414) 639-0195

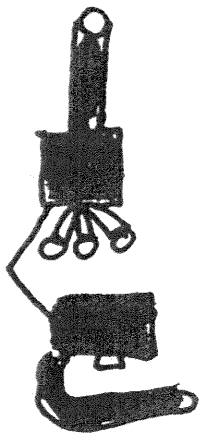


ɲce there was a little boy
ɲo was born too soon.
ɛ was just a little bit small.
s parents named him Jonathan.
recious gift from God.)
s Mother sat by his
ecial incubator bed
d sang him lullabies . . .
ɲd the little boy grew.

:w until he was
)ugh to say, "I love you Mom."
His Mom would get mad
.e silly thing he did,
ıld look up at her
crooked little grin
/eetly ask,
do dinosaurs
ass?"
)ther would
im in her arms
ıg
ıg him
labies . . .
ıe little boy grew.

The little boy grew until he was old enough to sleep in a big bed.
And when he had bad dreams or trouble getting to sleep, his Mother would sit him in her lap and sing him his lullabies until, because snore, she knew he was asleep . . .
e little boy grew.

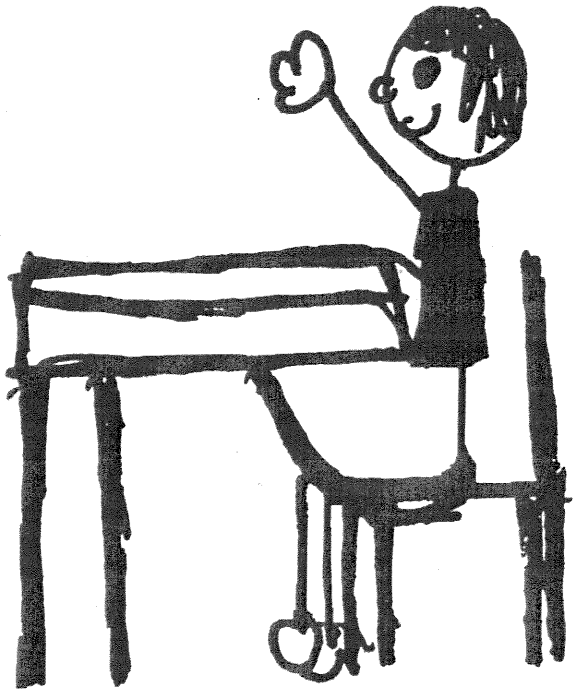


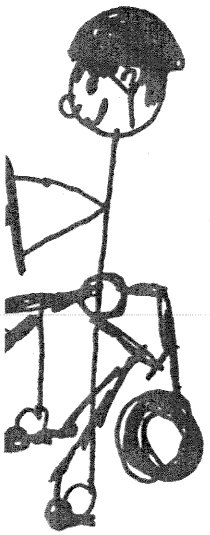


-tle boy grew until he was
ɔugh to go to school.
rned about dinosaurs,
ıs, insects, snakes and creatures
sea. He learned how to make

ul creatures out of clay and how
ı microscope.
ld come home from school and
mother stories about what he
ned in great detail.
is head hurt from trying to learn
ı, he
limb

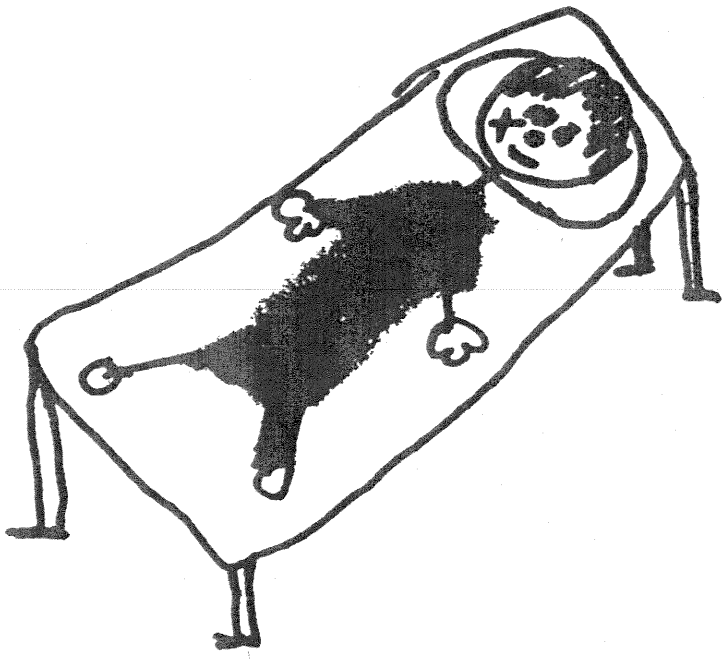
's lap
would
ı his
. . .
little
w.





The little boy grew.
He grew into a happy boy
who loved to tease his
older sister, play "bury
me in the sand" with his
little sister, and hold his
baby brother on his lap.
He learned to ride a

fish and write
:s and poetry.
his mother sang
labies, he would
real close and
long.
times she'd still
hem just for him . . .
he little boy grew.



ne day the little boy got hurt real
'ery day his Mother sat and sang.
: whole week the Doctors tried
est but the hurt was just too
or one little boy.
ne came and said goodbye.
Mother sang his lullabies
e gently travelled on . . .
HE LITTLE BOY GREW.

ı quietly little one.
hat they say is true.
ı listen with your heart you
ll hear . . .
r Angels do sing lullabies.

PLEASE WEAR
A HELMET
IEN YOU RIDE!

JONATHAN'S STORY

lutchie was a 9 1/2 year old boy, who always wore a bicycle helmet while bike at home. On May 11th, 1998 while at a friend's house, Jonathan nother child's bike and rode across an intersection into the path of a truck. t of the truck broke his leg. His unprotected, unhelmeted head hit the Seven days later, May 18th, 1998 Jonathan died due to a bruised brain. not all sad. The Pleasant Prairie Police Department has a new canine unit to his memory, Jerstad-Agerholm Elementary School in Racine, has an on going project with the main playground named in his memory. injuries to Jonathan's body enabled five other people to continue life with organs. Jonathan's story has inspired bicycle safety programs which have 000 children, with over 3,000 helmets sold. He leaves his many friends with many sweet memories of a gentle, budding artist and scientist. his story will touch enough people to make a bicycle helmet as readily a bicycle, that the two must be used together no matter the location.

e Melendez