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**Kari Jones**

# Wheels for Change

*Tackling climate change the family way*

**M**ary has just come back from the store where she's bought herself a proper biking jacket. "Now I'll actually look the part," she says with a laugh. Mary Stockdale, her husband Jon Corbett, their two kids and Mary's parents are all going to spend July biking across B.C. on a climate change awareness campaign called Wheels for Change. Their route will take them 1,000 kilometers from Nelson, up to Vernon, back down to Vancouver and across to Victoria. This campaign is the brainchild of Mary and a Vernon-based friend, Celia Auclair, who will be taking part in the tour with her own three children. They hope to be joined by many other families and individuals so that in total, the cumulative numbers of kilometers biked will be 40,000—the circumference

of the earth at the equator.

The idea for this campaign has been growing in Mary's mind for a long time. She first began thinking seriously about climate change when her daughter was born 10 years ago and she pondered what we, today's adults, are leaving for our children.

"Becoming a parent made me realize I am the adult. Now it is my job to take on this responsibility."

Mary believes that averting the worst impacts of climate change through individual and collective actions is possible and that we can change the future. She is learning more about climate change every day and like many of us, has felt anger, denial and, most of all, despair for the future. Mary wanted to do something to make a differ-



ence, but didn't know what. But as time passed, the sense of being compelled to do something grew.

For many years Mary and Jon have biked whenever possible instead of taking their car. Slowly, Mary realized that biking was something she could do to raise awareness of climate change, and so the idea of Wheels for Change was born.

"Biking is something people can relate to. It is part of what we do in our everyday lives. It's part of the solution, and it's fun."

Mary decided that Wheels of Change would be a collective action for families who want to have an opportunity to show how much they care about climate change and have fun at the same time. She is hoping that people of all ages will join. Already 18 people have signed up for the full tour, from small children to grandparents, with many more joining for smaller portions of the route.



The tour will start in Nelson on June 30. Participants will bike an average of 50 kilometers a day, about half the average daily distance of a commercial bike tour. To give an example of what that means, Mary says they will take a week to bike from Hope to Victoria. The tour will be supported by a vehicle powered by alternative fuels that will carry gear and any children who are not biking. All children will ride in the vehicle for those parts of the tour which have been deemed unsafe for young riders, such as the Coquihalla highway. The vehicle will also act as a "day camp" for kids, taking

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in the tour and hearing about it will remind people that every person can take actions to reduce the impacts of climate change and that everyone just has to do what they can do. She also hopes that Wheels for Change will encourage people to get out and vote in any upcoming elections.

“We need to all take our own actions, but we also need to think collectively to make a societal shift,” she says. “We need to vote for the politicians who will make the biggest difference.”

Mary admits that she is not a climate change expert, she’s just a mother who is concerned for her kids’ future and who has identified a skill that she has—biking—as a way to raise awareness about the environment. She has taken personal responsibility for making change. This is how change happens, one person and one step—or in Mary’s case, one “revolution”—at a time. For more information about Wheels for Change visit [www.wheelsforchange.ca](http://www.wheelsforchange.ca).

*Kari Jones is a Victoria based mother and writer who is doing her best to be more aware of climate change and adapt her actions accordingly. Photos by Natalia Vignola.*

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