

Get Lit
Portland's Original Bike Lights Program

I'm looking for someone to take over the Get Lit Bike Lights program I've been running "Get Lit" with a handful of volunteers for 3 years. It's time, for me, to move on to new projects. I really want to see the program continue, the need still exist. We've handed out 1500 bike lights & 500 helmets to all types of people and cyclist, all around Portland. Get Lit has made a huge contribution to safe cycling in Portland.

The demands are great but the rewards are even greater. We've been featured in The Oregonian's Portland Magazine, mentioned in Bicycling Magazine, awarded BTA's Alice B Toeclips award in 2006 and received Best of Portland recognition in Willamete Week in 2006.

If you think this is something you would like to do, make a minimum one year commitment to and willing to train the next person, the following list are things you need to think about:

- When lights are needing to be assembled and given out an 8 hour a week commitment is needed.
- You must be willing to fill out all necessary paper work in order to work with our current Non-Profit: City Repair Project.
- Facilitate fund raising, through grants, organizations, contacting previous donors, and of course-your friends.
- Remember half of your time is spent doing the background work (ordering, calling volunteers, assembly, fund raising) the other half of your time is spent handing out lights.

I find that this is a good project for a cycling enthusiast, maybe nearing retirement looking for a way to give back to the community and promote safe cycling as an alternative to automobile use. It's a big commitment, but well worth it. If you think this is something you would like to do, I'd love to talk with you.

Thanks for inquiring about this opportunity.

Jeff Bernards

The following article appeared in Oregon Cycling Magazine, April 2006.

Click here: [Alice B Toeclips Interview: Jeff Bernards](#)



Alice B Toeclips Interview: Jeff Bernards

Interview conducted by CAT student William Ross, age 15

What did you do to win an Alice award this year?

We started a program in Portland called "Get Lit". Its purpose is to bring lights out into the street to help people who can't afford to buy lights, to create a safe biking situation in Portland, to cut down on the number of frustrated car drivers who don't like cyclists without lights and to cut down on the number of accidents in Portland. We had a couple of people die up on Mount Tabor a while ago when a driver went around a cyclist who had lights on, came back into the lane, and hit two other people and killed them. I heard about that and thought that lights could really make a difference so we need to get them out there and make people realize how important they are.

Where do you get the lights?

The first set of lights we got was a grant from ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) that was for almost 5000 dollars. We gave all the lights away and saw that the program was successful, but there was nothing going on with it until a friend of mine—Dat Nguyen—offered to give us a \$500 matching grant if we could raise at least that much. We raised \$900, so we ended up with \$1400 to buy more lights. About a third of our money comes from the people who actually get the lights. Everyone who gets a light really appreciates it and 99 percent of the time they make some kind of donation: \$5, \$10, \$2... I had a homeless guy offer to give me his bottle return receipt. That's how much he appreciated the light, but of course I didn't take it!

Do you hear anything from car drivers about the program?

When I set up on the street, I get people who don't even own a bike—who just drive—tell me "oh, I'm so sick of cyclists without lights, here's \$20, go buy some more lights and keep up the good work!" So we get a good response from the auto community. The lights aren't really for the cyclist, they're for the cars. I can see pretty well riding around the streets of Portland, there are plenty of street lights. Really the lights are to be seen. We just want to cut down on accidents. Also, we want the program to get people to see biking as a positive alternative to using your car to go everywhere. So we get more people who see biking as safe and they see more people doing it, and they think "wow, maybe I could get out of my car and join them, it looks like fun, and it looks safe."

This interview is part of a series on 2006 Alice B Toeclips Awards recipients. Each issue, we will interview an Alice winner about what they have contributed to cycling in Oregon. More information about the Alice B Toeclips awards can be found at www.bta4bikes.org.