



# Merritt Herald

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## Cyclists share important message



The Otesha Project's Chris Hiebert (left), Emily Crosbie, Jannah Uhrich-Chappell, Alec Ellsworth and Erika Spearman take a rest in Merritt on May 19. The 18-member team is travelling from Vancouver to Calgary, performing environmentally-conscious theater for schools and youth groups.

By Colin Oswin  
May 23 2007

After a long hard climb, Merritt was a welcome sight to a group of cyclists on Saturday.

Members of the Otesha Project took a rest in the city on May 19 and 20, between stops on their tour of the

Rocky Mountains. The group, made up of 18 cyclists, is travelling to cities around the Lower Mainland and Southern Alberta, performing environmentally-themed theatre for schools and youth groups.

Otesha volunteer Emily Crosbie says the performances show students how their choices can help and harm the environment, without being preachy or condescending.

"We're not out there saying 'This is the way you should be,'" she says. "But these are the issues out there."

During the presentations, Otesha members connect global problems with everyday actions, from getting ready in the morning to packing a lunch for school.

The performers delve into the benefits of vegetarian and vegan diets in terms of personal and environmental health. They lead by example, with the volunteers subsisting on a fully vegan diet for the tour.

Crosbie says the group received positive reactions from their audiences so far, with young people making many different environmental commitments.

"It was really powerful to hear how they responded," she says.

The cyclists left Vancouver on May 8, and plan to wind up the tour in Calgary on June 29. The group stops in Kelowna this week before travelling to Lake Country for the end of the month.

Since the organization's founding in 2003, Otesha volunteers have performed for more than 60,000 young people and

bicycled over 22,000 km.

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