

Presto!

Meet the People-Powered Piano Bike during Bike Month

Debra Hensley has been taking her show on the road since this time last year with mobile Social Stimulus Gatherings – where she invites the community to “mob” a neighborhood or location in pursuit of “people/planet/purpose” – also driving revenue, awareness, and attention to local businesses and organizations.

She says, “I want DS\$ [Deb’s Social Stimulus] to have a fun edge surrounding our events and projects. When we go into a community, I want to look into the complex nature of the area, highlighting the history, the people, the small businesses and the unique features that reinforce our ‘sense of place and community.’ Most importantly, I want to engage the community in deep and meaningful ways.”

Past gathering locales have included S. Limestone, London Ferrell Garden; and most recently, the Distillery District (at Barrelhouse Distillery). This weekend – in time for Bike Month – the community will be invited to gather on N. Limestone in the Third Street Stuff parking lot, to make their own contribution to Presto: the People-Powered Piano Bike.

Why does Lexington need a People-Powered Piano Bike?

She says, “This project is in keeping with my core pillars of PEOPLE...PLANET... and PURPOSE. I wanted to bring together cyclists, environmentalists, and artists around a project that is by and for the com-



Photo of Debra Hensley by daughter Hallie Hensley

munity. From the beginning, my idea of the ‘PianoBike’ was untried and I had to bring the right people on board to see if we could make a go of it.”

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DEBRA HENSLEY'S
**SOCIAL
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PEOPLE PLANET PURPOSE
www.debrassocialstimulus.com

The What and the How came next. “The very first step I took was to call Shane Teder about the feasibility of cyclists pulling a trailer and on it will be a piano that we make, a piano player, a stationary cyclist



One of Debra Hensley’s Summer 2009 Social Stimulus Gatherings, on S. Limestone

(powering the generator) with lots of art made with reusable materials, attached to the piano frame and trailer, etc. (If you have had a smoothie at the Farmers’ Market, thank Shane and his business partner Patrick Garnett. I know they understood the technology).”

Somewhat to her surprise, she didn’t encounter skepticism. “Shane did not even ask what was in my

‘drink-i-n-g water.’ From the get-go, he said, ‘I am sure we can do this.’

Shane and his business partner are brilliant and innovative entrepreneurs who focus on eco-friendly bike projects. Like Morris Book Shop and Third Street Stuff, I have a bike stand at my office made with bike parts - Shane, and his business partner made it (Bike Creations).”

“Next step: I called Alex Meade to enlist his help. If you are an avid cyclist in this community, then you know Alex and you know he is a brilliant engineer. He made the contraption that will allow to cyclist to pull PRESTO.”

“Having the technology completed, a trial run or two with cyclists pulling the bikes, and a stationary cyclist charging the

battery/generator...we were ready. NEXT STEP: We had a big POW WOW with the WHOS - Joel Pett made the cartoon, Bob Morgan met the art teachers Jarah Jones, Georgia Henkel, Ann Allen and their students to demonstrate how to make throw away items and reusable things into art. Hub Cap Annie (Ira Lush) donated all the hubcaps, and the kids have been pouring their efforts artistically cool hubcaps they will bring on Saturday. Peggy at Don Wilson Music Company has donated graveyard instruments. Pat Gerhard, Bob Morgan and Melissa

Watt will help facilitate the gathering on Saturday as we all paint and add the final artistic elements to Presto.

As for the labor costs? “EVERYONE has donated his or her talents towards this project. Is that cool or what?”

Lori Houlihan and Debra Hensley “will manage the Community engagement piece of where Presto goes.” She adds, “Look for Presto at some neat public events....very soon.” ■

