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Bike commuter of the year: 9-year-old Lucas Valley kid

Mark Prado
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Meet 9-year-old Clay Kaufmann, who was honored as Bike Commuter of the Year Thursday as hundreds of people participated in Bike to Work Day across Marin County.

"Sometimes it's hard to ride outside, but I keep doing it," said the third-grader, who attends Dixie Elementary School in Lucas Valley.

Clay can be seen every day pedaling his black and silver bike to and from school, about a three-quarter-mile one-way trip, often with dad Mark at his side.

"Other bike commuters may log more daily miles, but Clay is totally committed," said JoAnn Richards, who organized this year's Bike to Work Day activities, in which volunteers at energy stations handed out drinks and food from the Golden Gate Bridge to Novato.

Early in the school year when it became apparent that Clay had not missed a single day riding to school, Kel Harris, who heads the Safe Routes to School effort in the Dixie School District, challenged Clay to ride every day.

Clay met the challenge on good days and bad, through sunny, rainy and windy weather.

Family friend Dick Dinkelspiel nominated Clay for the award.

"Every day, Clay meets the challenge with a smile on his face, standing for the final sprint along the rolling hills to the school, as though he were on the final stage of the tour," Dinkelspiel said.

For his efforts, Clay received gift certificates for everything from coffee to ice cream at a Bike to Work Day party at Mike's Bikes in Sausalito Thursday afternoon.

Will Clay continue his

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