



## **Pedal and Play in Paradise 2022**

“What a fun ride!” proclaimed a smiling cyclist, as they crossed the Start/Finish line at TEAM Punta Gorda’s March 26, 2022, Pedal and Play in Paradise. Gauging from the smiling faces on the over 400 riders in attendance, that rider’s observation mirrored the experience of many others.

Held on a perfect sunny day at Laishley Park in downtown Punta Gorda, Pedal and Play featured four rides for cyclists of all skill levels including 60-, 30-, and 15- mile routes. As they cycled around the area, riders were treated to the waterside beauty and history of Punta Gorda.

The fourth ride, the always popular “Mystery Ride,” featured stops at various sites in Punta Gorda illustrating the impact TEAM Punta Gorda has had on the community. Each stop featured a whimsical gathering of “visitors from the other side of the pond” dressed in flowing 19<sup>th</sup> century dresses, on a quest for the elusive “Tea” in TEAM. Pedal and Play riders were teasingly admonished by the formally dressed ladies for their casual attire. The last stop on the ride at The Spice and Tea Exchange in Fishermen’s Village featured samplings of tea along with treats from Nino’s Bakery.

Upon their return to Laishley Park, all riders were treated to box lunches from Jersey Mike’s along with several choices of ice cream flavors from Harbor Scoops. Free beer provided by Suncoast Beverage was especially popular. Thirst quenching water was provided by Waste Management who also took on trash and recycling duties.

Volunteers from the Charlotte High School Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp fulfilled several duties including enthusiastically cheering riders as they crossed the start/finish line. Master of Ceremonies, the ever-popular Yaya Diamond, played music, sang, and cheered on riders as they departed Laishley on their routes. Singer Paul Roush serenaded in his laid-back style during lunch.

TEAM Board President Sandy Dressler and CEO Nancy Johnson spoke briefly acknowledging the many sponsors and volunteers who made Pedal and Play possible. They also invited riders to return next year on March 24 and 25, 2023, for another spectacular day in paradise.