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Trishaw cycles across the age barrier

JENNIFER EDER

May Harris is looking especially rosy-cheeked after her first bike ride in years. But she wasn't the one doing the pedalling.

May is one of the first in the region to try out an Arvida trishaw, a three-wheeled, roofed and motorised bicycle.

"It's comfortable, really, really comfortable. I thoroughly enjoyed it," May says.

The Cycling Without Age project started in the Netherlands four years ago, aiming to give people with limited mobility a chance to get back on the bike.

Arvida retirement care, which operates 18 retirement villages and aged-care services, is rolling out trishaws across New Zealand.

Ashwood Park Retirement Village, in Blenheim, officially welcomed its own trishaw on Wednesday, and residents have been quick to request rides.

Volunteer pilot Deb Healy says she has put her hand up because it is such an enjoyable way to help others.

"I'm really keen to get behind it and support the programme. What a healthy way to volunteer. You get to exercise at the same time.

"But it takes a wee bit of training, and for this to be a success it really needs a big group of volunteers behind it."

Routes through parks and

along the Taylor River have been mapped out, and Ashwood Park diversional therapist Ange Stanton has liaised with police to make sure laws are adhered to.

An electric motor will kick in for uphill battles.

Arvida marketing manager Tristan Saunders says the best part of the project is it connects residents with the community.

"We wanted to change the experience of retirement villages. Most people would have biked to school when they were younger ... And you get the same experience, out in the sunshine, hearing the birds and feeling the wind in your hair."

May recalls biking through England with her daughters balanced on the back of the bike.

"I rode until I was 60, and then I got my driver's licence. I was much younger then, of course. But these are good fun. It's just a shame they can only take two at a time."

Volunteers interested in getting involved can register by emailing tristan.saunders@arvida.co.nz



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May Harris, left, and Vern Neal, piloted by Ashwood Park diversional therapist Ange Stanton.

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