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Island youth turned out last Saturday for the Teen Center's annual Skate Fest event, which included professional demonstrations, giveaways and an inflatable waterslide. Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

## Young islanders have a blast at Skate Fest

By Samantha Emrich

An inflatable waterslide, free giveaways and professional demos were just a few of the highlights that marked the Teen Center's annual Skate Fest held at the skate park behind Lawn Avenue School last Saturday afternoon.

Robb Roach, president of Kettle Bottom Outfitters, was emcee of the event and children as young as three years old came out to enjoy the skating, biking, food and music. Professional BMX bikers and skateboarders thrilled spectators with gravity-defying tricks on ramps.

"The kids get to watch the professional demos all day," said Debbie Tungett, Teen Center director, adding that professionals

from Trickstars, and Water Brothers Surf and Skate shop, in Newport, along with Donny Barley, owner of Fountain of Youth skate shop, attended the event.

Luke Lis, a 14-year-old BMX biker and incoming North Kingstown High School freshman, has attended Skate Fest for three years.

"I don't do anything extreme with biking, but I like to watch," he said. "It's a fun day with entertainment, food and a slide where you can just hang with your friends. It's pretty sweet."

Henry Young, 10, of Providence — who is vacationing in Jamestown this summer — was a first-timer at Skate Fest.

"I just skateboard for fun, but I think what they (the professionals) do is pretty cool," he said.

Young said his favorite trick at the event was a back flip performed on a ramp by a BMX professional. The biker sped up the ramp and did a 360-degree backward flip while still holding on to the bike, he said.

Another first-time Skate Fest attendee was 28-year-old professional BMX biker Ryan Lively. Lively said he has been riding for 13 years and found out about Skate Fest through a friend, the owner of Trickstars.

The decision to come was a no-brainer, he said.

"I like riding for fun," he said. "I'll definitely come in future years."

Aside from watching pro bikers and boarders, attendees were

automatically entered in a raffle.

"There are people locally in Jamestown that donate items for us to give away," Tungett said. "And we have a contact person with Zoo York. They send us t-shirts, stickers and posters for the raffle."

While the raffle and unlimited rides on the waterslide came with admission, some attendees were disappointed with the increased cost of the event as compared to previous years. This year's admission fee was \$10.

Sean Stanford, 15, and Drew MacIntyre, 13, expressed their opinions about the increase in price.

"Last year, it was cheaper," Stanford said. "The food isn't free this year and there is not a large selection compared to last year." But, MacIntyre said, Skate Fest was still a great time.

"This waterslide has been the highlight of my summer," he said.

Tungett said that the increase in cost was necessary.

"It is expensive to have the pros down, get the inflatable waterslide and so on," she said. "Everything we charge is really just to cover cost and any extra we make for the Teen Center is awesome."

While funds may have been tighter, Skate Fest proved to be a fun and action-packed day for young islanders.

"They always have so much fun at it," Tungett said. "It has become a little tradition."

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