



A lifelong friendship was made that day.

Sam's bike had a bent wheel and a flat tire. The bike was in bad shape, and Sam had a twisted ankle. It took the two of them a long time to reach the finish line.

They passed under the huge finish line banner together—no sprint, no push for first, just two riders moving as one.

By the time {text:child_name} and Sam had walked to the winner's stand, the celebration was nearly over.

Someone else held the silver trophy. Someone else was giving an interview to the town newspaper.

Sam leaned into {text:child_name}, still favoring his leg, but smiling—really smiling now—because somewhere along the way, the race had stopped being about the finish line.

It had become about something else. Something that would last longer—friendship.

{text:child_name} knew it too.

The chance to win had been there. Close. Easily within reach.

But so was the chance to do what was right.

And {text:child_gender} chose that.

Winning the trophy as the fastest rider in Great Oak Creek would have to wait one more year.