

Sandra Evangelina Garcia

Age: 17

Occupation: Communications Intern at Recycle a Bike (and high school student)

Are you a T.A. member? Unfortunately no...do you offer a reduced rate youth membership?

Where do you commute to/from? My house on Hunts Point Ave. in the Bronx, to school on Houston Street in Manhattan and to work in DUMBO (Brooklyn).

What is your route? I usually always take the West Side bike path and get off on 14th Street and work my way down to Houston Street. For DUMBO I take the bike path and work my way down to Canal and then get on the Manhattan Bridge.

What kind of bike do you have? IRO fixed ... I know it's funny to everyone who knows me and finds out!

What kinds of gear do you use (not gears on bike, but lights, helmet, rain coat, etc.)? I always use a back light and a front light. I hate not knowing where I'm going. I also use a helmet on official rides and that's it!

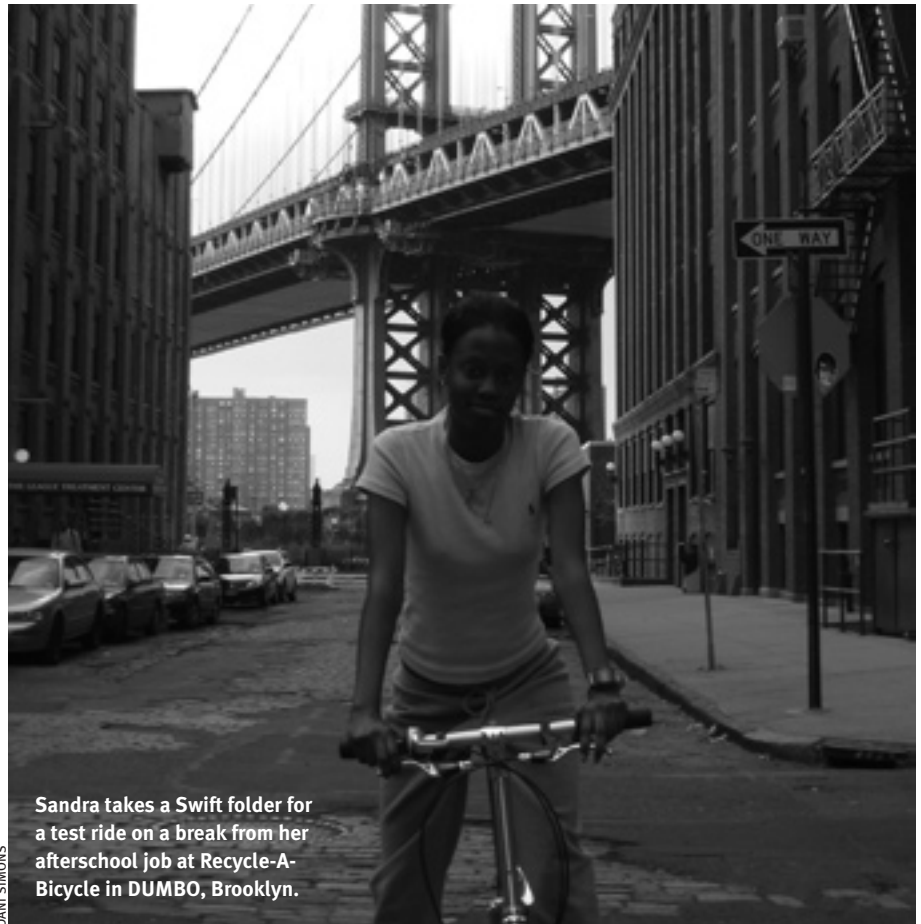
How long have you been commuting? About a year. I was really afraid at first. I had a small accident and the old lady driving the car started screaming obscenities at me. After that I thought "is that the worst that can happen?" and lost a lot of the fear I had.

Why did you start commuting by bike? I started because I was a Bike Ambassador [with Transportation Alternatives]. After my first experience it was fun to see all of NYC while riding a bike. Subways became dull and drowned my thoughts out. I found that I can think better while on a bike. So it became a new hobby.

What do you wear when you bike to work or school? I only ride in mild or hot weather sorry...I'm too afraid of the cold so if it's hot I wear shorts and a tank top, if it's mild a hoodie, a shirt, a tank top, tights and jeans. I hate the cold weather!

Do you ride in all weather? Nope, I don't think I can take cold weather on a bike. It freezes me; it's scary.

What kind of response do you get from co-workers or fellow students? My fellow stu-



Sandra takes a Swift folder for a test ride on a break from her afterschool job at Recycle-A-Bicycle in DUMBO, Brooklyn.

DANI SIMONS

dents can't believe me when they see me on a bike because I'm such a "girly girl." They always gasp when they see me arrive on my bike. I get dumb comments like "aren't u scared" or "you know u can't ride on the sidewalk right?" I just laugh them off. My teachers are always surprised too. But they are really proud about it for some reason. At work [at Recycle-A-Bicycle] my friends are always telling me I need to ride my bike more. They aren't lying I do. And I will once 70 degrees becomes the low (LOL).

What are some memorable experiences you've had while riding your bike? Riding from Manhattan to Coney Island, it was riveting. I had never been to Coney Island believe it or not, and it was cool to ride through there. I got a "nostalgic" feeling if you will.

What is the best commute you can remember? From DUMBO to my grandfather's house in Harlem is the smoothest ride ever. I love it there are no cars just a nice open road that's what I love.

What was your worst experience/commute? I never had a wild experience. When I'm on the streets I play it safe. I'm too afraid to get hit.

What is your advice for new bicycle commuters? Take it easy and soon you will get used to it. And when you do get used to it you will love it!

Where do you park your bike? I take it upstairs I live in a two-story house so it's only one flight up.

What's your riding style? I didn't know riding styles existed. But if I had to determine my own it would be safe, fun and easy.

What's the most memorable reaction you've gotten on your bike? I had just evaded a cab and I didn't get hit... I kind of just moved left and right really fast and another cyclist from the corner behind me screamed "Yeah that's what I'm talking about!" I felt so proud! □