



Bikes For Kids



November 2011 Newsletter

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Greetings from all of us at Bikes For Kids! Another year has swept on by and we are happy to say that it has been a successful one for us. This year we donated over 475 bikes to several groups and individuals. We continue our efforts to provide bikes and new helmets to needy children. In fact, in October we celebrated our 13,000th donated bike since our beginning in 1989. Chuck Graeb started this wonderful organization more than 20 years ago with the idea to help children experience the freedom of riding a bicycle. Since his passing in 2009, Bikes For Kids continues his dream. Dave Fowler, a former volunteer with Chuck, now leads the efforts to continue the mission, along with many volunteers throughout Connecticut.

An Amazing Bicycle Success Story!

We were happy to get a call from Pastor Don Morris of New Haven. He and a few other mentors started a bike club in the city for children aged 9-14. Their aim is to provide several positive opportunities to pair up kids and biking. Pastor Morris's group became so popular that a waiting list had to be formed. So far, Bikes For Kids has provided 54 bikes and new helmets to this program in an effort to get it off the ground. We hope that this will be a successful club that will provide knowledge, a sense of community, many enjoyable activities, and a safe haven for New Haven's youth for many years to come. Pictured below are some of the many kids that joined the bicycle club and their mentors.



Another Success Story! McDonnough School in Middletown

We were happy to collaborate with Principal Jon Romeo's plan to increase the daily attendance at his school. Each month, two young people with perfect attendance from each grade, K-6, are selected to receive one of our bikes. We have given away 48 bikes and new helmets so far and are entering our second year supporting the program.





How To Reach Us at Bikes For Kids:



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Our website: www.bikes-for-kids.net

We've been working on our website and although still under construction, it remains on-line for your use. Check it out every so often for some of our latest events, pictures, bios of some of our volunteers, our favorite bike routes and eventually, much more. Please e-mail Dave Fowler or Todd Jones with any suggestions to help improve the site.

Dave Fowler: dfowler01@snet.net or Todd Jones: tmjones@snet.net

Christmas In July!

Sometimes we get bikes that are so badly deteriorated that we can't do much with them - so we take them to the junkyard. We only get a couple of dollars per bike and this money is kept separately accumulating over time. We use it for a program that Chuck wanted to do which he called "Christmas in July". Although he passed away before we could begin, his successors got it off the ground. Each summer, since 2009, we have provided a complete turkey dinner for one of our area's families in need. It has grown so that we now provide four families (one with 13 members, another with 10 members, a family of 4 and a family of 2) with a dinner each summer, and again in November and at Christmas time - all with money from the junkyard.

A Couple of Very Special Kids!

We were happy to get a call this past summer from the mom of Juliana and Olivia from Clinton. The girls, aged 9 and 11, had decided that they had enough toys and "stuff" and requested that instead of birthday presents, they would prefer that people gave them bike helmets. What a couple of very special people! A few weeks later, Juliana and Olivia showed up with mom, dad and 28 helmets that we used to accompany many of the bikes that we gave away. We were totally impressed with their concern for others. Thanks again, girls!



The Oxford Junior Girl Scouts:

Thanks to a great effort from the Oxford Girl Scouts, we were able to place 42 more bikes into the hands of needy children. Thanks to the coordination of Scout Leader Amy Bothwell, the collection was a wonderful success and they were able to deliver them all for us on the back of a large trailer. Way to go girls!! To read more about it, check out the full story in the Oxford Patch: <http://oxford-ct.patch.com/articles/girl-scouts-collect-bikes-for-good-cause>

Breaking News: Special Note!!

Bikes For Kids is awaiting final word from the IRS that our application for a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization has been approved. The process has been a lengthy one but we are hoping to have it finalized within the next several weeks. This means that any donations made to Bikes For Kids can now be written off on your income taxes each year. Credit is due to Attorney Tim Crowley of Madison who has diligently and expertly shepherded this application through each step. Thank you, Tim. We wouldn't be this far along without you. You can reach Tim at: www.tcrowleylaw.com

Did You Know?

- Bikes For Kids has never sold a bicycle since its inception in 1989.
- We give away a brand new helmet with each donated bike.
- People from our organization are available to speak at your club meeting. Find out about Bikes For Kids and let us share some of our success stories with you.
- We are receiving more requests to assist the homeless with bikes as a means of primary transportation.
- You can help us save on the cost of postage by including your e-mail in your next communication with us.

Interested in Helping Out?

Bikes For Kids always welcomes volunteers willing to pitch in on a number of various activities. Can you pick up or deliver a bike sometime? Would you like to prepare some bikes for distribution? It's easy to have an office Helmet or Accessories Drive. Call us for details. Do you have grant-writing experience? We'd like to hear from you. We would like to explore this area as soon as our 501(c)(3) arrives. Maybe some of you have biking experience that might lend itself to helping some groups like Pastor Morris's to suggest and to develop activities. Can you photograph an event or write a news article for a local paper? Do you know of someone in need that would benefit from a bicycle? Of course, your generous monetary donations are crucial in keeping our program moving ahead and allow us to purchase repair parts and helmets. Checks can be made payable to: "Bikes For Kids".

Connecticut College Update!

We understand that the "Spokespeople", Conn College's bike club, are continuing their efforts to go green and to help students get from place to place quickly on bicycles. Students can now check out a bike for the day from the library and use it to get to classes or other places off campus. Bikes For Kids has donated over 50 bikes to help get this program off the ground. They are reducing their carbon footprint while staying in shape. The picture on the right includes many of the people who helped make this program a successful endeavor.



We Can't Thank You All Enough!

In closing, it is always important to acknowledge those who have lent a hand in some capacity or another to keep Bikes rolling. A big thank you goes out to Carol Fowler, Todd Jones, and Gary Baier for their continued efforts in helping with the development of Bikes for Kids. Our volunteers who repair and help to pick up donated bikes: Dan Fahey, Dick Pfeiffer, Charlie French, Eric Lieberman, Tracy Montoya, Jack Condulis, Brad Wolff, Chris Pavlopolous, Dick Van Loan, Bruce Forbes, Roger Hurley, Bob Low, Mark DuBois, Mark Sares, and John Lawler. Also, Attorney Tim Crowley who has guided us through the 501(c)(3) process, Darrin Zisk for his website development, Claire Keefe who has graciously looked into some grant opportunities, Gary, Bill, and the rest of the crew at Pedal Power in Middletown for their expertise, support of the program, bike donations and magnificent commitment to giving back to the community. Also Marty Bell for bike storage, Clarke Cycles in Essex for their support, expertise, repair help and donations, and Scott Carson at U-Store-It in Old Saybrook for making one of his sheds available to us. Thanks, too, to Lenny and Joe's Fish Tale in Madison for giving us one of their Carousel Days. Thanks to the dozens of other people that have helped the Bikes For Kids organization blossom and those that have made contributions to further the dream.



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**Look inside to find out about all of our
new and exciting adventures.**



- Bikes For Kids continues to provide bicycles & helmets to children and families in need.
- Bikes For Kids surpassed 13,000 bicycles donated since 1989!

Check out our website: www.bikes-for-kids.net