



Bikes For Kids



November 2012 Newsletter

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Help us get 500 likes on  by July 4, 2013.

Another very successful year is behind us. 2012 has been a year in which Bikes For Kids gave away **just over 1,000 bicycles** and new helmets to kids in need (and to some adults as well). As we go to press with this article, we have just surpassed the 14,000 mark in bikes given away since our founder, Chuck Graeb, began his efforts back in 1989.



PROFILE: Charlie French - one of our bicycle repair volunteers:

Charlie French has been one of our bicycle repair people for several years. He is a resident of the Bradley Home in Meriden where he has set up a bike repair shop in the basement. Charlie has repaired over 450 bicycles for us over the years and delivers them to the local fire houses in the city. The firemen then give them away to kids in the neighborhood who do not have bikes. Charlie often gets a ride home in the fire truck so everybody wins. He was born and brought up in Meriden and has lived there for the majority of his **97 years**. Charlie is a WWII veteran, having served in the army in France and Germany. After arriving home, he enjoyed careers at the International Silver Company as a photographer, employment in a city pharmacy, and at the Meriden Auction Rooms. Thank you Charlie, for helping make Connecticut a better place!

An Update on Pastor Morris' Efforts in New Haven

Pastor Don Morris continues to encourage his parish kids to get involved in several bike-related activities, such as rail-to-trail rides, repair opportunities, planned rides to destinations within a short ride of the city, and some film viewings with riding themes. We have provided him with approximately 200 bikes so far and the popularity continues. Pastor Don tells us that he has some difficulty finding chaperones for many of the rides he sponsors. If you are able to offer an hour or two of your time to help in his worthwhile efforts, please give him a call at 203-627-8333.



Left: Principal Jon Romeo of **McDonough School in Middletown** announces the recipients of bicycles. Mr. Romeo contacted Bikes For Kids to provide incentives to students for showing respect, positive character and excellent attendance. Right: Osiah smiles as he receives his red mountain bike and new helmet.

Bikes For Kids has provided McDonough with more than 75 bicycles since 2011.



Local Churches and Social Services:

Although large quantities of bicycles are donated to cities that have bicycle programs, many of our bikes are donated to individual kids and families in smaller towns. Churches and Social Services contact us throughout the year, especially near Christmas, to provide bicycles to those that are struggling. Your donations go a long way to helping kids enjoy the freedom of the road.

Connecticut Tigers Baseball:

On July 21, 2012, we were glad to be in attendance at Dodd Stadium in Norwich for Bikes For Kids Night. Jack Kasten, a group sales account executive for the CT Tigers (single A affiliate of the Detroit Tigers) invited us to be part of the festivities. The Lifestar helicopter landed on the field to deliver the ceremonial balls and our President, Dave Fowler, threw out the first pitch! The evening was capped off with an amazing fireworks display. Many thanks to Jack Kasten for providing Bikes For Kids with new connections to help our cause.



Interested in Helping Out?

Bikes For Kids is always looking for assistance. Can you pick up or deliver a bike sometime? Would you like to prepare some bikes for distribution? **It's easy to have a helmet or accessories drive at your office.** Are you involved in a school or church group, Boy or Girl Scouts, or another organization that could host a bicycle collection to help replenish our inventory? Call us for details. Do you have grant-writing experience? We would like to explore this area more now that our 501(c)(3) status officially arrived. **Do you have bicycles in your garage that are no longer being used?** 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? We hope to hear from you.

E-mail Dave Fowler: davefowler05@gmail.com and/or Todd Jones at: tmjones@snet.net

Your generous monetary donations are crucial in keeping our program moving ahead and allow us to purchase repair parts, helmets, and new bicycles when necessary. Checks can be made payable to: Bikes For Kids

Breaking News: IT'S OFFICIAL! Bikes For Kids is an approved 501(c)(3) non-profit organization!

Bikes For Kids received the official paper work from the IRS; we are now officially a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. This means that donors to our program can use their contributions as a tax deduction on their income tax forms. Credit is due to Madison Attorney Tim Crowley for all of his efforts! Thank you, Tim! We wouldn't have been able to do it without you.

The Morgan School in Clinton, CT: Student Volunteer Day

For the second year in a row, our very own BFK Vice President, Gary Baier, has supervised students from The Morgan School while they repair bicycles. The Morgan School hosts a Volunteer Day during the month of May each year where the students assist a variety of community programs. Marty Bell of Bell Power Systems in Essex graciously offered warehouse space for the students to clean and repair bikes of all sizes. Thank you to the students for choosing Bikes For Kids and for all your help! (Picture is from May, 2011)



Martin Luther King Jr. Volunteer Day:

A few of our volunteers along with 10 employees from Milone and MacBroom, Inc., a civil engineering firm in Cheshire, spent Martin Luther King Jr. Day cleaning and repairing 46 bicycles. Thank you to all that helped and thank you to the Essex Fire Department for the use of their back building. Special thanks goes out to Firefighter John Orr for helping make this day a wonderful success.



UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU TO ALWAYS WEAR YOUR HELMET!



CT State Law requires all riders under the age of 16 to wear helmets while riding a bike. **We recommend that ALL riders do!**

Teen Challenge:

Pastor Arthur Stafford is the director of a recovery facility in New Haven. He works with clients who find that it is often difficult to get to and from jobs and grocery stores and asked us for some assistance. Bikes For Kids came through and has donated close to 50 bicycles to Teen Challenge so far this year.



Deliveries to Bridgeport Cathedral of the Holy Spirit: (above) Ron Welcome & crew continue their efforts to provide bikes in the parish neighborhood. We

Bikes to Africa: (above) Sandra Asante (second from right), representing the OSU Children's Home in Accara, Ghana contacted us over the summer with a request to help her send bikes back to her home country. We were able to supply her with 66 bikes to



We Can't Thank You All Enough!

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 Bikes For Kids President Dave Fowler, his wife Carol, and his mom Phyllis, Board of Directors Gary Baier, Jennifer Caffrey, and Todd Jones 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, Ali Muir, Meredith Belden, Charlie French, Eric Lieberman, Tracy Montoya, Jack Condulis, Brad Wolff, Chris Pavlopolous, Dick Van Loan, Bruce Forbes, Peter Washbourne, Roger Hurley, Bob Low, Mark DuBois, Mark Sares, and John Lawler. Also, Attorney Tim Crowley who successfully guided us through the 501(c)(3) process, Darrin Zisk for his website development, Andy at Pages, Claire Keefe & Michelle Dickey for their PR work, 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 and usable space, Clarke Cycles in Essex for their support, expertise, repair help and donations, Herb and Tryon Clark of The Clark Group of Essex and Karen King of Cube Smart in Old Saybrook each for making one of their sheds available to us. Thanks 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. We count on your help; whatever your gift, the impact that it has on children is enormous for those families struggling to get by. So many more people have helped and if we didn't mention you by name please know how appreciative we are for your assistance and continued support! Thanks!!!



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Look inside to find out about all of our new and exciting adventures during 2012.



- Bikes For Kids continues to provide bicycles & helmets to children and families in need; over 1,000 have been donated this year!
- Bikes For Kids just surpassed 14,000 bicycles donated since 1989!
- Bikes For Kids is now an official 501c3 non-profit charity and all monetary donations are tax deductible!
- Bikes For Kids encourages you to host a bicycle and accessory drive to help keep our inventory up; contact us for details.

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

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