

Changing lives one bike at a time!

bikes for Kids

bikesforkidsct.org

22,000 BIKES TO DATE!

THANK YOU!

Bikes for Kids had another successful year. Volunteers at the Essex, CT Wheelhouse worked hard repairing and safety checking over 1,000 gently used bikes. The bikes and a new helmet were given to young people who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to own a bike. The hard work of the volunteers allowed us to celebrate the delivery of our 22,000th bike in October. None of this would have been possible without the great support of our growing base of donors. We are thrilled that you all could join us in our mission and hope you will enjoy reading about some of our successes this past year.

CHESTER ROTARY & BFK DELIVER BIKES TO HURRICANE RAVAGED HOUSTON

Back in the fall of 2017, a major hurricane struck the greater Houston area. Among the massive damage was over half a million vehicles underwater. Our people at BFK worked very hard to find a company that would undertake the cost of sending a truckload of bicycles and helmets during the aftermath of the storm to help some people, at least, with the next best form of transportation. However, none were available or their owners felt that they had already done their fair share of deliveries to the area. We were very lucky to be able to collaborate with Ron Woodward, owner of BJM Pumps in Saybrook, CT, and a member of the Chester Rotary Club. Ron and the Rotary were able to arrange, with local Houston Rotaries, the coverage of costs for a truck and driver to make the trip. Because of their efforts and the efforts of our own volunteers, we were able to load 213 bikes and helmets onto a truck bound for Texas. Children in need or having experienced a loss were identified and the Houston Rotarians distributed every bike within a week of the arrival of the truck. A big thank you is in order to Ron and all at the Rotary Clubs who lent a hand to make this happen.

Wheelhouse fun fact

Green Duct tape on the seat of a bike means the bike has been repaired, safety checked, cleaned and is ready to go.



The North Pole Express

On November 3rd, Bikes for Kids hosted 33 young children (and a parent) on the Essex Steam Train's North Pole Express. The children were selected by local schools. They came dressed in their pajamas and during the hour long ride to the North Pole, the children met Santa, Mrs. Claus and some of the elves. They sang, played games and enjoyed cookies and hot chocolate. Upon returning to the station, the children proceeded across the street to the BFK Wheelhouse where an early Holiday present awaited them. Each child was gifted a new bike and helmet.

This event was also a fundraiser for Bikes for Kids.

Thank you:

Essex Steam Train, Essex Boatworks, PizzaWorks, Pfizer, Inc., Rotary Club of Old Saybrook Foundation, Inc., Augenblick Race Team out of Duck Island Yacht Club, Tavano, McCuin, Bonanno & Collins, LLC and Whelen Engineering!



HELP FROM THE COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEERS

For the seventh year in a row, 14 of our friends from Milone and MacBroom, a civil engineering and landscape architecture firm out of Cheshire, CT, helped us repair bikes on Martin Luther King Day as part of their company-wide Day of Giving. Milone and MacBroom employees are offered the opportunity to go out into the community to help at a non-profit. Bikes for Kids is fortunate to be one of the beneficiaries.

Several Chester Rotary Club members joined M&M and our regular volunteers. Just under 100 bikes were inspected, repaired and made available for distribution to our clientele. This was a huge help to all of us here at the Wheelhouse and a nice collaborative effort.

On October 23rd members of Pfizer's Collaboration Center of Excellence (CCOE) and other colleagues came together and assembled 35 new bikes which were later donated to the young people who took a special ride to meet Santa on the Polar Express train out of Essex, CT. A special thanks to Negeena Niazi for all the preparation within Pfizer to make the bike-building event a success.

Thank you to Aaron Schumacher, Ron Woodward, Ted Taigen and Karl Jens for coordinating these events.

We welcome other like-minded, community oriented groups to come in and help with the same kind of thing. Is your office, factory, social group, school or church interested in contributing a few hours of community service or working on team building. You bring the group, we'll bring lunch, bike projects and great company!



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THE JOSHUA SCHOOL

Currently, we are awaiting the arrival of our friends from the Joshua School. Each week the group visits, we work to teach them the basic life skills of maintaining a bicycle. They learn to fix flat tires, adjust seats and handlebars and are exceptionally good in making our gently used bikes shine! We like to throw in the math and science related applications to everyday life when we have a chance. Dave says that it brings back a lot of good memories from his teaching days in fourth and fifth grade.



RACE4CHASE KIDS TRIATHLON PROGRAM

For the third year in a row, Bikes for Kids joined up with the CMAK Sandy Hook Memorial Foundation to provide bikes for their summer program. Each season after school is out, 26 YMCAs in four states offer triathlon training for boys and girls up to age 14. BFK was able to donate just over 100 bikes to children wanting to take part, but not owning their own. The bikes were provided in June so all participants could ride during the summer in preparation for the big Triathlon at Camp Sloper, Southington CT in early August.



events:

11/25 Trees in the Rigging
Parade in Essex

12/8 Old Saybrook Torchlight
Parade

We are looking for as many young people of all ages to light up their bikes and join us for the festivities this Fall. Let's get a great turn-out again this year.

Get more information on our Facebook events page.



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

A quick and easy way in which you can support our efforts is to sign up for the Amazon Smiles Program and designate Bikes for Kids, Inc., Centerbrook, CT as your beneficiary. Every time you order something through Amazon, a small portion of the proceeds will be donated to us. Thank you in advance for checking this out.

LENNY AND JOE'S CAROUSEL DAY

One of the great stops along the Shoreline for seafood of any kind is Lenny and Joe's Fish Tale. We were honored, once again this year, to be invited to represent BFK at their Magic Carousel in Madison on July 28th. It's always great to have an opportunity to meet people and talk about our organization and the Carousel Day provides exactly that. The way it works is: your group is invited to man the booth near the Carousel, talk with people and hand out informative literature. All proceeds from ticket sales are donated to the designated charity of the day. Thank you again this year to Lenny, Joe and Jim for offering this great opportunity. We understand that their Carousel has donated just under one million dollars to charities over the years.

Save the Date!

ESSEX SAVINGS BANK COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Please mark your calendars again for February. That's the month that all Essex Savings Bank account holders may vote for their favorite local charities. Each year, ten percent of the bank's profits are dedicated to this venture and divided, according to your votes, among the participating charitable organizations. Last year, through your solid support, we placed fifth out of all the organizations that were accepted. Thank you to all for voting. Hopefully, with just a few more votes, we can make it into the top three!

We Love our volunteers!



HOW YOU CAN HELP ?

We are always looking for and welcome help:

- * **Bike repair** - No prior skill necessary.
- * **Transport** - Pick up and delivery of bikes.
- * **Write** - News articles, thank you notes etc.
- * **Shop AmazonSmile** - Select Bikes for Kids, Inc.
Centerbrook, CT.
- * **Organize** - a drive to raise money to purchase new helmets.
- * **Donate** - a bike, monetary donation or company match. Our website has a PayPal option.



TWO SUCCESS STORIES IN THE MAKING

Dave is sometimes quoted as saying, “You never know what new opportunity is going to present itself the next time the phone rings.” Well, it happened again. We recently received a call from our friend Ron Welcome at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bridgeport. They have been able to distribute several hundreds of our bikes to the kids in their city over the years. Ron and his parish have entered into a relationship with a very impoverished portion of a city in Alabama. The jobless rate is sky high and the children in the neighborhood really have next to nothing in the way of the usual “kid stuff” that many others get to enjoy. Ron is working on acquiring a truck to bring 200 bikes and helmets down south during the first week of December for distribution by Christmas. We, at the Wheelhouse are working overtime to get these bikes ready to go in time for the holiday. If you are inclined to help out as a volunteer for a non-profit organization, where no knowledge of bike repair is needed, we would like to hear from you. We will show you everything that needs to be done in preparing a bike for delivery. We would appreciate the help. Contact us at info@bikesforkidsct.org.

Back in August, our group was invited to the Rotary Tent at the Chester Farmer’s Market. Thanks again to Ron Woodward, Jan and Ted Taigen and the rest of the Rotary for your invitation. We made several real nice connections, but one in particular was with a local pediatrician. He works at Hartford Hospital and does several hundred wellness checkups for children in need. When we asked how many of those clients might not have a bike, his answer was, “All of them!” BFK will have begun delivering bicycles to the hospital by the time you receive this newsletter. We hope that the number delivered will hit at least 200 over the next several months. “You never know what type of opportunity will present itself next!”



bikesforkidsct.org

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CHANGING LIVES ONE BIKE AT A TIME!