

Give'em Adventure

Fall 2023

bikes for Kids

Greetings from the Wheelhouse!!

Let's take a quick tour of this past year. We started the year with a steady stream of requests. As a result, we averaged 100 bikes per month out the door through April. Rolling from May to mid-summer the requests increased and we averaged 130 bikes per month! Shifting gears into fall we slowed a bit to enjoy the ride. No pumping the breaks yet, by the end of the year we will have given away 1,300 bicycles! Our wheelhouse is spinning to an average of 4 bikes a day! WOW!

Since our inception in 1989, we will have given away over 27,500 bicycles!

We appreciate you and thank you for your kind donations. When you no longer need a bike, we wheelie love receiving them at BFK to be refurbished and given away to someone else in need. We want to emphasize that we never sell bikes; that all of your donations are given away along with a new helmet, set of lights and a sturdy lock.

We are also very fortunate to have such a dedicated staff of volunteers who repair bikes and make them safe to ride once more. Our operation has developed into a well oiled chain.

You never know who you will meet the next time someone walks in the wheelhouse. Recently, we had a woman from Saybrook stop by. She had just taken in a family from the Ukraine who loved and missed riding bicycles. She asked us for some bikes for the children and we were happy to assist. With the help of a translation app, we learned that mom and dad also would like bikes so they could ride with the kids. Word is spreading, we receive requests from groups of foster families, as well as refugee organizations, to individuals in the state and beyond. Pedaling into the future, our reach keeps growing and our commitment has never been stronger. "Changing lives one bike at a time."



Insurance Professionals of Eastern Connecticut (IPEC) presented a check of \$3,928.75 from their tea cup auction on March 29th. Thank you for picking us!

5th Annual Polar Express

We will sponsored 30 boys and girls this year. Each child, and their parent, rode the Essex Steam Train for a holiday performance of The Polar Express; including cookies, caroling, cocoa and Santa Claus! After the ride, unbeknownst to them, the children came across to the BFK Wheelhouse where each child was gifted a brand new bicycle, lights and a helmet. The children were so excited and the parents were thrilled. This year parents were also offered a refurbished bike to ride along with their children. Now the whole family can enjoy riding together. This year each bike recipient also received a new winter coat, thanks to our friend, Melinda Harmon at Operation Warm in Chicago. A special thank you to those who volunteer and fund this event. It's the most wonderful time of the year!

Essex Steam Train & Riverboat Old Saybrook Rotary Operation Warm



Remembering Our Friend Paul Egan

We were saddened back in May to learn of the passing of Paul Egan, Clinton's own "Bike Guy". We had tried to get him to come to our wheelhouse to help repair bikes, but he was usually too busy with his own bikes and repair projects. It was enjoyable, though, to meet up with him and talk bikes and go through our parts pile to see if we had anything he might need. The day arrived when Paul realized that his repairing days were coming to an end and he wanted to be sure that the bulk of his operation, parts, supplies, tools, stands, tubes, etc. would go to Essex to be put to good use and to further our program. We were honored to accept Paul's huge supply and will remember him as a selfless person who always tried to help others and make life a little better for those in need.

OVER 1,000 BIKES Given Away Annually!

Some of our larger group give aways:
Whalers Helping Whalers from New London
Beat the Street from Meriden
CMAK Foundation (Race For Chase)
Town of Kellyville, Oklahoma
Several state and local agencies
St Vincent de Paul
Offices of Community Health Resources
Child and Family Services
Camp Victory Lake in New York
Cheshire Food Pantry
New London Youth Affairs.



Helmet Safety

Message from one of our volunteers

"I Am an experienced rider that was involved in a serious crash in July 2023. I fell off my bike onto the left side of my face and it was my helmet that protected me from a serious injury. The helmet cracked instead of my head! Although there is no concussion proof helmet, worn correctly, a helmet can protect you and your children from serious head or brain injuries. When choosing a helmet, it is best to speak with someone who is knowledgeable like a bike shop person so that you chose the right fit and comfort. A helmet is not an accessory. It is a necessary safety practice for all riders. My hope is that some day a law will be passed calling for all states to make the wearing of a helmet to be mandatory when riding."



Trips made by bicycle: United Kingdom 5% USA 1% Netherlands 30%
A recent trip to Amsterdam by one of our volunteers reveals that just over 600 bikes are pulled from the city's canal system each month.



Our Volunteers Love to Ride

John, Norm and Lee (volunteers at BFK) were regularly out for rides and putting lots and lots of miles behind them. This was all in prep for a special ride that they were planning for later in the season. The following is an overview from their trip along the Erie Canal Bike Path in New York. The three got together earlier this year and decided to cycle the entire route, Buffalo to Albany. A day's ride varied between 36 and 70 miles after accommodations were secured. The weather varied with at least a partial day of rain but with many sunny days. Even though the canalway is fairly flat, some of the accommodations took us up some steep hills, one in particular, after our longest cycling day. The trio ended up riding 414 miles with 4800 feet of climbing on our weeklong journey. Will a cross country trip be next?



bikesforkidsct.org

BFK Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 94
Centerbrook, CT 06409

Wheelhouse
36 Plains Road
Essex, CT 06426
(Opposite Essex Steam Train)

860-388-BIKE (2453)



Please join us on our mission to provide bikes
to boys and girls in need.

We rely 100% on donor giving and support.

Donate To those of you who regularly support us with a check, you are helping to purchase helmets, lights, parts, supplies and to pay for the monthly rent. Scan the QR code or donate on-line at bikesforkidsct.org.

Donate Bikes Drop gently used bike(s) at the BFK Wheelhouse.

Join the Crew Crank nuts and bolts:
Tuesday or Thursday mornings from 9-12
Thursday evenings from 6-8

Other ways to help Would you like to join us on our mission to provide bikes to boys and girls in need? We need help grant writing, fund raising, and running events.

Request a Bike In order to be as efficient as possible, and to honor requests as fast as we can we are asking that all requests in the future be made through our web site at Bikesforkidsct.org. Click on "How to Request a Bike". We will receive your request electronically and call you regarding the pick up of your bike(s) when ready.

