

Greetings from the Wheelhouse!!

Another successful year has been completed at our wheelhouse. Almost **1,000** bikes, helmets and light sets were given away this year. Bike number **26,000** went out in the middle of November. We continue to receive comments on what a great organization we have and how much we can change peoples lives when we give them a bike. I'm reminded of the mom who called in the spring requesting a bike for her son who was getting up at 4:00a.m. each morning and walking to a 5:00 a.m. football practice in the dark. His trip was over two miles. Mom was unable to come to Essex to pick up a bike and so Mrs. Fowler and I took a special road trip to West Hartford to make a delivery. The young man receiving the bike was thrilled that he could now get to his school in 10 minutes on his new bike rather than take 50 minutes to walk the same distance. We were able to provide him with a new helmet, a lock and a set of front and rear lights so he would be visible to approaching drivers. Although we have not heard from him lately, we are sure that he continues to make the trip safely to and from his daily football practices. This is a great example of how we not only give away bikes, but change peoples lives at the same time. We hope that you will enjoy some of the other success stories contained within this newsletter and, if so moved, continue to join us on our mission to provide bikes to underserved young people. Your donations are so important in keeping us moving down the road. We appreciate you, all our volunteers and those who continue to support us.

Thank you!



Early this year our 25,000th bike went out the door!

600 bikes of the 1,000 given this year went to the following organizations (the rest were individuals or smaller groups):

KELLYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT
CAMP VICTORY LAKE
HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HOUSE OF PRAYER
BEAT THE STREET
NEW LONDON HOMELESS HOSPITALITY CENTER
ELIZABETH NJ POLICE
BOOKER T WASHINGTON ACADEMY
NORTH POLE EXPRESS EVENT (27 new bikes)
RACE FOR CHASE

North Pole Express

For the fourth year in a row, we will sponsor about 40 boys and girls in our local towns. Each child, and their parent, will ride upon the Essex Steam Train for a holiday performance of The Polar Express; including cookies, caroling, cocoa and Santa Claus! They will make a quick stop at Deep River Landing which will be transformed into a special Christmas village. Once back in Essex, unbeknownst to them, the children will be escorted across the street to the BFK Wheelhouse where each child will be gifted a brand new bicycle, lights and a helmet. The disbelief and surprise on the faces of the kids is really something to see. And let's not forget the parents who are so thankful to have this special moment for their children, something they could otherwise not afford.

This year each bike recipient will also receive a new winter coat, thanks to our friend, Melinda Harmon at Operation Warm in Chicago. Her program is very similar to our local Warm the Children Fund. A big thank you goes out to Melinda this year.

We would like to thank our business sponsors:

Marty Bell
Old Saybrook Rotary

Cartier Optical in Old Saybrook
Sage Photography, East Haddam



Volunteers

Scrap Metal Pick Up

As most of you know, our volunteers make every effort to ready every donated bike that appears at our door. Once in a while, a bike is in too much disrepair for us to do too much with it. In these cases, parts will be salvaged and the rest of the bike will be taken to a scrap yard where we receive about a dollar per frame. Volunteer Joe Frutuoso, 860-436-8132, has taken on this responsibility. When he began to advertise metal pick up around the surrounding areas, his phone began to ring off the hook. If you have any scrap metal, no matter how big or small, Joe will come and pick it up for you. It is important to note that all proceeds are donated to Bikes For Kids. So far from inception to date Joe has raised over \$15,000 just in scrap metal! In 2021, he collected 35,000 pounds (20 tons) and in 2022 for far 73,000 pounds (56 tons) of scrap metal!

Thank you Joe for all his time and effort in this. And thank you to all our volunteers who work hard behind the scenes to fix bikes, fundraise, write



Come Volunteer- We are always looking for people to repair bikes, help organize, write grants & articles, and fundraise.





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 DONATE TODAY

We rely 100% on donor giving and support.

Donate Donate on-line bikesforkidsct.org
OR use the enclosed envelope
OR use the QR code to donate with your phone

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

Come Volunteer No experience is necessary. Join the crew on Tuesday or Thursday mornings from 9-12 or Thursday evenings from 6-8pm at the Wheelhouse to repair bikes OR volunteer your time (contact us for more information).

LOVE TO SHOP Sign-up on AmazonSmile.com and choose Bikes for Kids (Bikes for Kids Inc listed in Centerbrook) as your designated charity.

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. Once there, 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.

Organize a Helmet Drive Host a helmet drive within your local community (religious organization, school, community group, etc). It's super easy. BFK has a template and will help.

