



Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland

Third Annual Report

July 2021 - June 2022

fb4kmaryland.org



Collect



Refurbish



Give Away

Howard Hughes

HC HOWARD COUNTY
MARYLAND

HORIZON
FOUNDATION

Race Pace
BICYCLES
EST. 1978

SAFE
KIDS
WORLDWIDE

Park Tool

TREK

Q
QUALITY BICYCLE
PRODUCTS

bgeSM
AN EXELON COMPANY

Our bottom line

315 volunteers spent over 3400 hours refurbishing 2,125 donated bicycles that were then given away with new helmets to children in need in FY 2022 for a total value of \$222,650.

Message from the President

Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization geared toward helping all children ride into a happier, healthier childhood by providing bikes to those most in need. We were established in July of 2019 and conduct annual campaigns beginning in October: We ask the public to donate gently used bikes; we organize scores of volunteers to clean and refurbish them, and then we give them away to children in need. We were the eighth regional affiliate of Minneapolis-based Free Bikes 4 Kidz to be established of the current seventeen affiliates.



In this, our third Annual Report, we provide details on our annual campaign, our free bike repair clinics for children in need, our activities since then, and our plans for the future. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we were able to safely distribute more than twice as many bikes as we did in our previous year, while providing a safe working environment for our volunteers.

No nonprofit can be successful without the help of many people and organizations. We are grateful to the public, who have donated over 2800 bicycles to us this year. We thank our 315 volunteers, who collectively devoted over 3400 hours to making donated bicycles clean, shiny, and safe. We appreciate our collaboration with our partners who identified children in need and gathered their information for us. Thanks as well to our Directors for their ongoing support: Betsy Schultz, Chris Tsien, Tom Lewis, and Marc Tolson.

And we are especially grateful to our sponsors, Howard County, the Horizon Foundation, Park Tool, Race Pace Bicycles, Quality Bicycle Products, Trek, SafeKids, and BGE for enabling us to have such a successful third year, and especially to our Founding Sponsor, The Howard Hughes Corporation, for providing our initial funding in 2019 and for donating space in the Tenable building for all of FY 2022. This has allowed us to begin collecting bikes for our October 2022 campaign, and to already refurbish and give away 244 of them since January.

Ted Cochran, President
Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland
July 2022

Free Bikes 4 Kidz Locations



*One of the most important days of my life was when I learned to ride a bicycle.” —
Michael Palin*

Three Issues

Health

One out of three Maryland children aged 10-17 is overweight or obese.¹ These children are at risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and other health issues. According to the World Health Organization, the two most important means of preventing childhood obesity are healthy eating and physical activity. Outdoor activities such as biking are one of the few pandemic-safe ways to stay active, but as a result bicycles have been expensive and in short supply.

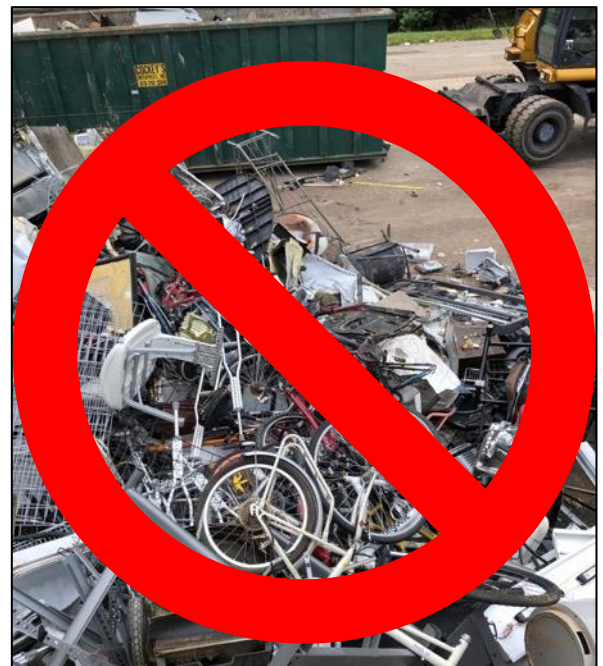


Equity

More than two out of five children in Maryland, and about 13,000, or one out of five children in Howard County², qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on family income. Families that struggle to put food on the table are rarely in a position to furnish and maintain bicycles for their children. The pandemic exacerbated the problem by increasing unemployment while also increasing the cost of bicycles. These children are missing out on a fundamental childhood experience, the ability to expand their horizons and explore the world on their own, and the acquisition of a lifelong skill.

Sustainability

The supply of used children's bikes is nearly limitless. Every year between 15 and 20 million bikes are sold in the US. One-third of those bikes are 20" wheel-size or smaller. Since kids grow like weeds, well over 5 million bikes are outgrown each year. These bikes are often uneconomical to keep in good repair—an hour of mechanic's time can cost more than the bike is worth! Millions sit unused, and thousands end up in landfills instead of being refurbished for children to use.



Every bike we refurbish is a bike kept out of the waste stream.

¹ America's Health Rankings analysis of U.S. HHS, HRSA, Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI), National Survey of Children's Health Indicator Data Set, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, United Health Foundation, AmericasHealthRankings.org, Accessed 2020.

² Maryland State Department of Education Free and Reduced-Price Meal Statistics, 2018-2019

Our Answer

Collect Bikes from the Public

Conduct a campaign every year to collect used children's bicycles from the public. Ask for bikes that have been outgrown, broken, or otherwise unwanted and abandoned. Divert bikes from landfills.

Refurbish Them

Recruit volunteers to clean, tune, and/or repair the bicycles over a period of ten weeks. Have experienced bicycle mechanics thoroughly safety-check each and every bicycle. Using volunteers eliminates the cost of labor—the biggest contributor to the cost of refurbishing bicycles. Conducting one short-term campaign a year in donated space also keeps the costs down, and prevents volunteer burnout.

Give Them All Away

Use schools, community organizations, churches, government agencies, and other nonprofits to identify underserved children and programs in need of bicycles. Match children in need to bicycles on hand. Give the bikes, along with a new helmet, to the children.

We thus simultaneously contribute to children's health and fitness, address underserved populations, and keep bicycles out of landfills.



"Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of a bike ride." — **John F. Kennedy**

When you ride a bike and you get your heart rate up and you're out, after 30 or 40 minutes your mind tends to expand; it tends to relax." — **George W. Bush**



Why Bicycles?

We have been asked why we're focusing on giving away bicycles, as opposed to other, less expensive sports equipment. Or computers. Or books. It's because we're cycling enthusiasts at heart, and know first-hand the benefits of cycling as a lifelong activity.

Bicycle riding is a life skill

Riding a bike is a skill that only needs to be learned once, and it's easiest to learn as a child. Once learned, bicycle riding provides lifelong benefits in mobility, physical fitness, and mental health, and is much less expensive, and often faster, than an automobile for short trips.

A bicycle is a child's ticket to freedom

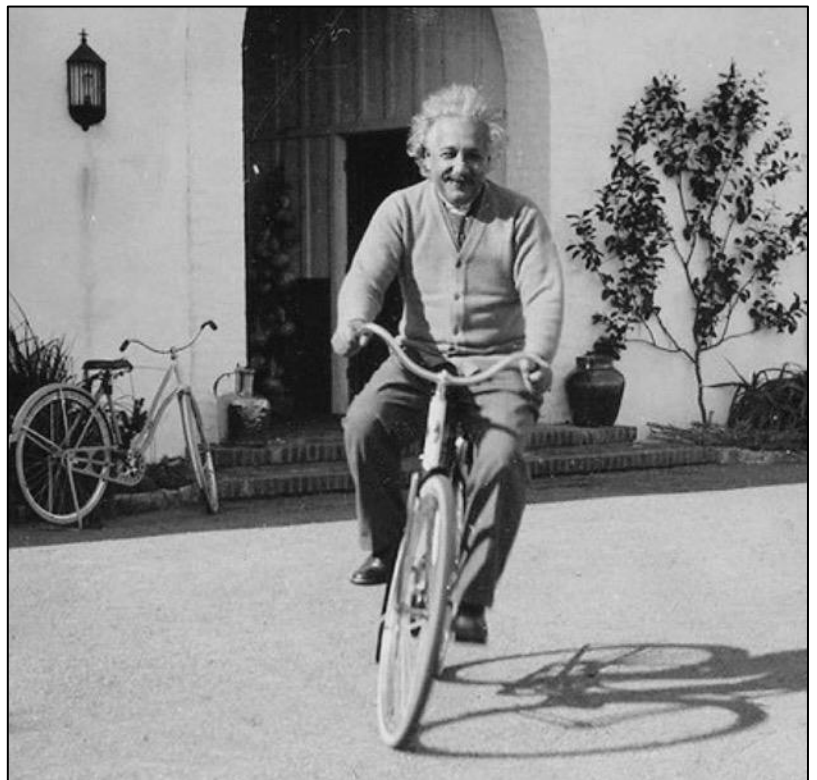
A child on a bicycle can go four times farther in the same amount of time, opening up sixteen times the area that a child can explore, and enabling them to explore it without the need for adult assistance. They won't need a computer, an athletic field, or a chaperone.

Bicycling is a gateway to an active, healthy life

Bicycling is a low-impact physical activity that can be avidly practiced throughout one's life. It increases cardiovascular health, muscle strength and flexibility, joint mobility, and overall fitness.

Bicycling can be a social activity

Bicycling enables children to ride together on outdoor adventures, in person, for hours at a time. Besides, it's fun!



"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." — **Albert Einstein**

Our Approach

Free Bikes 4 Kidz has studied similar programs in the US that collect, refurbish, and give away bikes to underserved children. Most such programs operate year-round: They collect bikes, employ staff, own or lease space, and need to recruit volunteers and solicit funds and media coverage all year.

Our approach has been different: We collect bikes in a single one-day event; we borrow a warehouse for ten weeks, turn it into a pop-up repair shop staffed by hundreds of volunteers, and then partner with dozens of local agencies that work with underserved families to identify children in need of bikes. We give all the bikes away and then pack up, clean the warehouse, and return it to the owners. Then we essentially go ‘dark’ for nine months. This method allows us incredible financial efficiency as well as a renewed excitement when the lights go on again nine months later. If we are provided free space and bicycles at other times, we happily accept them, but we don’t depend on a year-round presence to be successful.

Our program might be easier if we just raised the funds to purchase new bikes to give away, but that is much less economical: Our FY 2022 cost per bike was only about \$6. Further, buying bikes does not satisfy our sustainability mission: We need to keep bikes out of landfills and put them back on the street. We want to refurbish bikes, not add new ones to the stream. Even wrecked bikes can provide useful parts: Nationwide, we annually recycle tons of metal and rubber every year; as our program grows, that statistic also grows.

And as more people ride bikes, we reduce CO₂ emissions. Every car trip saved helps, and if some of the kids we put on bikes now become bike commuters in the future, our impact will grow.

We also work to bring together people from all political persuasions, all religions, all ethnicities, and diverse economic statuses to work together as a community for the common good. Everyone can agree that a child receiving a bike is a good thing; our efforts are a bright spot in an increasingly polarized culture.

We are able to use volunteers of all ages and abilities regardless of bike knowledge, and if they become regulars, they learn a lot about bicycle maintenance. From cleaning bikes to adjusting and repairing them, we provide our volunteers with tasks that suit their abilities. And they can work alone, in pairs, or in teams, cooperating and problem solving to make the bikes safe and functional. It’s a unique experience in a sea of hundreds of bikes of every make, model, and color. The experience is truly rewarding, and a high percentage of first-time volunteers return.

Finally, our method of giving away bikes is unique. We never want to be in the position of vetting recipients to determine whether or not they ‘deserve’ a free bike. Instead, we invite community organizations—schools, nonprofits, and government agencies—to identify children in need for us, secure parental permission, and collect the bike preferences from the children. We then schedule the children to receive a bike in our giveaway event.



Collecting Bikes from the Public

Our 2021 campaign began as soon as 2020's Giveaway Day was over. We received over 1100 bikes before our Collection Day on October 2, 2021. We received another 700 bikes that day, and more than 400 additional bikes over the next few months. Thanks to the generosity of the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services and five volunteer fire departments, we were able to use eleven Howard County Fire Stations as collection points.



County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball helps load donated Bicycles at the Ellicott City Volunteer Fire Department.



BGE employees donated a trailer full of bikes last spring as a corporate community service activity.



Over 1000 bikes collected and stored during the off-season were sorted and staged in preparation for trucking to the warehouse.



Howard County firefighters and Wilde Lake Village Board Chair Kevin McAliley show off the first bike collected at Banneker Road Station 7.



Dr. Ball helps unload bikes at the warehouse, donated by The Howard Hughes Corporation, which became our refurbishing center for ten weeks.



The Mount Hebron Mountain Bike team collected a full trailer load of bikes for us last spring.

Collecting Bikes from Alpha Ridge Recycling Center

In late October of 2020, we finalized arrangements with the Howard County Department of Public Works, the Glenwood Lions Club, and Bikes for the World to expand the existing bicycle recycling program at the Alpha Ridge Residents' Convenience Center to enable us to collect small bicycles and tricycles which were previously put in the landfill, as well as other bikes not wanted by Bikes for the World. These bikes are on average a little more in need of tender loving care, but most can be refurbished, and we can strip usable parts off of even unsalvageable bikes. This initiative furthers our objective to increase sustainability and reduce waste, and added about 500 small bikes and trikes to our inventory last year. The only downside is that we need to collect and store the bikes until our volunteers can refurbish them during our annual campaign.



The Glenwood Lions Club's bike collection shed at the Howard County Alpha Ridge Residents' Convenience Center.



Every week, we sort and stack bikes prior to collection by Bikes for the World and Free Bikes 4 Kidz. Free Bikes 4 Kidz takes the tiny bikes and trikes that were previously discarded as well as any bicycles that Bikes for the World cannot use, such as children's bikes with plastic headsets.

Collecting Bikes from Race Pace... and Trek

In February, the Race Pace Bicycle Stores, long-time sponsors of Free Bikes 4 Kidz, were purchased by Trek Bicycles. At that time Race Pace generously donated their entire remaining inventory of 170 used children's bicycles to us during the ownership transition.

Since then, the Trek Columbia and Ellicott City stores have been donating every bike they receive as a trade-in from their customers to us. These are high-quality bikes in children's sizes and typically require very little refurbishment. We expect to receive at least 500 children's bikes this year from their generosity!



Two truckloads of bikes were received from Race Pace in February. We expect to receive five truckloads of bikes from Trek in 2022.

Refurbishing Donated Bikes

In ten weeks, volunteers, singly and in groups, cleaned, adjusted, and repaired over 1900 bikes. Many bikes merely needed cleaning and adjusting. Repair parts, when needed, were taken from unrepairable bikes whenever possible. Each and every bicycle was checked for safety by bicycle mechanics whose cost was defrayed by a sponsor, Race Pace Bicycles. Tools were provided at a significant discount by another sponsor, Park Tools.



Volunteers repairing bikes at ten fully-equipped workstations



Just a few of the corporate and club teams who helped us out!



Employees assembling bike purchased for us by BGE.



Nearly 2000 bikes ready to give away in December.

Giving Them All Away

Children were identified and referred to us by our partners: schools, social services organizations, and nonprofits, who used their own qualification criteria. We matched the children to bikes of the correct size from our inventory, and notified the referrer when a match was made. We conducted an early giveaway for preschoolers, a big giveaway of 1800 bikes for our partners, and several smaller giveaways to churches, schools, nonprofits, and refugee groups. Every child received a correctly-sized new helmet and children at our large giveaways selected their new bike from a dozen or so bikes that fit.



Check in, get measured for a bike, get measured for a helmet, pick out a bike, and off they go into a whole new world.



A new bike; a new world of possibilities!

Free Bicycle Repair Clinics

In the spring of 2022, the pandemic continued to lead challenges for underserved families with bicycles in need of repair. These families could not afford to get their bicycles fixed and put back on the road. And even if they could, the waiting list for repairs at local shops was often months long. To continue to help address these issues, Free Bikes 4 Kidz built on the efforts begun in 2021 with Columbia Community Care.

In 2022, in conjunction with Howard County Libraries, we offered free bicycle repair clinics at four libraries. Most bikes merely needed adjustments, or a tube patch to make the bikes safe to ride again.



Other Activities

One of the issues that arises in collecting used bicycles is the variety of types of bikes donated, and the need to match some of the more unique donations with appreciative users. This year we were able to find homes for over 40 bikes that were not good fits for the needs of local children. We donated unicycles and a clown bike to the University of Maryland Juggling Club, single-speed beach cruisers to the Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park Bike Barn, older vintage ten speeds to Bamiria Aid to West Africa, and sturdy 24-inch single speed bikes to Volunteers for Medical Engineering to be modified for users with special needs.



Big one-speed beach cruisers, returned to their natural habitat

2021 Campaign by the numbers³



Bicycles

Metric	FY2022 Total	3-year Total
Bicycles carried over to 2021 campaign	647	
Bicycles collected	2828 (+72%)	5,197
Bicycles given to children	1971 (+117%)	3,299
Bicycles given to programs	154 (+196%)	278
Total Bicycles given away	2125 (+121%)	3,577
Bicycles stripped and scrapped	105 (5% of collected bikes)	
Value of bicycles and helmets given to children in need ⁴	\$222,650 (+75%)	\$408,772
Bicycles collected through June 2022 and stored for the next Campaign	1245	

People

315 unique volunteers (+37%)

3400 volunteer hours exclusive of administration (+35%)

Financial (Fiscal year ending 30 June 2021)

\$6,905 Foundation and Corporate grants

\$12,133 cash donations by the public (+72%)

\$569,309 in-kind contribution of tools, parts, bicycles, helmets, space, and services (+156%)

\$23,326 in cash expenses for 2021 campaign, including \$10,393 for helmets

Average cost to refurbish a bike: \$6.08⁵

\$9,952 Funds remaining for 2021 campaign

Platinum
Transparency
2022

Candid.

³ Preliminary figures; our IRS form 990 will provide details.

⁴ Bike value is estimated from FMV for each type of bike and varies by market and mix of bikes. Helmet values are MSRP.

⁵ The average cost is calculated by dividing \$12,933 cash expenditures supporting the 2021 campaign (exclusive of helmets but including parts, supplies, insurance, transportation, tools, and other overhead) by 2125 bikes refurbished.

What's Next?

As we begin to recover from the pandemic, we're planning to continue to expand our regular operations to collect, refurbish, and give away bicycles to children in need. While we've been able to give away almost 3300 bicycles over the past three years, there is much work to be done: There are over 10,000 school children eligible for free lunches in Howard County alone, and nearly 3,000 additional children eligible for reduced price lunches. We intend to continue to grow to address that need, through increased publicity and cooperation with local organizations.

We've made our first steps into Baltimore and Prince Georges Counties and Baltimore City, where the need is significantly greater, and we plan to expand our footprint there and in neighboring counties as donations and volunteers permit.

Our national organization continues to develop alliances with organizations with similar missions, including USA Cycling, the organization that sponsors U.S. national and Olympic cyclists and that champions children's bicycle riding for many of the same reasons we do. We will support that alliance by providing bicycles for USA Cycling's local and national giveaway events associated with efforts.

We intend to initiate a first-of-its-kind study to quantitatively assess how much the bikes we provide are used by their recipients as a means to determine the real-world impact of our activities on children's health.

We will keep the public informed on our website, fb4kmaryland.org, and our Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland Facebook page.



A shaky child on a bicycle for the first time needs both support and freedom. The realization that this is what the child will always need can hit hard.

Sloan Wilson

A Final Note of Gratitude

Special thanks to Howard County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball for his support, and to the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services and six volunteer fire departments for the use of space at twelve fire stations on Donation Day. Thanks also to the Howard County Department of Public Works, Bikes for the World, and the Glenwood Lion's Club for their help in providing access to donated bikes at the Alpha Ridge Residents' Convenience Center.

The Howard Hughes Corporation donated the space that we used for our 2021 Campaign, and then extended the arrangement for all of 2022, which enabled us to collect and give away more bikes in the spring as well as next December. We are the only Free Bikes 4 Kidz affiliate in the country to be working in a Class A office building, and we will always be very thankful for the experience!

Finally, a massive thank you to the more than 300 volunteers who worked to collect, refurbish, and give away bikes, pandemic notwithstanding, over the past year. Your efforts are what makes our organization possible!



Howard Hughes, age 12, with his do-it-yourself electric bike.





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