



FB4K

FREE BIKES 4 KIDZ



Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland

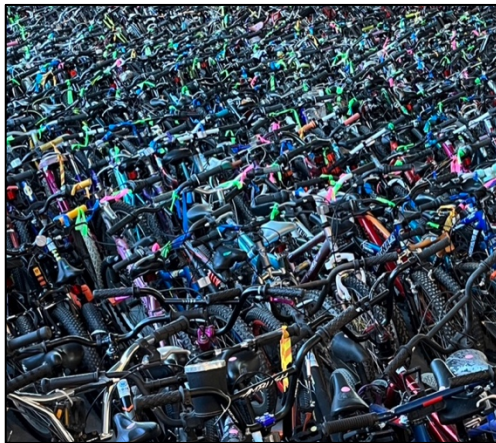
Fourth Annual Report

2022-2023

fb4kmaryland.org



Collect



Refurbish



Give Away

Howard Hughes

HOWARD COUNTY
MARYLAND

HORIZON
FOUNDATION

OUTRIDE

SAFE
KIDS
WORLDWIDE

Park Tool

TREK

QUALITY BICYCLE
PRODUCTS

bge
AN EXELON COMPANY

Our bottom line

A \$294,000 impact in FY 2023: 652 volunteers spent over 4500 hours refurbishing 2,608 donated bicycles that were then given away with new helmets to children in need.

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 typically 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 fourth 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. This past fiscal year we were able to distribute over 2600 bicycles, up 23% from the previous year.

No nonprofit can be successful without the help of many people and organizations. We are grateful to the public, who donated over 2500 bicycles to us as well as significant financial contributions. We thank our 652 volunteers, who collectively devoted over 4500 hours to making donated bicycles shiny, functional, 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.

We are especially grateful to our sponsors: Howard County, the Outride Fund, the Horizon Foundation, Park Tool, Quality Bicycle Products, Trek, SafeKids, BGE, and the Miller Foundation for enabling us to have such a successful fourth 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 our third and fourth campaigns.

Ted Cochran, President
Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland
July 2023

Free Bikes 4 Kidz Locations



A bicycle, for me, was the only way to get around the city. If I wanted to meet some of my friends, travel across the city, go to school, play basketball - anything - the bicycle was the way I got around." —LeBron James

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

Over half of children in Maryland, and over 17,000, or 30% of the 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

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.

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.

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, 2022-2023

Why Bicycles?

We have been asked why we're focusing on giving away bicycles, as opposed to other, less expensive sports equipment. Or books. Or computers. 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.

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. It's fun!

Our Approach

Unlike many programs in the US that collect, refurbish, and give away bikes to underserved children, Free Bikes 4 Kidz typically conducts an annual ten-week campaign to refurbish donated bikes, in borrowed space staffed by hundreds of volunteers. We give the bikes to children referred to us by dozens of local agencies that work with underserved families, and then pack up, clean the warehouse, and return it to the owners. This allows us to be incredibly efficient and generates a renewed excitement when the lights go on again nine months later.

We could just buy the bikes, but that is much less economical: Our FY 2023 cost to refurbish a bike was only about \$7.50. Further, buying bikes does not satisfy our sustainability mission: We need to keep bikes out of landfills and put them back on the street.

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.



*"My bike is my gym, my wheelchair and my church all in one. I'd like to ride my bike all day long but I've got this thing called a job that keeps getting in the way." — **Bill Walton***



Collecting Bikes from the Public

Our 2022 campaign began as soon as 2021's Giveaway Day was over. We received over 2000 bikes before our Collection Day on October 1, 2022. We received another 500 bikes that day, and 300 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.



Collecting Bikes from Alpha Ridge Recycling Center

We've worked with the Howard County Department of Public Works 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.



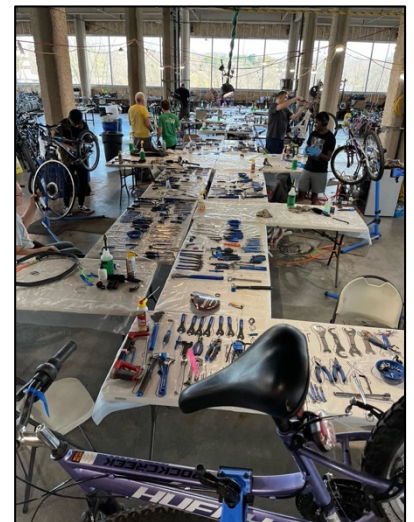
Bikes collected at the bike recycling center.

Collecting Bikes from Trek

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

Refurbishing Donated Bikes

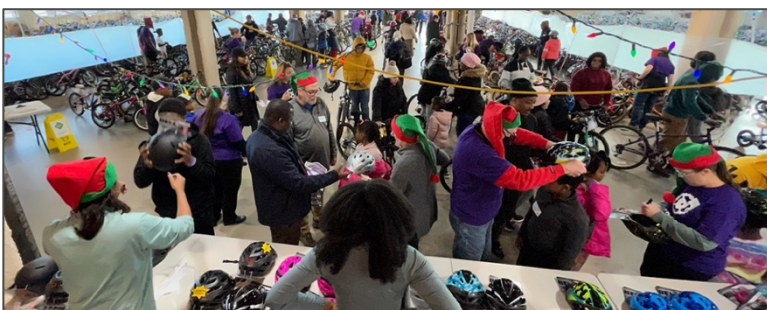
In ten weeks, volunteers, singly and in groups, cleaned, adjusted, and repaired over 2600 bikes. Many bikes merely needed cleaning and adjusting. Repair parts, when needed, were taken from unrepairable bikes whenever possible. Tools were provided at a significant discount by another sponsor, Park Tools.



Volunteers repairing bikes at ten fully-equipped workstations in space generously donated by The Howard Hughes Corporation.

Giving Them All Away

Children are identified and referred to us by our partners: schools, social services organizations, and nonprofits, who used their own qualification criteria. We match the children to bikes of the correct size from our inventory, and notify 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 get to select their new bike from a dozen or so bikes that fit.



Giveaway Day!



Helmets awaiting sorting.

Giveaway Day!



Children getting bikes and helmets...



...and riding away

Other Activities

Free Bicycle Repair Clinics

Underserved families with bicycles in need of repair can often not afford to get their bicycles fixed and put back on the road. To help address these issues, Free Bikes 4 Kidz built on the previous years' efforts to offer free bike checks and bike riding lessons at all six Howard County Libraries. Most bikes merely needed adjustments, or a tube patch to make the bikes safe to ride again.



Free bike safety checks at the East Columbia Library.

Bike Donations to Organizations



Large tricycle to be modified for a child with special needs.

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 older vintage ten speeds to Bamiria Aid to West Africa, and bike trailers, adult tricycles, and 24-inch single speed bikes to Equipment Connections for Children and Volunteers for Medical Engineering to for users with special needs.

Corporate Community Service Activities

We encourage local corporations to work with us in a number of ways: They can volunteer in groups during our annual campaign, collect bikes for us, or purchase and build new bicycles. Groups that participated in this way last year include BGE, The International Monetary Fund, Harkins Builders, and The Howard Hughes Corporation.



Bikes awaiting assembly by IMF volunteers.

Working to Improve the Regulation of Nonprofits in Maryland

Free Bikes 4 Kidz relies on volunteers and donations of bicycles and space, as well as discounts on tools, helmets, and repair parts, to keep our funding requirements low and our efficiency high. Recent changes to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) require that these donations and discounts be reported as revenue on financial statements as determined by current prices for similar property on the open market. This accounting change will better reflect our financial impact on the community.

However, there was a side effect in that Maryland regulations required independent financial reviews or audits once nonprofits reach certain gross revenue thresholds. Reportable gross revenue of over \$300K required an independent review, and over \$750,000 required an independent audit costing as much as \$15,000. This would have had a huge impact on our budget: In FY2023, our gross revenue according to GAAP was nearly \$350,000, despite the fact that our cash revenue was less than \$50,000.

This issue affected all Maryland nonprofits largely staffed by volunteers that primarily collect and redistribute property (e.g., food, books, sporting goods, medical equipment, household goods). We worked with Maryland Delegate Courtney Watson, State Senator Katie Hester, and the Maryland State Department to draft legislation to mitigate this issue, helping us conserve funds needed to refurbish bikes and provide helmets for children in need.

The newly enacted legislation enables nonprofit organizations with significant noncash contributions that use Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and that meet certain other criteria to avoid independent review and audit requirements until their *cash* budgets reach \$300,000.



Senator Hester, Delegate Watson, Ted Cochran, Watson's Chief of Staff Michels, Senate President Ferguson, House Speaker Jones, and Maryland Governor Wes Moore at the signing of House Bill 72/Senate Bill 254 reducing audit requirements for nonprofits that collect and redistribute physical property.



Nice bikes!



2022 Campaign by the numbers³

Bicycles

Metric	FY2023 Total	4-year Total
Bicycles carried over to 2022 campaign	99	
Bicycles collected	2531	7748
Bicycles given to children	2401	5700
Bicycles given to programs which then give them to children	207	485
Total Bicycles given away	2608	6,185
Bicycles stripped and scrapped	178 (7% of collected bikes)	
Value of bicycles and helmets given to children in need ⁴	\$294,052	\$702,824
Bicycles collected through June 2023 and stored for the 2023 Campaign	995	



People

652 unique volunteers

4513 volunteer hours exclusive of administration

Financial (Fiscal year ending 30 June 2023)

\$23,333 Foundation and Corporate grants

\$23,872 cash donations by the public

\$477,323 in-kind contribution of tools, parts, bicycles, helmets, space, and services

\$33,039 in cash expenses for 2022 campaign, excluding helmets

Average cost to refurbish a bike: \$12.67⁵ (\$7.53 net of strategic investments in expansion and software)

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 \$33,039 cash expenditures supporting the 2022 campaign (exclusive of helmets but including parts, supplies, insurance, transportation, tools, IT expansion and other overhead) by 2608 bikes refurbished.

What's Next?

We 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 over 6000 bicycles over the past four years, there is much work to be done: There are over 17,000 school children eligible for free or reduced-price meals in Howard County alone. 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 central Maryland 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.

In the summer of 2023 we intend to conduct a bonus campaign to refurbish bicycles for Howard County Public School System students who will no longer be served by school buses due to a change in HCPSS policy.

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 for their help in providing access to and storage of 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 have worked in a Class A office building, and we will always be very thankful for the experience!



A few of the many Harkins employees that refurbished bikes during their community service event.



BGE employees fixed dozens of bikes during a community service event.



HH Cares!

The Renegades unpacked and sorted hundreds of helmets!

Finally, a massive thank you to the more than 650 volunteers who worked to collect, refurbish, and give away bikes over the past year.



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