



# Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland

## Annual Report

Inaugural Year, 2019-2020

[fb4kmaryland.org](http://fb4kmaryland.org)



Collect



Refurbish



Give away

### Our Launch Partners

*Howard Hughes*

 HOWARD COUNTY  
MARYLAND

### Our Sponsors

  
HORIZON  
FOUNDATION

 Park Tool

 Race Pace  
BICYCLES  
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 BICYCLE

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# 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 conducted our first campaign beginning in October: We asked the public to donate gently used bikes; we organized scores of volunteers to clean and refurbish them, and then we gave them away to children in need. We're the eighth regional affiliate of Minneapolis-based Free Bikes 4 Kidz to be established of the current twelve affiliates.



In this, our inaugural Annual Report, we provide details on that first campaign, our activities since then, and our plans for the future.

No nonprofit can be successful without the help of many people and organizations. We are grateful to the public, who donated 512 bicycles to us. We thank our 175 volunteers, who collectively devoted over 1500 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.

And we are especially grateful to our launch partners, The Howard Hughes Corporation and Howard County government, and to our sponsors, the Horizon Foundation, Park Tool, Race Pace Bicycles, Bodhi Digital, and Quality Bicycle Products, for enabling us to have such a successful first season.

Ted Cochran, President  
Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland  
August 2020

*As a kid I had a dream - I wanted to own my own bicycle. When I got the bike I must have been the happiest boy in Liverpool, maybe the world. I lived for that bike. Most kids left their bike in the backyard at night. Not me. I insisted on taking mine indoors and the first night I even kept it in my bed.*

**John Lennon**



# Three Issues

## Health

One out of three Maryland children aged 10-17 is overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Equity

More than two out of five children in Maryland, and one out of five in Howard County<sup>2</sup>, 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.

## 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 ultimately end up in landfills. The supply of used children’s bikes is nearly limitless.

*When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and go out for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking.*

**Arthur Conan Doyle**



<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 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 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, 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.

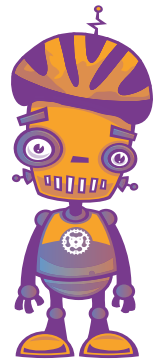


*Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race.*

**H.G. W**

# Collecting Bikes From the Public

Collection Day was October 5, 2019. Thanks to the generosity of the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services and six volunteer fire departments, we were able to use twelve Howard County Fire Stations as collection points. Volunteers helped the public unload donated bicycles, and then other volunteers then trucked the bikes to our refurbishing center.



County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball and Maryland Delegate Courtney Watson greet children donating their out-grown bicycles.



Volunteers unload the trucks and bring the bikes in to the refurbishing center –the Columbia Flier building.



# Refurbishing Donated Bikes

In ten weeks, volunteers cleaned, adjusted, and repaired all but 4% of the bikes. Most bikes merely needed cleaning and adjusting. Repair parts, when needed, were taken from unrepairable bikes, or purchased from our sponsor, Quality Bicycle Products, at a significant discount. Each and every bicycle was checked for safety by bicycle mechanics whose time was donated by our sponsor, Race Pace Bicycles. Tools were provided at a significant discount by our sponsor, Park Tools.



Bikes awaiting refurbishment.



Cleaners, preppers, and mechanics hard at work.



Cleaned, greased, and ready to go back together.

## 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. All of the recipients were scheduled to come on Give Away Day, December 14, 2020. Every child received a correctly-sized new helmet, and selected their new bike from a dozen or so bikes that were the correct size.



Maryland Delegate Terry Hill sizes a bike recipient for her new bike.



Helmets await their new owners



A new bike; a new world of possibilities



*A few years ago, I bought an old red bicycle with the words Free Spirit written across its side - which is exactly what I felt like when I rode it down the street in a tie-dyed dress.*

**Drew Barrymore**



*...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**



*She who succeeds in gaining the mastery of the bicycle will gain the mastery of life.*

**Susan B. Anthony**





# 2019 Campaign by the numbers

## Bicycles

512 bicycles collected

492 bicycles refurbished (average cost \$23)

415 bicycles given to children

72 bicycles given to programs<sup>3</sup>

5 bicycles sold for parts

20 bicycles (3.9%) stripped of useful parts and scrapped

## People

175 unique volunteers

1564 volunteer hours exclusive of administration

## Financial

(Fiscal year ending 30 June 2020)

\$27,000 Corporate and foundation grants

\$12,570 donations by the public

\$33,792 value of bicycles donated by public

\$17,00 in-kind contribution of space and services

\$21,490 in expenses, including \$5,128 in launch expenses and \$5099 for helmets

\$18,080 Funds remaining for 2020 campaign



<sup>3</sup> Howard County Public Schools bicycle safety education program, The Children's Home, Bikes for the World, Morrell Park Recreation Center

# Impact

Some stories are cute, like the home we found for a unicycle with the University of Maryland juggling club, or the home we found for a broken electric scooter with the Glenelg High School Robotics Club.

Some are life-changing: For example, we gave a high quality trail-a-bike (a trailer that attaches to an adult bicycle that enables a child to ride and pedal behind) to a family with a child who has become severely visually impaired, enabling him to ride with his family for the first time.

Many of our volunteers shared the significance of the experience with us and with their friends. For example, a bike shop owner said, *"As rewarding as anything I have done in the last twenty-five years in bikes!"*

A teacher said, *"...I am honored to be a part of this wonderful program, and being able to work with our local community to connect kids and families to bikes was one of the greatest opportunities I've ever had. It's so hard to describe the day to people other than inspiring but I'm so grateful to have been a part of it."*

And our nonprofit partners were enthusiastic as well, for example: *"Words cannot express our appreciation for your efforts, and the team of volunteers and donors who made this event possible!"*

But perhaps a little girl said it best, and spoke for all of the children, when she said, *"My new bike is the most beautiful bike in the whole world."*



*I thought of that while riding my bicycle.*

**Albert Einstein**, in reference to the Theory of Relativity



## What's Next?

Since our bike giveaway in December 2019, the pandemic has changed the world in ways that significantly impact our operations. Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland's marketing and publicity activities this spring were all canceled.

But the need for children's access to bicycles has only increased: People have turned increasingly to bicycling as a safe outdoor activity, and bike shops have been overwhelmed. Inexpensive children's bikes are sold out across the country, and wait times for bike repairs are measured in weeks, if not months.

In response to this need, Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland is planning to conduct free bike repair clinics for children's bikes, twice a week in July. That could become a permanent part of our activities in the future.

We are also developing plans for socially-distanced bike collection, refurbishment, and give away activities this Fall, pandemic notwithstanding, with Collection Day scheduled for October 3, 2020. We hope to expand the area we serve to include parts of Baltimore County and perhaps even Baltimore City in 2020.

We will keep the public informed on our website, [fb4kmaryland.org](http://fb4kmaryland.org), and our Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland Facebook page.





Special thanks to Howard County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball for his support, and to Howard County government and 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, and the Columbia Flier Building for ten weeks of refurbishment, followed by Give Away Day.



[fb4kmaryland.org](http://fb4kmaryland.org)