

Bikes4Kids Newsletter

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This newsletter is published with the intended purpose of providing information for all volunteers, suppliers and known supporters of Bikes4Kids. To subscribe or unsubscribe please contact B4K at 763-234-4790.

2017 Recap; A Record Year!

In our last issue of the Bikes4Kids Newsletter we announced the amazing accomplishment of 1000 bikes repaired (actually 1072 were repaired and 1052 were delivered). In addition to these numbers Norm Dahl has also provided us with this recap.

We have had requests from 7 communities as follows,

- *Somali community-St. Paul Police Dept.*
- *Hmong community-Social workers Ramsey County*
- *Latino community- CLUES*
- *Liberian community- LHI*
- *Russian community-Way of the Lord*
- *Korean community -Sejong Accad.*

- *Gambia- Thousands of bikes sent over the past years*

Requests made:

- *7 different school districts throughout the metro area*
- *7 different church organizations*
- *Many personal requests*

Bikes distributed:

- *1,052 finished bikes locally*
- *Thousands of bikes sent over the past years to the country of Gambia. (see the article highlighted in "Why We Do What We Do")*

Bikes received:

- *2,843 bikes from many donors including law enforcement agencies as widespread as Sauk Rapids and Cambridge.*

It was a very busy and rewarding year!

In the Spotlight



In the volunteer spotlight for this issue is our chief mechanic, Ken Johnson. Being a very private person, it has been a challenge to get his story, but we finally have it and here it is:

"I was raised on a dairy farm. Everyone was required to work on equipment, in the field, barn and other tasks. I was not so much the cow person although everyone had the chance to do ALL the farm tasks.

With the Vietnam Conflict going strong at that time and with the major I chose at college, I realized the Draft Board was not going to let me finish even 3 years of college. I enlisted in the USAF (4 good years) and became an electronic technician.



Following the military, I got a job In private industry, I transitioned away from electronics into chemical and mechanical disciplines. A business with technical background was not going to qualify me for an engineering position at Medtronic Inc. As a result, I decided to get a Mechanical Engineering degree. After 16 years and well over 400 credits, the U of Minn. granted me a Mechanical Engineering degree.

I spent 38.5 years at Medtronic. I had many different rolls with the Lab. The Lab had several different service related electronic and mechanical development identities over that 38 years at Medtronic in Cardiovascular field.

After I retired I looked for ways to continue using my skills. I knew many of the people in the B4Ks organization so in the fall of 2013 I started volunteering. Doing something good for kids and people one day a week was very attractive. Doing something mechanical was also attractive to me. I worked on my own bike when I was growing up and I have done bike things since. Tinkering with mechanics is in my wheelhouse and I am a DIY kind of person.

Spotlight on Ken Johnson continued

Bikes4Kids purposely separates the organization from the people that benefit from getting a bike. BUT, Once In A While I have seen, heard and read thank you notes from kids. The effects on people who receive a bike is amazing.

The B4Ks people quality also pulls a person deeper into the organization. The term NO is not an easy word or common word to use in the B4K vocabulary. Everyone at Bikes4Kids is a great asset to the organization!

Why We Do What We Do...

We recently had a request from our contact Pateh Baldeh who maintains the pipeline of bikes that are sent to Gambia. Pateh had made a request for more bikes to be sent but unfortunately, we were unable to comply on such short notice. He very graciously sent this notice back to us

*“Hi Ken,
Sorry for the late reply. I had traveled out of town and I am now catching up on my emails.
I have never shipped in the months of December, January and February since it gets so cool. Thank you for all your help and much appreciated.
I and my wife Isatou, started shipping bikes to The Gambia in 2013. When we first started, all the bikes we shipped were bikes we bought from individuals, at auctions and few bikes donated by individuals. It took a long time to come up with the number of bikes needed for a shipment. We could only ship once or twice a year due to the limited amount of supply we get. When we started getting bikes from Bikes For Kids, now we could shipped 3 to 4 times a year and we only pay for the cost of shipping.
A lot the bikes we donate to kids are used for commuting to and from school. We have also donated bikes to teachers who walk a mile or more to school.
Thank you everyone at Bikes For Kids for all the generous donations, smiles and ideas. You are all much appreciated.
Sincerely
Pateh Baldeh”*

Throughout the year Bikes4Kids will provide many bikes for shipment though Pateh’s operation. Here is a photo of a container being loaded for shipment.



(Ken Johnson added this commentary)

“Gambia is a poor country. People "know" when a Pateh Isatou (wife) container is going to arrive. Pateh has told me that people come from many miles around to wait for the container. The bikes make a difference in Gambia life. The bikes are repaired by people in Gambia”.



Operations Statistics

