

# B4K Newsletter

January - March 2022 (vol. 22.1)

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.



## Spotlight on Volunteers Meet LeRoy Curwick



This issue of the Bikes4Kids Newsletter is featuring one of the original volunteers for B4k, LeRoy Curwick, LeRoy has served Bikes4Kids for many years and was a part of the startup for the organization while volunteering for Kiwanis and FROG's (Faith Lutheran

Church men's group)

LeRoy serves quite a unique role with Bikes4Kids. While his primary function is to clean the bikes as they arrive at the facility, his diverse background allows him to play the important role of triage for incoming bikes and inspector. In this capacity he is positioned to save unnecessary labor on bikes that may look fine but may have some small flaw that renders them unsafe for use.

LeRoy is more than qualified for this role with a PhD in Metallurgical Engineering. His career was spent with companies that focused on metallurgy in product development and sales management. The companies included Inco Ltd. Alloys in research and development and as a Regional Sales Manager. He also worked for Vincent Metal Goods Nationwide.

LeRoy is married to his high school sweetheart. They have four children and fifteen grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

Upon his retirement in 2010, he has been a star volunteer working primarily for Kiwanis, FROG's and B4K.

I asked LeRoy what keeps him going at B4K and he says: *"I love serving kids and people in need and I love the wonderful camaraderie and my love of Christ"*.

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## Thoughts from Julie Executive Director for Bikes4Kids



The weather forecast may indicate otherwise, but we know from all the activity of recent weeks that Spring is definitely on the way! Our bike requests from our long-time partners are coming in, and new partners are requesting a large number of

bikes too! Many thanks to all of you for pitching in and helping to fill those requests!

Winter was hard on the site. Ice was a never-ending obstacle. We lost one of our gray units, and the late winter winds have all but destroyed the other. Our fence was toppled and so was the satellite, but that's how life goes on the farm! But there is good news—the ice is finally gone, and the fence has been repaired by the able team of Chuck Cotch, Lowell Kutches and Mark Swenson with an assist from Byron Dokken who made sure the utility lines were all marked! The satellite is back in business (pun intended), and we just received a \$5000 grant from the Ham Lake Lions that will be used to replace the last gray unit and help fund operations! The Ham Lake Lions have been long time supporters, but they made a significantly larger donation this year. Our thanks go to Ed Dols who helped make that happen! If you know anyone who is a member of the Lions Club, please extend our gratitude!

And speaking of feeling gratitude... about two weeks ago, a woman named Deborah came to pick up bikes for two young boys. It turns out that Deborah has opened her home to a mom and her two young sons who are refugees from Ukraine. Shortly after Deborah left, she called to say that one of the bikes was too small. When she came back to exchange it, she brought the boys' mother, Alla, with her. Alla

told us that she first met Deborah and her husband when they were in Ukraine on a church mission trip a couple of years ago, and they have stayed in touch ever since. When the news of war began to intensify, Alla and her husband made a plan to send Alla and the boys to stay with Deborah and her family in Lino Lakes, and they have been in the US since early March. Alla's husband Dime has stayed behind to help civilians evacuate from the east of the country to the relatively safer west. As we can imagine, she is worried about her husband, her friends and extended family, and her country. Several times she expressed her thanks for our mission and for the bikes for her boys because they give them something "normal" to do. I think I can speak for all of us who were there that cold and blustery Monday that it was incredibly moving to hear her story, and we were all grateful to be a small ray of sunshine for her family.

As much as we sometimes try to fight it, there is no doubt that things change. This past week, we said goodbye to one of our volunteers, Karen Toogood. Karen's son is relocating for work, so Karen is following her grandchildren to South Carolina. For those of you who know Karen, you know her energy, her organization, and her willingness to do absolutely anything that needed doing. For those of you who did not meet her, she was one of the team, along with Norm and Patty, that makes sure bikes are in queue for repair, organized in the proper units, moved from waiting to prepping to fixing and cleaning to distribution. And so much more. Karen was fun to have around, and we will all miss her!

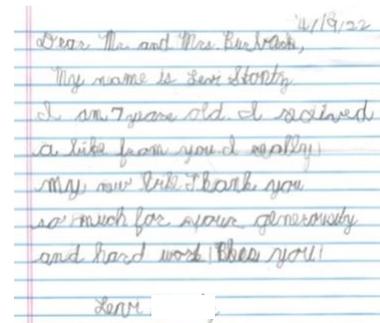
So as we go through the busyness of Spring, I think it's important for us to count our blessings, appreciate one another, and remember that we are all a part of great team that is doing phenomenal things in the world—one bike at a time!

We get letters and responses from the large population of people that we serve. This response is from the family from Ukraine that Julie just included in her report. This letter was sent by the mother (Alla) of the two children who recently received bikes



*"I am thankful for the joy you bring to people through your ministry. I left my country with my two boys, Misha and Elijah, with only one suitcase and two backpacks. Of course, I could not bring bikes. It is such a blessing for the kids to have the opportunity to ride bikes here. My youngest son, Misha, has been struggling in these new circumstances, but biking has built confidence, good conversation and relationship building. Your ministry is important and was able to support my family during a difficult situation. Thank you SO much!"*

Here is another letter from a satisfied recipient:



## We Have Fun!

On a cold Spring day this past March, the volunteers were surprised by a lunch treat from our Executive Director for B4K, Julie Gotham. Julie happens to be an excellent cook along with her many other attributes. She provided two kinds of chili that she made herself along with the fixings and dessert treats as well. It was a very welcome surprise on a very cold day. The food and comradery were an extra. Pictures of the event are provided below. Thank you Julie!



# Bikes4Kids

## 2021 Annual Report

### Celebrating 10 years!

\$71,557  
Raised



12+ containers saved from landfills

We donated 5,490 bikes to Kids and People in Need

5490

Donated



2052 Bikes to Africa



1209 Bikes Repaired



43 volunteers = 7,509 Volunteer Hours



## For the Record – Statistics

The charts below show the number of bikes repaired and the number of bikes delivered over the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2022. The year of 2018 was included since it was the record year for B4K. The charts will no longer include each previous year to make the charts less cluttered. However, in the future the charts will include the individual average for each year.

