

INGEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF PEDALS FOR PROGRESS



PEDALS FOR PROGRESS AND SCHOOL-BASED COMMUNITY SERVICE

By Kelli McMahon

As a middle-school teacher, helping twelve and thirteen year olds understand the importance of giving back to their community and their world is just as important as teaching them how to infer meaning from a text, how to organize their writing, or how to solve for x. I am lucky enough to work in a building where community service opportunities are abundant and there seems to be constant flow of fundraising for different causes. When I started teaching here at Tohickon Middle School in Doylestown, PA, eight years ago, I, along with the team of teachers I worked with, wanted to create a community service activity that stood out from all of the other options already in place. We wanted something that would not only help others, but would give our particular team of students a chance to learn something new and important and provide a chance for them to work together



Students preparing a bicycle for the shipping container.

Since then, we have held eight bike drives—one each year—and have collected over 800 bicycles and approximately \$9,800.

Along with the knowledge that the lives of over 800 individuals have been improved, the students involved in the bike drive have a great learning experience. Each year, our new team of 7th graders is presented with the task of organizing the bike drive. To do this, the students learn many life skills that cannot be taught in a classroom. First, students must research the countries where the bikes might be sent and attempt to grasp the need present in those countries. In a time of cell phones and computers and iPods, it can be difficult for kids to understand that there are people in the world who consider running water and transportation by motor vehicle luxuries; so, having the students research the countries with which Pedals for Progress partners gives the students a glimpse into how people in other, less fortunate parts of world live. This not only helps the students realize how the bikes will improve the lives of those receiving them, but also helps them understand how fortunate they are.



Students in front of the Tohickon Middle School Building after their collection.

to build a strong relationship. One of the teachers on our team had heard of Pedals for Progress and suggested that we hold a bike drive. After a little research into the organization, we decided to give it a try.

After researching the countries, the students work together in groups to develop an advertising plan, which includes designing a flyer that they can distribute in their neighbor

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**THERE IS STILL TIME TO PLAN A
SPRING BICYCLE COLLECTION.**

**Call or e-mail Bev today!
(908) 638-4811, bev@p4p.org**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Pedals for Progress is much more than an organization that just delivers bicycles overseas. We work with scores of school, civic, religious, municipal organizations and individuals here in the United States. All of these groups or individuals dedicate a day of their year to being proactive in their community recycling bicycles and sewing machines. The dozen or so people from these organizations who run each bicycle collection demonstrate to their community their concern for the plight of the poor around the world. This creates a greater awareness in the community of how lucky we are, that we happen to have been born here. These volunteers also demonstrate how being proactive locally can have a global effect.

From Vietnam east to Central America, from Albania south to Uganda, to Fiji dotted in the middle of the Pacific, access to mobility is the key to economic success. It is in the interest of everyone that people worldwide are economically successful. It sounds so simple, but it is true, the introduction of the wheel for personal transportation creates massive positive change. And when those wheels happen to be environmentally friendly, it is even better.

This recession has been/is difficult. So many businesses are closing up, losing so many jobs that people here need. P4P has struggled in this environment. Our projected production was down 26% as fewer people right now are buying new bicycles and recycling their old ones. We were supposed to live 6,000 families out of poverty in 2011. P4P only reached 4,400 families which is personally very disappointing. However if you ask one of those 4,400 families which were lifted permanently from poverty in 2012. It was a very good year!

I realize in these economic times it is hard to look beyond our backyard, but we live on a very small globe and what happens in one area has great effect on the rest of the world. Please consider a donation to our organization this spring. I realized that all of you receive a multitude of solicitations, and I know I am biased towards my mission. Yet one thing you can be sure of, every dollar is well spent and we are the organization that delivers. We do not give handouts, we offer opportunity. We show people how through their own hard work they can help themselves, and we give them the mobility necessary to obtain that employment. For me, the only long-term solution to poverty is gainful employment. Mobility is a prerequisite for employment. More thoughts on this continued on page 8.

Dave

www.p4p.org

hoods and communities. It would seem that getting people to come to our bike drive each year would get harder and harder, being that it is held in the same town and advertised to the same community each time. One would expect that the flow of used bikes would run dry sooner rather than later. However, with our new crop of seventh graders each year comes new ideas and new motivation and they always seem to get the word out about the drive to people who have not been reached before. This has led to our successful run of bike drives. Working in their groups to advertise the bike drive, the students learn the benefits of team work. This makes the relationships among our students stronger. Throughout this process the students also gain some insight into how to market an idea, which is a very important and relevant skill to have in today's world.

Finally, after researching and planning and advertising, comes the day of the bike drive—the day when all of the hard work and effort put forth by the students pays off. Over our eight years holding a drive, we have collected bikes in wind, sun, rain and even a rare October snowstorm. Each time, no matter what the weather, it is a day of team work, fun, and memories. The kids enjoy working together to “break down” the bikes to prepare them for shipping and assist the donors with the bikes they are coming to deliver. The people who come to donate are always so grateful to get rid of the bikes that were clogging their garages and that they didn't know what to do with. This aspect of hosting a Pedals for Progress Bike Drive is such a perfect model for a community-service activity.

Everyone wins. The students gain invaluable life lessons and teamwork skills. The people who donate are happy to have found a home for their unwanted, but not unusable, bikes that were taking up much needed space and gathering cobwebs. Most of all, the lives of the individuals who receive the bikes in different parts of the world are forever changed. Getting to work or school, reaching needed medical attention, and accessing water and food sources all become easier for those that the bikes reach. Hosting a Pedals for Progress Bike Drive is the ultimate win-win and we look forward to doing year after year.

MISSION STATEMENT

TO DELIVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AID BY
RECYCLING BICYCLES AND SEWING
MACHINES IN THE U.S. AND SHIPPING THEM TO
THE PEOPLE OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD



Our new sewing program in Belize

P4P is proud to announce the renewal of our grant from the Clif Bar Family Foundation. Their support has been critical in keeping the Uganda program active.



P4P Bicycle in action in Nicaragua.

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

By Dr Jerry Agasar,
Committee Chair of the Newtown Rotary club

What a great marriage Pedals for Progress (P4P) and the Newtown Rotary club has been. Our relationship started back in 2003 when the club was looking to do more service projects in the community, instead of just having fundraisers and donating the money to a particular group. We had



The 2011 Newtown Rotary Club Collection

become comfortable raising money and being generous with our allocations to various community organizations, but we wanted to become more active in service projects. Our president at the time received a flyer from a South Jersey club, which had run a successful bike collection and asked me to see what the club could do. Having been a 20-year veteran of Rotary, I had experience with other projects and knew that if I surrounded myself with a committed team and we created energy behind the project we should do okay. But I really had no idea what to expect. For those who are not familiar with The Rotary Club, it is first an international service organization. Basically, we are local clubs that are connected globally. The motto of Rotary International is "Service Above Self." It's all about giving back to your community, locally and beyond. In our first collection, we received 128 bicycles, which was great for the people in Central America who received them. But it was also a really positive experience for the Rotarians, creating an energy and nice buzz with our members. The P4P project inspired both young and more mature members and brought them together. Our members also connected to the area students from the Council Rock HS Interact club, the high school version of Rotary. They assisted young and not-so-young Rotarians in breaking down

the bicycles to prepare them for shipment overseas. After our initial success, I didn't understand how we could go back the very next year in the same community and ask for more bike donations. During the second collection, we received 170 bicycles. The third and fourth years we collected over 300 bikes. P4P had to make two trips. It was amazing. Our club members were brought together in service, connecting to each other and the Interact students. But more importantly we helped many people internationally.



The 2010 Newtown Rotary Club Collection

KEEP ON COLLECTING: 2011 PEDAL WRENCH OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER SHOWS US HOW TO STAY INVOLVED

By Patricia Hamill

The philanthropic spirit descends upon most of us in various ways and at differing frequencies throughout the year. We may tire of the interruptions of our favorite radio programs and figure our \$5 will get the fund drive chatter to end sooner or we may be unable to resist the angelic face of the child at the door shaking the collection jar. But what truly differentiates the sporadically involved donor from the civic minded, community service for the community's sake organizer? The tireless and ongoing dedication to and enthusiasm for a cause. Liz Sweedy is one of those enthusiastic people. Since 2003, she has been in charge of coordinating the annual Pedals for Progress bicycle collection events for the Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority (MCMUA) in New Jersey.

According to P4P's 2011 Pedal Wrench of the Year award winner, "My passion for P4P has been in full gear ever since our first bicycle collection event occurred, and that's for two reasons. First, I'm very happy that unwanted, used bicycles have been spared from spending an eternity in

landfills. Second, I'm delighted that these bicycles, which I fondly call 'precious gems,' provide assistance and joy to folks whose lives are virtually transformed as a result of having them."

To date, this municipality has coordinated the collection of literally thousands of bicycles. The members of the MCMUA are not the sole participants in this collection process. The County College of Morris in Randolph donates the use of one of its parking lots for the County's June collection day. Members of a local Boy Scout troop volunteer by unloading bikes from vehicles and doing some mechanical preparation so the bikes can be shipped. Local newspapers, cable TV programs referencing P4P, or signs advertising the event are what draw bicycle donors who happily include \$10.00 along with each bike, understanding that this helps alleviate transportation costs.

This is only one example of groups of people from disparate organizations coming together and coordinating an ongoing, efficiently run bicycle donation event that repeatedly draws enthusiastic participants. The Boy Scouts of America and some Rotary clubs have offered financial assistance for events similar to the one sponsored by the MCMUA and some municipalities receive the \$10.00-per-bicycle fee

from local service organizations. This makes it possible for people to donate bikes that are occasionally collected from roadsides or illegal dumping sites without having to reach into their own pockets for the accompanying \$10. Another option is to apply to a local municipality for a Clean Communities Mini-Grant Clean UP Program. These grants tend to be awarded to non-profit organizations that conduct litter cleanups. The non-profits apply the funds from the mini-grant toward the fee for the bicycles that are found and donated.

One would think that it is not so easy to interest people in participating in a cause, much less year after year; but, when local businesses, organizations, and schools cooperate and dedicate their efforts, the results are often staggering. As Sweedy puts it, "In a nutshell, my organizing and executing P4P collection events causes me to experience all sorts of good feelings. Hurrah for P4P—may its wheels continue to turn!" No matter how near or far the recipients of your philanthropy reside, active and continuing participation in your community has long-reaching and lasting benefits for everyone involved.



Liz Sweedy with her 2011 Pedal Wench of the Year Award.

PEDALS UNITES GENERATIONS, CHURCH AND TOWN

Rev. Chris Vande Bunte, Colts Neck Reformed Church
Colts Neck, NJ

People begin asking about it usually a month or two after we've just done it. Calls come in from our town and surrounding towns, "Are you that church...?" Participants begin strategizing weeks and months ahead about how things could run more smoothly, how we could inform donors more easily and effectively compared to last year. For the Colts Neck Reformed Church, our Pedals for Progress Bicycle Collection has become an anticipated and rewarding annual event for our congregation and our community. For our congregation, the Pedals Collection is a chance for families, adults, and especially our teens to lend a hand and join together for a day of local hands on volunteering that has far reaching effects. It seems that each year more and more people want to help – who wouldn't want to be involved with a successful program? Mechanically minded members who are collection veterans take the lead showing others how to prep bikes and ready them for shipping. Those less mechanically inclined have signed up to be greeters and drop off directors for people donating. They have been essential in getting the word out about Pedals to those who come to drop off a bike. Besides, it never hurts

to give a friendly hello to a visitor! We have seen those who've participated in our collection come back year after year to help. Our congregation is thrilled to have such a local experience have such a global impact. Through this single event each year, we join in a multi-generational mission endeavor, have the opportunity

efforts, we've seen our collection numbers rise to some of our best efforts ever. In addition, we've found more bicycle donors willing not only to contribute a \$10 donation, but even more to support Pedals. We've even begun to see sewing machines in our collection too!



The 2011 Collection Crew in Colt's Neck

to welcome many new visitors to our church property and share our commitment to mission with our community. Past years have seen sometimes two annual collections and up to 300 donations, but that changed a bit a few years ago when we saw our donations dip due in large part to the economy. We decided to get creative and worked to get the word out even more. We have found our local newspapers and magazines very receptive to print and online

As a church mission leader, I don't think you can go wrong working with Pedals for Progress. Their staff can help you develop a first time collection and instructs you along the way each year. By hosting a collection, the congregation is able to raise its profile in a positive way in the community. In addition, a Pedals collection allows a local mission project to have global reach. The Colts Neck Reformed Church is excited not only to host an annual collection, but make



Bikes ready to go in the P4P truck in Colt's Neck.



Gary Michel our collection coordinator and Founder Dave Schweidenback after a job well done!

community event postings with a number coming to cover the collection each year. We have also contacted our town about the annual clean-up day they hold. Our public works department receives a number of bicycles in good condition each year during our clean-up day as people clear out their garages. A simple phone call saves them from the dump and instead gets them put aside for our collection a few weeks later. With repeat donors and increased publicity

Pedals for Progress part of our annual benevolence giving to help them continue their mission around the world.

2011 ACTIVE PARTNERS

In 2011	In Total
EcoBici, Nicaragua 1,141 bicycles, 10 sewing machines	Since 1992 20,903 Bikes 182 Sewing Machines
WeBikes, Ghana 928 bicycles, 97 sewing machines	Since 2006 5,265 Bikes 222 Sewing Machines
FIDESMA, Guatemala 558 bikes, 35 sewing machines	Since 1999 6,335 Bikes 128 Sewing Machines
PASS, Albania 523 bikes	Since 2010 986 Bikes
EIAAT, Uganda 442 bicycles, 82 sewing machines	Since 1992 20,903 Bikes 182 Sewing Machines
Sewing Machines Only:	
Miracles in Action, Guatemala 50 sewing machines	
Central Leeward Public School, St. Vincent/Grenadines (20 sewing machines)	

In 2012 we have plans to add a new partnership in Tanzania, the Unity in Diversity Foundation LTD and renew our commitment to Withjak, in Fiji, a program we started in 1993 but having not received a shipment since 2002. (1,012 bicycles shipped).

PEDALS FOR PROGRESS BOARD OF TRUSTEES & STAFF

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For many decades, on the wall next to my computer, there has been an AT&T poster with a photograph of the moon in the night sky and a very large Saturn, Jupiter and a third planet, maybe Pluto, in the background. In white letters in the night sky the poster reads "Don't recycle. We can always move." That seems to be the motto for many nations. Just shift the burden to another location or leave the poisoned one behind. I've never agreed with this mentality and, through P4P, have made a point to cross international boundaries not with pollution, but with productive recycled materials. We don't need to make more, we need to use what we have—and share it.

I have been fortunate to earn recognition for my efforts and now, by virtue of having become a Rolex Laureate in 2000, I have been invited to participate in the 1st European Convention of Environmental Laureates in Freiburg Germany in March, 2012.

The Convention is an academic platform for those who have earned various prestigious prizes for marked accomplishments on behalf of the environment in Europe and other international locations. The goal of this convention is to push "for the development and adoption of 'The Decla-

ration on Rio +20 by European Environmental Laureates,' which aims to send a positive signal for achieving ambitious climate and sustainability goals and necessary innovations."

I'm already packing my bags, suit and all, and while I'm humbled by the recognition, I plan on grabbing this opportunity to push for the very real and necessary changes to international environmental standards and cooperation. After all, how useful are bicycles on the moon?

For more information on the convention and the European Environment Foundation go to or click on the following link: www.european-environment-foundation.eu



For more information visit www.p4p.org.



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