

# ANNUAL REPORT

USING BICYCLES TO  
EMPOWER LIVES AND  
CREATE SOCIAL IMPACT



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CREW



Friends,

2017 was a year in which Working Bikes distributed a record 8,430 bikes and made deeper its bonds across the city and world. Our staff, volunteers, and board members were able to visit bicycle organizations in Mexico, Canada, Lesotho, Zambia, Botswana, and Uganda. Not only did our Board President, Phil Kaplan, visit the bike project in Uganda, but our mechanic, Patrick Tivnan, was then asked to go and train the mechanical staff! Eight weeks later with five women bike mechanics trained, Patrick returned with a better sense of how we can fill the specific material needs of our partners in the next shipping containers we pack.

Locally, Working Bikes expanded our Cycle of Peace program to donate 738 bicycles to youth across the Chicago area and utilized volunteers and young adult apprentices to repair those bicycles. Our Cycle of Power program refurbished and provided 379 bikes to adults in need of sustainable transportation and added a partnership with Esperanza Community Health, which provided bicycles to patients with a diagnosis of depression or diabetes.

Surely 2018 will be another year of growth, change, and development for the organization. We at Working Bikes look forward to the future with a patch kit in one hand, wrench in the other, and a word of thanks to our numerous donors, customers, volunteers, and supporters around the world and in our backyard.

Peace + Bike grease,

The Working Bikes Crew

# ABOUT WORKING BIKES

Working Bikes, a 501(c)(3) organization started in 1999 by Lee Ravenscroft, Amy Little and a group of volunteers is dedicated to reusing bikes, supporting bike culture, and helping international and local projects.



**Working Bikes gives donated bicycles new life by redistributing them as tools of empowerment in local and global communities.**

# WHO WE ARE

## Staff

Paul Fitzgerald, General Manager  
Brian Vargas, Sales Floor Supervisor  
Andrew Bermudez, Volunteer Coordinator  
Aaron Brown, Production Manager  
John Clark, Production Mechanic  
B.K. Elmore, Warehouse Manager  
Dalia Garcia, Retail & Service Staff  
Mikela Pinkney, Sales Floor / Program Assistant  
Steve Irwin, Staff Accountant  
Alan Lloyd, Production Mechanic  
Cesar Meza, Retail & Service Manager  
David Nasca, Production Mechanic  
Maja Perez, Volunteer Shop Manager  
Patrick Tivnan, Production Mechanic  
Gary Hurst, Production Mechanic

## Board of Directors

Phil Kaplan, President  
Amy Little, Vice President  
Jim Lindsey, Treasurer  
Trevor Clarke, Secretary  
Alderman Brian Hopkins  
Regina Murphy  
Lee Ravenscroft  
Eric Wood  
Pete Travnicek  
Dave Gorman  
Jose Munoz





# 2017 STATS AND STORIES

**WE EMPOWER PEOPLE  
BY PUTTING BIKES IN  
THEIR HANDS! -  
PHIL KAPLAN**



**12,771**

**Bikes Collected**



**8,430**

**Bikes Donated**



**6,690**

International + Domestic



**1,739**



**10,444**

**Logged Hours**

by 985 Volunteers

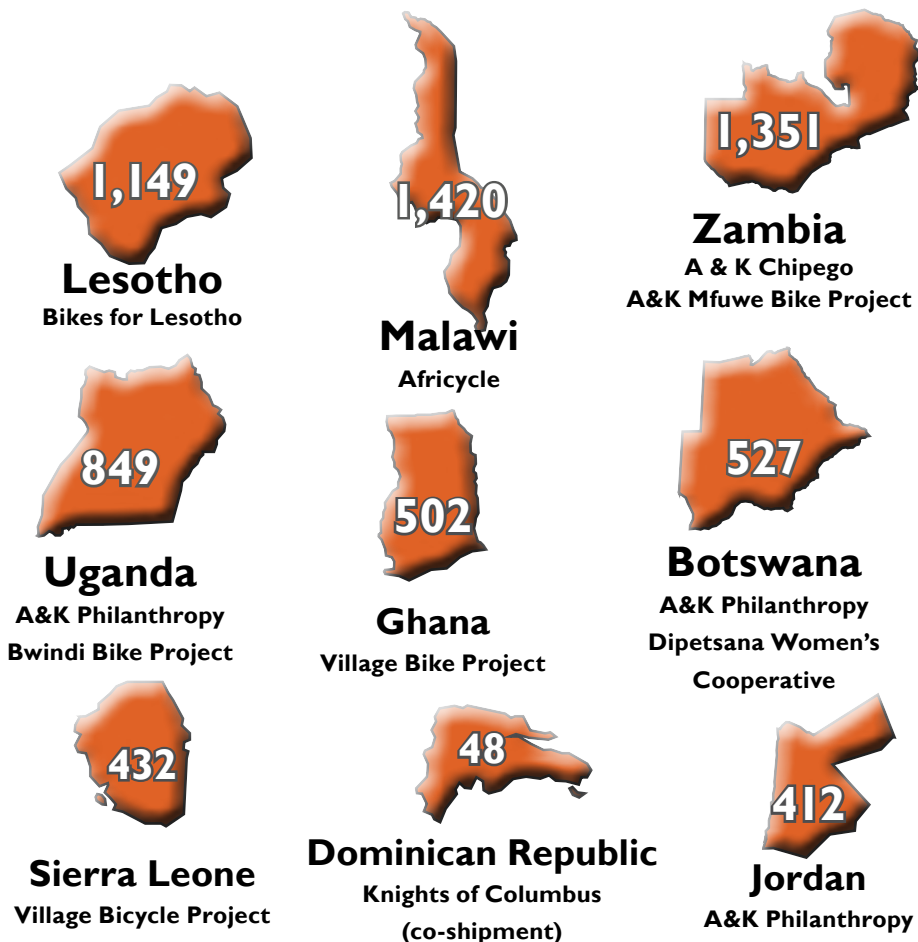


**1,613**

**Bike Sold**

# INTERNATIONAL DONATIONS

Working Bikes shipped 15 containers, filled with a total of 6,690 bikes, to partners in Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Uganda, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Jordan, The Dominican Republic, and Ghana. The containers leave Chicago on the rails, travel over water, and are taken from port to project by our international partners, who then fix the bikes and distribute them in their communities. The outgoing bikes cross international boundaries and are responsible for breaking transportation barriers, allowing access to employment, markets, education, and other resources.



## ON THE GROUND WITH OUR GLOBAL MISSION

In 2017, we not only sent two shipping containers with 887 bikes to the Chipego Bike Project in Nakatindi Village, but our Board President Phil Kaplan and his wife Marcia travelled to Zambia to meet the five women - Agathar, Bridget, Esther, Sitali and Musole - who operate the shop. This amazing team is providing vital transportation to their neighbors as well as Zambians who travel considerable distances to get the quality bikes Chipego is cranking out. Chipego means 'blessing'. It is a blessing to be involved in the work of getting bicycles to these hard working women. Donating a bike to Working Bikes allows the Chipego women to give bikes to the students at the Nakatindi primary school so they can make the 5 mile ride as they move on to the secondary school in Livingstone.



Going down the road a couple of hours and crossing the Zambezi River into Botswana, the Working Bikes delegation next visited the Dipetsana (little zebra) Bike project. Mary, Ntumi, Goitseone, and Chine, along with the other women of the Dipetsana Cooperative had successfully distributed two containers of bikes and were awaiting the third shipment of 527 bikes in transit from Working Bikes. The women were eager to hear the story of Working Bikes and how we collect, load and transport the bikes to them and the Working Bikes folks were eager to hear every detail of how WB can best tailor our shipments with the right bikes, parts and tools to ensure their success. Led by Mary, the WB delegation visited the Government of Botswana Department of Cooperatives, where small business assistance is made available to the women.

Both of these projects, which were started and supported through our partners at Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy, now know the depth of commitment Working Bikes has for their success.





## REFLECTIONS ON BWINDI

This past winter, I was lucky enough to live my Working Bikes dream. With special thanks to Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy and the Bwindi Community Hospital, I was able to travel to the southwest corner of Uganda and spend two months helping to establish a bike shop. I've been lucky to have traveled extensively, but this trip was unique for me. It was my first time in Africa, my first time staying exclusively in a rural area in a developing country, and my first time being sent abroad to work.

Southwestern Uganda has a beautiful landscape, with lush greenery and abundant wildlife. I spent nearly the whole time in a long and narrow valley in Kanungu province. The single road in the valley slowly wound higher and dead ended at the gate of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, home to a large number of the roughly 800 remaining Mountain Gorillas in the world. These incredible creatures inhabit a small area where Uganda, Rwanda, and The Congo meet.

Bicycles were fairly scarce. The few I saw were Chinese made roadsters, single speed, with rod brakes, similar to the famous Flying Pigeon. Most were in bad repair and either being ridden for short distances in the evening, to see and be seen, or loaded with cargo and pushed. Everyone had a lot of hope for our "sport bikes" with multi-speed gear systems and improved braking capability.

Some months prior to my arrival, WB and AKP sent two containers full of bicycles and parts. In anticipation of their arrival, a thick and level concrete slab was poured in what had been a steep tea field on the property of another generous organization, the Batwa Development Program. The containers had been emptied, moved, and reloaded. The BDP also lent a room to serve as an interim repair shop. Their night watchman became our camp fire chef and served beans, corn porridge, and occasionally grasshoppers.



A list of eight trainees was provided and that list shrunk and expanded until a group of five women took ownership of the Bwindi Women's Bicycle Enterprise. Most of the women I met along the way had no prior experience riding bikes or using hand tools. Many were enthusiastic about riding, and learning a new skill that will hopefully be profitable for years to come. Together we overcame a significant dialect barrier, local tools that snapped after two weeks of use, uncertainty about how to organize, and questions regarding how the local market would respond to an influx of 800 bikes. Most importantly, the five women who are now full time employees learned quite a bit about how to overhaul bikes and how to share their strengths and teach one another.

We contracted a local welder to build a double sided repair stand and had a basic service manual printed on durable paper. Finally, I oversaw the sale of the first thirty bikes and had the pleasure of handing out five paychecks to our brand new professional bicycle mechanics. On my final day in Uganda I hired a local driver to take me to Queen Elizabeth National Park to see elephants, hippos, antelopes, baboons, buffaloes, and storks. When I returned I was treated to a candlelight surprise party featuring speeches, gifts, barbeque, soda, and beer. It was an emotional conclusion to an incredible experience. I returned with a new appreciation for Working Bikes mission and the generosity of our partner organizations.

*Patrick Timan, BA, MA*

**Working Bikes Mechanic**

# LOCAL DONATIONS

Working Bikes believes in making a local impact as well as a global impact. We work with our partner organizations to give bikes, locks, and helmets to deserving people in the Chicago region. In 2017, 1,739 adults and children received a bike through our work, including our Cycle of Power and Cycle of Peace programs.



**738**

**Kids Bikes Donated**



**622**

**Donations to Bike Projects**



**379**

**Adult Bikes Donated**

**1,739**

## BIKES DONATED DOMESTICALLY THE BREAKDOWN

### 738 Kids Bikes

**repaired & donated locally through Cycle of Peace, our youth donation program.**

**120** North Lawndale Boxing League

**106** Carter Temple (Chatham)

**86** Exodus World Service (Chicago Heights)

**46** South Merrill Community Garden  
(South Shore)

**38** Christ Tabernacle of Love  
(West Englewood)

**30** Community Builders  
(East Garfield Park)

**10** Gads Hill (Pilsen)

**10** CPD 7th District (Englewood)

**9** Kennedy King College Development  
Laboratory (Englewood)

**102** Roots: The Redwood Tree Organization  
(Chatham)

**60** Esperanza Community Health  
(Little Village/Marquette Park)

**48** Lords Lambs Ministries (Pembroke, IL)

**24** All Nations Worship Assembly  
(South Shore)

**21** Fellowship House Chicago Youth Centers  
(Bridgeport)

**20** Apostolic Assembly (Washington Heights)

**5** Englewood 5k

**3** Chalmers School of Excellence  
(North Lawndale)

### 622 “as-is” Bikes

**donated to other bike projects**

**246** Rebel Bikes/Milwaukee Bike Collective

**180** Revolutions Bike Co-op Memphis

**90** Blackstone Bikes (Woodlawn)

**73** Bikes N' Roses (Albany Park)

**33** Knights of Columbus (Hebron, IN)

**12** Altus Academy (North Lawndale)

### 379 Adult Bikes

**donated locally via our Cycle of Power Program including helmets and locks.**

**59** Chicago Help Initiative

**26** We Keep you Rollin'

**27** Northwest Indiana Veterans Village

## NORTH LAWDALE BOXING LEAGUE



The staff of Working Bikes got to know Derek Brown and The North Lawndale Boxing League (NLBL) when Mr. Brown arrived in the service department in 2016 with a small fleet of bicycles in need of major repair. The bicycles were to be used by teens in the boxing program he ran at Saint Agatha Church in North Lawndale. Several months later, as part of the North Lawndale Community Restorative Justice Hub, NLBL was a sponsor and host of Working Bikes' 500 bike donation for the children of North Lawndale.

Since 2016, the partnership between WB and NLBL has continued to deepen and grow. In 2017, Working Bikes donated a total of 120 bikes to NLBL through our Cycle of Peace program, provided mobile bike repair at NLBL's back-to-school event, and led a ride for the NLBL youth to the Chicago Critical Mass 20th anniversary ride. Working Bikes is grateful for the opportunity to support Mr. Brown, Creative and NLBL's efforts to make the youth of North Lawndale feel powerful, loved, and healthy.



**WANT BIKES FOR KIDS IN NEED?**

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CYCLE OF PEACE  
PROGRAM & EMAIL [INFO@WORKINGBIKES.ORG](mailto:INFO@WORKINGBIKES.ORG)

## AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS AND CYCLE OF PEACE APPRENTICESHIPS



Working Bikes' Apprenticeship programs grew in 2017. Working Bikes hosted 15 youth aged 14-18 for an After School Matters (ASM) program while simultaneously teaching another 8 young adults (ages 17-24) through the Cycle of Peace Apprenticeship.

The ASM program in Brandon's Bike Shop met four days a week for six weeks and served as an introduction in bicycle mechanics and refurbishment, as well as in sustainability and service, both local or global. Working Bikes' ASM program participants loaded containers, prepped bicycles, built out local donations and went for rides which served to link their program with other local institutions.

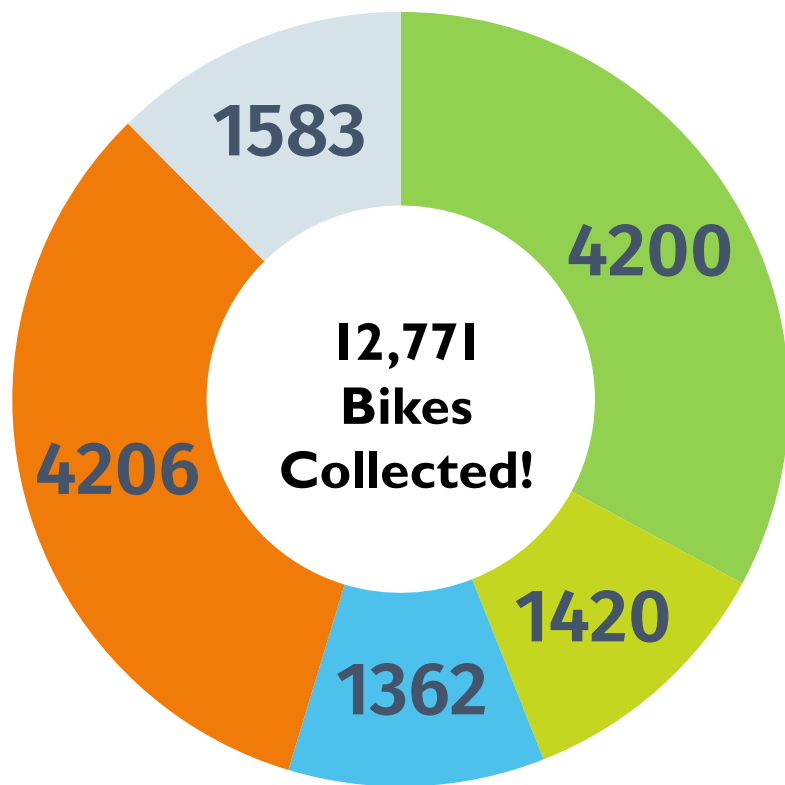
The Cycle of Peace Apprenticeship was made possible by the Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities as well as ONE Summer Chicago. Participants in the Cycle of Peace Summer Program were responsible for skillfully refurbishing 205 bicycles which were donated at community events at which the apprentices provided riding tutorials, and safety demonstrations.

The importance of service is a core principle of Working Bikes as an organization. These apprenticeship programs provide an excellent and hands-on experience for the next generation of community workers, cyclists, and organizers!



# WHERE OUR BIKES COME FROM

The bikes we receive come from various channels, such as individual donors, police departments, park districts, recycling events, Eagle Scout bike drives, property management companies, universities, and our various drop-off locations in the Chicago region- including many bike shops.



■ Drop-off Sites     ■ Businesses / Condos & Apartments     ■ Individuals  
■ Events     ■ Nonprofits / Government

## THANK YOU DICK ATWELL



Dick Atwell, "our man in Nevada, IA", just retired from being one of our most dedicated collectors of bikes. He and his band of octogenarians (and other ages) collected 10,030 bikes for Working Bikes over the last 16 years. We are indebted to Dick and his crew!

Dick is a retired Marine who leaves no bike behind. He worked at Donnelley Marketing in Nevada until its closing in 1999, then ran an antique store with his wife and then his son for 15 years. We secretly hope he'll get bored with his early retirement to come back to "work." Thanks Dick.



### BECOME A DROP OFF SITE

LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A DROP OFF SITE LIKE DICK BY EMAILING [INFO@WORKINGBIKES.ORG](mailto:INFO@WORKINGBIKES.ORG).



## BRANDON'S BIKE SHOP: 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Brandon's Bike Shop serves as an enduring tribute to former volunteer Brandon Bernier, who passed away in 2013. Located behind the Working Bikes retail space, "Brandon's" is the heart of the organization. A place where people come from near and far to serve others by the repairing donated bicycles.

Throughout 2017, the Working Bikes volunteer program offered five walk-in based sessions in which novice and experienced mechanics worked together to repair the bicycles which were then donated through the Cycle of Peace and Cycle of Power Programs. In addition to the walk-in sessions, WB opened Brandon's to groups of volunteers from corporations, churches, schools, and community-based organizations.

Without the help of Working Bikes' dedicated volunteers the organization would be unable to load the 6,690 bikes shipped globally or repair the 1,117 ready-to-ride bikes which were donated locally.

## A YEAR IN ROSES: ENVISION UNLIMITED



Envision Unlimited's Rose Center, a day training center that serves individuals with developmental disabilities diagnoses, is extremely grateful for the opportunity to volunteer with Working Bikes. Fred, a training counselor at Envision, found the past year at Working Bikes to be a valuable and rewarding experience for both him and his clients. Being a part of our global efforts has made a huge impact on his life and has been an immeasurable benefit to his clients who enjoy giving back to their community. Going forward, Rose Center would like to explore opportunities for their participants to get involved with Working Bikes events outside of the shop.



### CAPACITY BUILD WITH US

GET INVOLVED! PARTNER WITH US TO CREATE MORE MEANINGFUL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION OR COMPANY. EMAIL US AT [INFO@WORKINGBIKES.ORG](mailto:INFO@WORKINGBIKES.ORG).



## MARKS THE SPOT: A VOLUNTEER'S TALE



Mark Dabrowski has been volunteering with Working Bikes for one year. A lifelong bicycle commuter, Mark managed to ride to the train between work sites in Deerfield and downtown.

When he retired and had his bike inspected at Orland Cyclery, they gently suggested he get a new bike. Not wanting to just landfill the bike, he was introduced to Working Bikes by his son-in-law. Mark rode his bike over to Rich Carriel's house, the Orland Park drop off location. Rich is a first-class Working Bikes advocate and got Mark interested in volunteering.

Mark came in to volunteer and was impressed with so many friendly people with different abilities. At his first shipping party, he naturally gravitated towards the hard work of loading the container, including his own donated bike!

He is more comfortable among a diverse group of people and loves working with his hands, learning new skills, and exercising. He loves the idea of helping people get and work on bikes for either local or international donations. He was also impressed with the special night of volunteering for women only.



**VOLUNTEER WITH US!**

LEARN MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES BY  
EMAILING [VOLUNTEER@WORKINGBIKES.ORG](mailto:VOLUNTEER@WORKINGBIKES.ORG).

## LEGEND OF TALMAS: FALL INTERN STORY



In the fall of 2017 we were honored with the presence of Talmas Elliott, a West Side Chicago-raised Workplace Learning intern from our neighbors at Instituto del Progreso Latino. With a background in construction work, he felt right at home in the Working Bikes' warehouse.

Talmas enjoyed all aspects of work in Brandon's Shop -- from local donation mechanical repairs to lugging "shippers" to containers destined for our international partners. Some of his favorite memories included joining staff on a bicycle-pickup-run to Iowa City and "getting in the box" to efficiently pack international donations with Lee, Working Bikes' Founder. Talmas has also taken on a leadership role in co-facilitating volunteer group work sessions.

His advice for Working Bikes: engage more of the students at Instituto! Talmas believes the Instituto youth and young adults are an untapped source of support for us. There are plenty of folks there who are in need of service hours, and what better place to serve them than a couple blocks away with Working Bikes!

Talmas believes in the Working Bikes mission because Working Bikes is a place that tries to help everyone, no matter the person's situation. He loves that we're always here for folks in need. Talmas' kindness and dedicated energy were fantastic additions to Working Bikes this year. We look forward to having him, and others following his lead, help us do our thing for years to come!





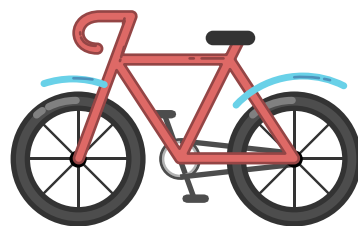
# RAISING THE BAR!



## 2017 RECORD BREAKING YEAR FOR BIKE DONATIONS!

8,430 exceeds the number of bikes we donated last year (8,323). Thank you to all the volunteers and donors that helped make this possible! Let's keep pushing in 2018!

# GET INVOLVED IN 2018

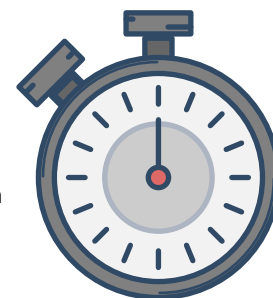


## Donate BIKES

Donating a bike or hosting a bike drive is a fantastic way to contribute. Working Bikes is able to do the work we do because of the generosity of individual donors, recycle event organizers, and our donation drop-off locations.

## Donate TIME

We continue to expand our programs through the efforts of our dedicated volunteers and supporters. Volunteers work in our community workshop repairing bikes for our local donation programs and preparing bikes for our international shipments. We have five drop in volunteer work sessions each week, including one exclusively for women, transgender, and gender non-conforming folks. For more info, email [volunteer@workingbikes.org](mailto:volunteer@workingbikes.org).



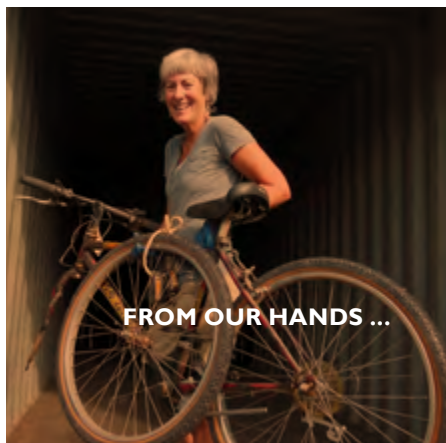
## Donate MONEY

Each bike costs an average of \$5 to collect. International shipments cost between \$3,500 to \$12,000 to send. About a dozen amazing, committed staff work to accomplish our mission. We accomplish a tremendous amount using our resources as efficiently as possible. Your support enables us to enhance our impact!



# GIVING DONATED BICYCLES NEW LIFE

REDISTRIBUTING BIKES AS TOOLS OF EMPOWERMENT IN LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

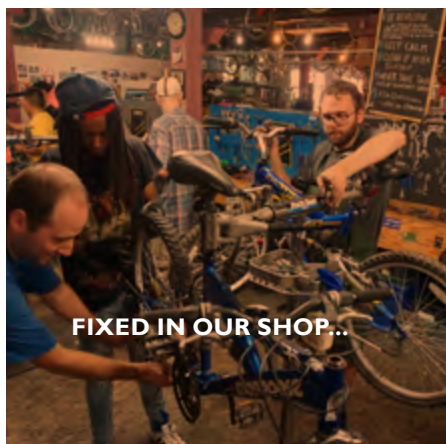


**FROM OUR HANDS ...**



**... TO YOURS.**

FROM WORKING BIKES CHICAGO TO DIPETSANA IN BOTSWANA,  
FROM AMY TO NTUME - THIS BIKE BROUGHT SMILES TO BOTH OF THEM.



**FIXED IN OUR SHOP...**



**...BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY**



## DONATE BIKES TODAY!

We collect bicycles and bicycle accessories

## CONTACT US!

2434 S. Western Ave, Chicago, IL 60608  
[workingbikes.org](http://workingbikes.org) | [info@workingbikes.org](mailto:info@workingbikes.org)  
773.847.5440