2018 Annual Report

GIVING OLD BIKES NEW HOMES

WORKING BIKES
# A Message from Our Executive Director

In our 19th year of operations, Working Bikes continued the astounding work that inspires over 12,000 bicycle donations annually. Our international impact grew as thousands more unused bicycles found new value as vital tools of mobility in Africa, Central America, and the South Pacific. Locally, thousands of our neighbors received sustainable two-wheeled transportation thanks to the wrecking of hundreds of Working Bikes volunteers and our dedicated staff. Numbers in the thousands are staggering, as the hundreds of astonished first-time Open House Chicago visitors reminded us, their jaws dropping while touring a warehouse of nearly 6,000 bikes on three floors and learning of our work beyond the warehouse walls.

But for me, looking past the big numbers gets at the real power of Working Bikes. What other organization could see a volunteer from 2014 establish new international partnerships years later? Where else could one be included in a WhatsApp group text with women mechanics in Uganda about needed tools and bike shop design? Where else could a mechanic provide no-cost repairs to a formerly incarcerated man who, after his wrongful conviction was overturned, received a Cycle of Power bicycle and put so many miles on it in two months that he needed a tune-up?

Working Bikes is a special place - a hub for thousands of profound connections and empowering experiences, all enabled by the value we recognize and potential we create in each donated bicycle. We hope this report gives a glimpse of our collective efforts over the last year. Thank you to everyone who contributed in 2018, we look forward to your support in making our 20th year the most impactful yet.

Trevor Clarke,  
Executive Director
ABOUT WORKING BIKES

Working Bikes is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1999 by a group of like-minded folks dedicated to recycling bikes, fostering bike culture, and helping international and local bike projects. Since its inception, Working Bikes has recovered tens of thousands of bikes from Chicago and the Midwest. More than 70,000 bikes have been given new life across our region and the world, empowering tens of thousands of individuals to access resources in their communities.

Our Mission
Working Bikes gives donated bicycles new life by redistributing them as tools of empowerment in local & global communities.

2018 BY THE NUMBERS

In 2018, Working Bikes reached new partners and donors, strengthened long-standing relationships with stakeholders and community members, and continued to empower folks by getting them on bikes! Some of our highlights from this year include:

- **12,632 BIKES COLLECTED**
- **6,420 BIKES SHIPPED TO INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS**
- **1,053 BIKES DONATED LOCALLY**
- **326 INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS & OVER 60 VOLUNTEER GROUPS**
- **1,655 BIKES SOLD**
- **COUNTLESS PIZZAS & TUBS OF HUMMUS**

A portion of the bikes that we collect become “organ donors.” Volunteers remove parts from bicycles that we are unable to fully repair, making sure we recycle as much of the donation as we can. Once we have salvaged all usable parts & components, the damaged bikes are scrapped.
WHO WE ARE

STAFF - END OF 2018
Aaron Brown, Senior Mechanic
Al Schorsch, Service & Retail Mechanic
Alan Lloyd, Production Mechanic
bk Elmore, Warehouse Wrangler
Brian Vargas, Service & Retail Mechanic
Devon Snyder, Community Engagement Manager
John Clark, Production Mechanic
Josh Korby, Bicycle Shop Manager
Mikey Young, Teaching Mechanic
Steve Irwin, Bookkeeper/Tube Doctor
Trevor Clarke, Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Phil Kaplan, President
Amy Little, Vice President
Jim Lindsey, Treasurer
Dave Gorman, Secretary
Lee Ravenscroft, Founder & President Emeritus
Alderman Brian Hopkins
Jose Muñoz
Regina Murphy

ROLLING OUT

In 2018, five of Working Bikes’ finest shifted gears to find new adventures. Cesar Meza, our former youth program standout who became our Service Department Manager headed to Mexico City for college, but only after attending a Festival of Cakes in his honor.

Andrew Bermudez and Maja Perez, Volunteer Coordinators and more, found new trails in Chicago and California. Patrick Tivnan, service mechanic and international wrencher, is now patrolling the streets of Milwaukee.

Finally, our long-time General Manager Paul Fitzgerald, pictured here with Andrew and Maja at his new home turf, will be cutting trails of his own as Executive Director of Friends of Big Marsh.

ROLLING IN

Hopping on the saddle on Team WB, we recruited Devon Snyder from the cycling haven of Portland, OR, to try out the streets of Chicago as WB’s Community Engagement Manager. Former WB board member, general counsel, and volunteer mechanic Trevor Clarke is riding on as WB’s first Executive Director. Volunteer of the early oughts, Josh Korby, returned to the team first as a mechanic and then as our Bicycle Shop Manager.
WHERE OUR BIKES COME FROM

We are so grateful to the countless individuals who support our mission through bike donations. We work with individuals, businesses, city and transit organizations, academic institutions, property managers, and other bike shops on collections. These donors help keep Working Bikes awash in bikes, parts, and accessories. Props also to our dedicated donation drop-off sites; they make it possible for folks throughout the region to donate a bike to us at a location that is convenient for them.

WB is contacted by an individual, organization, or business. Many of our bikes come from annual Earth Month recycling events that take place throughout the spring & summer.

Once the bikes reach our warehouse, they have 3 paths

Prepped for shipment to one of our international partners.

If bikes cannot be refurbished, volunteers salvage any parts that could be used to repair local donation bikes.

Refurbished by WB mechanics to be sold on our sales floor.

Refurbished by WB volunteers to be donated locally.

THE PLACES YOU’LL GO!

In the summer of 2018, we partnered with the Glenview Farmers Market to hold several bike drives. Lauren heard about one of these drives through our website and decided it was time to donate some of her bikes. She had just completed a cross-country bike trip and wanted to see the beloved rides go to a good cause! Lee Ravenscroft loaded the three bikes in the container bound for our partners at the Village Bike Project in Ghana. There, they were donated to Mustafa, Yakuba, and Dauda. The three students all live in the Sahkpalgu community, and have to travel between 7-15km (about 4-10 miles) to get to their respective schools. The boys all love science and math, but find it difficult to concentrate at school after walking several hours in the early morning. They used to miss classes because of their long commute! Thanks to Lauren and the efforts of WB volunteers and staff, Mustafa, Yakuba, and Dauda are now able to get to school quickly and safely. Over 5,000 miles away from their first “home,” Lauren’s bikes have found new homes in Ghana and will continue to create new opportunities for the three students and their families.

Mustafa, age 14

Yakuba, age 12

Dauda, age 17
GLOBAL IMPACT

In 2018, Working Bikes shipped 6,420 bikes to international partners. These partner organizations use bikes from WB as raw materials, investing labor to repair each bicycle before distributing to their communities. The bikes provide access to employment, education, markets, and other resources - not to mention recreation for the rider! By sending repairable bikes, our partners can focus on job training and community economic development.

This year, Working Bikes volunteers loaded 14 containers. We also developed new partnerships, sending bikes to projects in Fiji & Honduras.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

CESTA
EL SALVADOR

Ministry of Youth & Sports
FIJI

Bici-Tec
GUATEMALA

Village Bicycle Project
GHANA

Nuestros Hermanos Pequeños
HONDURAS

The Al Numeira Bike Shop
(Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy)
JORDAN

Bikes for Lesotho
LESOTHO

Africycle
MALAWI

Mfuwe Women’s Bike Society
(Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy)
ZAMBIA

Chipego Bike Shop
(Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy)
ZAMBIA

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy has helped launch a number of international bike shop projects, including the Al Numeira Bike Shop, Mfuwe Women’s Bike Society, & Chipego Bike Shop. These shops are run by local women, trained in bike mechanics & small business practice. AKP is a longtime partner of ours, & has helped us coordinate countless shipments!
POSTCARD FROM FIJI

Last year, a WB volunteer helped coordinate our first shipment to the Pacific Islands! Ruth Rosas was in Fiji on assignment with the Peace Corps. An avid cyclist, Ruth wanted to learn more about the island’s cycling community. She discovered Burning Rock Triathlon and Cycling Club. Founded in 2016, the Club sought to improve conditions for cyclists and triathletes. Starting with only four members, the Club quickly grew by reaching out to at-risk youth, girls, and women. By the end of 2017, there were 48 members of Burning Rock - all Fijians - making it the biggest cycling club in Fiji. The founders realized they needed more bikes to support their members, along with tools to teach basic bike mechanics. Unfortunately for the club, most Fijians lack access to affordable bikes or bike tools. That’s when Ruth reached out to us! Thanks to Ruth’s coordination and some financial support from the Fijian Government, WB was able to send a container of 438 bikes. All of this was made possible because a Working Bikes volunteer saw a need and knew we could fulfill that need!

POSTCARD FROM BWINDI

In the winter of 2017, WB mechanic Patrick Tivnan visited the Bwindi Women Bicycle Enterprise in southwest Uganda. The shop has been recently converted from a shipping container, one of several that was sent from the Working Bikes warehouse earlier that fall. Patrick worked with a number of women, many of whom had little prior mechanical experience. After 8 weeks, five “graduates” were selected to serve as the official staff members of the Bwindi Women Bicycle Enterprise. Beth, Bridgette, Penlope, Proscovia, and Scovia, would manage and operate the co-op, repairing bicycles and passing on their newfound skills.

Now, a year later, the shop has six female owners and operators. They still have over 600 bikes to repair and sell, and have saved about $9,000, which will help pay the shipping cost for another container from WB! The women are true entrepreneurs, and have even started to develop a bike touring business!
LOCAL DONATIONS

In addition to shipping bicycles to our partners abroad, Working Bikes coordinates with local organizations to get bicycles in the hands of those in our community who might not otherwise be able to afford them. In 2018, we distributed 1,053 bikes through our Cycle of Peace (children and youth) and Cycle of Power (adults) local donation programs. Skilled volunteers repaired the majority of donated bikes. Many of the groups and service providers we work with become dedicated stakeholders. We partner with these stakeholders on bike rides, holiday bike giveaways, and community celebrations.

RECIPENT ORGANIZATIONS

This past year, Working Bikes donated bikes to hundreds of social service organizations, like-minded bike projects, congregations, and community groups. Below are some highlights from our 2018 Cycle of Power and Cycle of Peace donation programs.

Bikes N' Roses
Blackstone Bicycle Works
Broadway Youth Center
Carter Temple
Chicago Help Initiative
Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital
Esperanza Health Centers
Free Bikes for Kidz Madison (FB4K)
Girls in the Game

Mercy Housing
New Directions Sober Living
North Lawndale Boxing League
North Lawndale Employment Network
Refugee & Immigrant Community Services
Roots Redwood Organization
World Relief Chicago

In February, WB Board members Phil Kaplan & Lee Ravenscroft drove 150 miles to Madison, WI. There, they delivered 210 kids’ bikes to FB4K. The bikes went towards the organization’s annual 1,000 bike giveaway.
**CYCLE OF POWER HIGHLIGHT**

In April 2018, Congregation Hakafa contacted Working Bikes with a Cycle of Power bike referral for Maekele Saleh. Maekele, a refugee from Eritrea, had moved to Chicago earlier in the year and was in need of a better way to get around the city. Working Bikes Board President, Phil Kaplan, did the honors of dropping off a bike for Maekele. At 5’9”, Maekele was unfortunately too tall for the Schwinn Phil had with him that day. But Maekele was so excited out the bike that he kept it until we could deliver something more suited for his height. For two weeks, he used the little Schwinn to commute from West Rogers Park to his job in Wrigleyville. He was able to cut his commute from a 40 minute bus and “L” ride to a brisk 20 minute bike ride! By the time Phil brought him a properly sized Trek, he was an avid bike commuter!

Through our Cycle of Power program, Maekele received a means of convenient, self-sufficient, and sustainable transportation. This is a critical part of the work we do at Working Bikes - helping people be more independent, empowered, and connected to their community. We can’t wait to see where Maekele’s Trek takes him next!

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM WORKING BIKES!**

In December 2018, Working Bikes donated over 300 bikes to youth throughout Chicagoland. 78 of these bikes went to Carter Temple Church, located in Chatham. The kids received their bikes during an annual Breakfast with Santa Claus event. This was the second time we worked with the congregation, and our WB crew was happy to play the role of Santa’s elves! Carter Temple also received helmets to go with the bikes.

Other 2018 holiday Cycle of Peace recipients include Apostolic Assembly Church, Maristella, Roots Redwood Organization, and 1st AME Church in Gary, Indiana. This year we were happy to make the holidays a little brighter for hundreds of kids and their families!
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At Working Bikes, we know that a bicycle can be so much more than a way of getting around. Bikes are how we engage with our community. Whether it’s students with After School Matters or Riot Fest concert goers, our crew loves being out and about, connecting with people through bikes! In 2018, Working Bikes staff and volunteers attended 87 tabling events, bike drives, and block parties. In the summer, we hosted ten After School Matters students in the second year of our Bikes Youth Apprenticeship program. Over the course of the six-week program, students learned about basic bike mechanics and safe city riding techniques. In the fall, 15 students from Benito Juarez High School joined us in the workshop for a Mechanics Apprenticeship. Students dedicated 80 hours to bike mechanics. One student, Gloria Reza, returned as an intern to help manage the program after completing the apprenticeship last year. These community relationships help our impact grow!

OUTREACH & EVENTS

Summer is festival season in Chicago, and chances are you can catch Working Bikes out celebrating! We love to table at neighborhood festivals, school block parties, music festivals, and Earth Day events, just to name a few. These events are a great way for us to reach a broader network of people, and to support our community through engaging activities or with a donation of some bikes!

In July, Working Bikes joined community groups at the Poetry Foundation Block Party in the Austin neighborhood. Working Bikes volunteers fixed sixteen Cycle of Peace youth donation bicycles in advance of the event and sent a delegation to talk to the attendees out at the Austin Town Hall. While there, volunteers conducted the first ever VeloPoetics event, collecting bicycle-related poems from the young poets, who all received bicycles!

Attendees who wrote a bike themed poem received a free bike! Here are some favorites from this summer!
Brandon’s Bike Shop is where members of our volunteer “Kitchen Crew” repair bikes for local donation and prep bikes for our international shipments. The space stands as a dedication to Brandon Bernier, a former Working Bikes volunteer who passed away in 2013. Brandon’s is where the magic happens: every year, hundreds of volunteers come through to lend a hand, donate a snack, or share a story. Our community of volunteers make it all possible!

In 2018, Working Bikes hosted drop-in sessions in Brandon’s five times a week, including our Thursday night Women Trans Femme session. These walk-in sessions are open to everyone - no experience required! Volunteers work together on repairs, with more experienced mechanics passing on skills to those just getting started.

In 2018, the Volunteer Committee elected to change its name to the Working Bikes “Kitchen Crew,” inspired by the tradition of referring to community bike shops as “kitchens.” It also helps that many of our volunteers are excellent cooks, bakers, & brewers!

VOLUNTEER GROUPS

We host group volunteer sessions for corporations, schools, and community-based organizations. These groups come from all over the Midwest (and the world!). In 2018, Brandon’s welcomed over 60 groups to repair, strip, and prep bikes. These groups also supported us outside the shop, by helping raise awareness of our work, collecting bikes, and donating funds. Want to learn about volunteer opportunities for your company or organization? Contact us at volunteer@workingbikes.org.

2018 Annual Report

Benito Juarez High School
Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association
Bowen High School
buildOn
Chicago Cares
Chicago Stamping Plant
Church of Saint John
DePaul University
Eagle Scout
Equipment Depot
Evanston Township High School
Finkl Elementary
Fourth Presbyterian Church
Gage Park High School
Gems World Academy
Google
Groupon
Illinois State University
Indiana University Student Foundation
Kellogg School of Management
Latino Greek Council, UIC
LinkedIn
Mercy Home for Boys & Girls
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Mount Carmel High School
National Health Corps Chicago
Nielsen
Northwestern U.
Old St. Mary’s School
Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago
Radio Flyer
Scarce
Solorio Bike Club
(Solorio Academy High School)
Speer Academy
SRAM
Tilden High School
VML Chicago
Walter Payton College Prep
Watershed School
Whitney Young Magnet High School
Woodlands Academy of the Sacred Heart
World Bicycle Relief
WorldChicago
Youth Crossroads, Inc
Youth Guidance
Volunteer Snapshot: Michael “Murph” O’Leary

Michael “Murphy” O’Leary first heard of WB during a Critical Mass ride. A collector of “junk bikes” and tinkerer by nature, Michael would stop by the shop when it was located on Taylor to look through the selection of hidden gems. With two jobs and a family, Michael wasn’t able to find the time to volunteer with us until January, 2016. Not too long after his first visit, Michael got in a bicycle accident that resulted in him going on disability leave. After he gave himself time to heal, he dove right back into volunteering. He says the accident “pushed him in a new direction.” Murph has been a regular in Brandon’s ever since, and enjoys honing his skills. He still finds some things tricky - cantilever brakes are not his friend - but he knows that if he keeps coming he can continue to branch out and learn new things. He especially loves fixing up old Schwins. Eventually, Michael would love to learn how to build his own custom frame to show off at Critical Mass. He’s glad that he has more time now to volunteer and give back, knowing that the bikes he works on are not only being saved from a landfill, but also finding new owners. Now, Murph is passing on his skills to other volunteers.


Open House Chicago

On a weekend in October, Working Bikes participated in Open House Chicago, an annual festival organized by the Chicago Architecture Center. All throughout the day, members of the public were welcomed to tour the WB warehouse and learn a little bit of history about the space. Dozens of Working Bikes volunteers acted as official docents, leading attendees through the maze of bikes. This was a great opportunity for volunteers to take center stage, sharing personal stories about their experience in Brandon’s, a time they helped out at a shipping party, and a fun time they tabled for Working Bikes during a community event.

Even though it was our first time participating in the festival, we still packed the house! 749 people came through the Working Bikes warehouse that weekend!
SUPPORT OUR WORK!

DONATE BIKES 🚴
Each Year, Working Bikes is able to empower folks in our local and international communities because of the generosity of our bike donors. Bikes are essential to the work we do! You can help us grow our impact in 2019 by making a donation of an adult bike in repairable condition, a gently used kids’ bike, or bike parts and accessories. Visit our website for more information.

DONATE MONEY 💲
Although bicycles are the bread and butter of what we do, we greatly appreciate individuals and organizations that are able to support our work with a cash gift. You can make a financial donation today by going to our website.

GET INVOLVED!

DONATE TIME 🔄
We wouldn’t exist without our community of volunteers. Whether wrenching in Brandon’s Bike Shop, packing a shipping container, tabling at an outreach event, or coordinating a bike drive, volunteers help us fulfill our mission and expand our programs. We would love to have you join our Kitchen Crew!

We host weekly drop-in volunteer sessions, including an evening for women, trans, femme volunteers. We don’t require any prior bike mechanic experience - just enthusiasm and a desire to learn! To learn more about volunteer sessions and all the other ways you can get involved.
From all over Chicagoland, to our warehouse in Little Village, to dozens of shops around the world and thousands of individuals locally. From your to-do list, to their first ride.

Working Bikes collects bicycles & accessories. Donate a bike today to make an impact in your local community and abroad!

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