

Recycle-A-Bicycle 2018

The program empowers individuals by providing them independence and freedom through an affordable and healthy source of sustainable transportation. Clients are more likely to obtain employment and keep necessary appointments when they have transportation. Our main goal is to provide opportunities for families to play together and to remove obstacles for people to move forward. "A bicycle is a low cost investment with a huge potential for payoff."

We provided bicycles for approximately 30 social agencies which include schools, shelters, treatment services and housing, the courts, churches, and human services agencies.



The Recycle-A-Bicycle program has developed with the assistance of several volunteer supporters and partners. The program refurbishes donated bicycles, they are then given to individuals in need where the bicycle serves as their main mode of independent transportation. Since 2007, the Recycle-A-Bicycle program has provided over 1,798 free bicycles to those in need and provided well over 300 free repairs.

We have several volunteers who help repair bicycles and organize the workshop. They have helped this program grow and run smoothly. We served 231 of our neighbors in 2018 with 178 bicycles given away and 53 free repairs and maintenance provided to keep them mobile. The Annual Bike Swap requires approximately 25 volunteers, with most returning from previous swap meets to assist with moving bicycles, setting up the venue, checking in customers' sale items and running the meet throughout the day.

Resources

In 2011, with Tart Trails help, we planned our first annual Bike Swap. It was well received and totally successful, but short on bicycles for sale. We learned a lot! With feedback from our volunteers and the public, we decided to have at least one more bike swap. It was a big success, with many more bicycles, trailers and hitches offered for the public. We have held eight annual bike swaps with numerous return volunteers and the Bike Swap always seems to get more popular. Twenty five percent of the consigned sale proceeds are donated by the sellers to support the Recycle-A-Bicycle program.

Last fall Scott Dennison at Alma College found our program through a Google search and inquired about donating a building full of abandoned bicycles. They really wanted to have them recycled instead of scrapped. I was able to accept 21 bicycles that were delivered the next day. Scott will be happy to supply more bicycles in need of new homes in the future. We are also supplied with donated bicycles from the surrounding community.

R-A-B Funders and Supporters in Fiscal Year 2018

My thanks to the many foundations and supporters for your kindness and much needed financial assistance for the Recycle-A-Bicycle program to thrive.

The Cherry Capital Cycling Club who has been a supporter since inception in 2007.

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians for our mezzanine and your support over the years when we really needed the funding.

Rotary of Traverse City, Good Works Grant for support for our building mezzanine.

Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Campbell Endowment for funds to repair bicycles.

Zonta Club of Traverse City for your contribution towards our mezzanine and for funds to repair bicycles.

Cherryland Cares funds for funding towards 100 bike cable locks and funds for bike repairs.

Great Lakes Stainless, Inc. and Up.Bike for your outstanding bike rack system and great service.

TART Trails and Chris Deyo for Administrative support and assistance applying for grants and organization for the Annual Bike Swap.

Reflections on our Journey

Upon completion of our 12th year of the R-A-B program, I was looking back at photos from the beginning in my home garage in early spring of 2007. I spent my Saturdays and some Sundays searching garage sales and asking folks to donate bicycles to my new Bike Give Away program.

Over the next two years I collected well over 100 bicycles each year to repair and distribute to our community shelters and social agencies. Repairs were supported by Cherry Capital Cycling Club. For the next two years my inventory grew considerably and my garages and storage sheds became overstuffed with bikes and parts. I delivered all bicycles to referred clients and shelters from my residence which was several miles from town. With some help in my third and fourth years, I took a stab at grant writing for the purchase of some tools and equipment to improve my efficiency. I was mostly successful. I repaired and delivered around 500 bicycles in four years from my home.



In late 2010 TART Trails Inc. invited my program to be under their non-profit status. In the winter of 2010 -11, I searched for a centrally located larger facility to work out of and store the large inventory I had collected. "Success", we moved into a temporary warehouse in June 2011 on Woodmere Ave. I could move all the bicycles, parts and tools into one facility and the location was perfect. This made access to the program more convenient for our clients. Most of the donated bicycles are now dropped off at our site. From then on I required clients to make attempts to come pick up their "new to them bicycles" so I could properly size and fit them. If some bicycles failed or were damaged I would do repairs at their location or bring them back to my workshop.



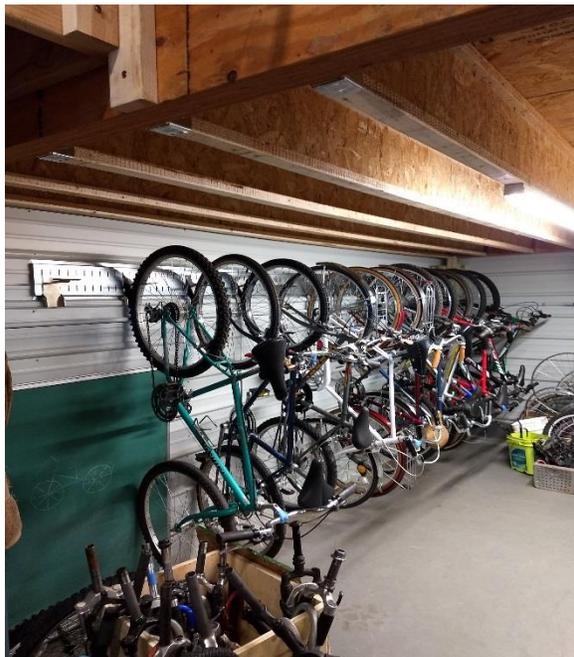
After four months I needed to move next door to a smaller warehouse, with a different landlord, and I was fortunate to negotiate a lower rental fee for a few years to keep our program viable. After eight years I'm still in the same location.

As our program continued to grow every year our space kept getting tighter. I designed and built five bike racks that hold 15 bicycles and over 24 wheels each. We also hung bicycles on two walls for another thirty bikes off the floor. Within three years we found ourselves overcrowded again.



In the late fall of 2017 and moving forward to 2018, our biggest concern was that we had outgrown our 1600 sq. ft. building. Moving would be expensive and possibly not in an ideal location. I proposed a second floor 16'X40' mezzanine to the landlord. We worked out a plan that would increase our space and not increase our lease agreement. We needed to raise \$10,000 to make this mezzanine happen.

Grant requests were made to Rotary Charities of Traverse City, Good Works Grant Program, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and Zonta Club of Traverse City to cover the estimated \$10,000 cost of building the storage mezzanine and modifying the heating system to accommodate the lower second story clearance. Each organization granted our request and we were able to begin the project in the spring. We ordered all the materials and emptied our workshop, the following week the lumber was delivered. The next week the mezzanine was completed. We were back in the warehouse by the middle of April. Within a few weeks our bicycle hook system just didn't seem adequate. We contacted Up.Bike and inquired about their stainless bike rack systems for the mezzanine. We were quoted around \$3,030 and we agreed and asked about making payments, only to get a response that the system would be donated to our program. We also had additional racks for the downstairs walls installed with their guidance and they again donated them to our program at a value of \$2,879.



This has been an educational and satisfying program to have started in my small home garage 12 years ago. However, I could never have progressed without our community and foundations supporting me along my journey.