



## HOW TO START A BICYCLE REHAB MINISTRY



The Bicycle Rehab Ministry at Manchester United Methodist Church in Manchester, Missouri, has entered its twelfth year of service. As we continue in 2012, the ministry has donated 3,100 bikes to mission organizations and individuals.

To help you and others understand the anticipation and fulfillment intended by the efforts of participants, it is helpful to have a goal and objectives.

### GOAL:

Provide the opportunity for persons of all ages to participate in the ministry of reconditioning bicycles for families and individuals in need.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Invite the local community to donate bicycles to be reconditioned for distribution to disadvantaged persons.
2. Collect and catalog bikes for the rehab process.
3. Organize cleaning and repair sessions to recondition donated bicycles.
4. Distribute rehabbed bicycles to needy individuals.

Any group choosing to become involved with a bike rehab or similar ministry may use the goal and objectives listed above. Caution should be taken to ensure that your goal and objectives are so written to describe the uniqueness of the program they are to serve.

If you choose to establish a bicycle rehab ministry, issues to consider and decisions to be made follow:

#### 1. Need

Make an effort to determine the volume of need for rehabbed bikes. If the need is 4 or 5 bikes a year the ministry will operate differently than if the need is 45 every 3 months. Regardless of the need for bikes, the ministry should function at a level of involvement and production that inspires enthusiasm, fellowship, and fulfillment, rather than over work and create "burn out". It would be better to turn out fewer bikes over a longer period of time than cram to get many completed and then quit because of worker burn-out.

#### 2. Ministry team

It is important that the leadership of the ministry be composed of individuals committed to the success of the ministry. These individuals may or may not be those involved in active recreational bike riding. The more bikers you can have in the leadership of the ministry the better; but their most imperative contribution is their knowledge of terms, parts, and repair procedures on rehab work days. One



experienced biker can coordinate 3 to 5 other workers to ensure that parts are being installed and adjusted properly.

Regardless of personal skills, there is a job for everyone in the bike rehab ministry. In addition to mechanical repair there are jobs of cleaning, lubricating, polishing, moving bikes, coordinating food, cooking, communications, scrap-booking, “logging in”, ordering parts, “partsing out” (saving good parts from unusable bikes), organizing supply storage, picking up bikes and storing them, and sending letters of appreciation to bike donors.

### **3. Source of bikes to rehab**

If your community is aware of the ministry and its goals, many people will want to be involved by donating bikes that haven’t been ridden in years, ones that have been outgrown, or bikes that need repairs which would cost more than they want to spend.

- a. Advertise in your organization.
- b. Next, share your ministry goals with the local bike shops. They can post your ad on their bulletin board and spread the word of your cause. When a customer learns the cost of fixing their bike, many times it becomes more practical to buy a new one and donate their old bike to charity.

### **4. Degree of rehab involvement**

Decide what quality of bike to be donated. Our goal is to donate a bike that will make the new owner proud. To donate bikes that are in good repair and look in excellent condition, the quality of the donated bikes has to be at a level to support that goal. For example, our ministry chooses not to recondition painted or chromed parts that do not return to a “like new” appearance with cleaning and polishing. We do not attempt to replace bearings or axles. These tasks involve either too much time or too much expense. Some parts and systems can be replaced on a bike if good parts have been saved from bikes being discarded, which we refer to as bikes being “partsed out”.

### **5. Equipment**

Most participants bring their personal tool boxes to make most of the adjustments and repairs to the bikes. However, the ministry owns specialty tools; such as tire changing tools, cable cutters for replacing brake and derailleur cables, chain breakers to remove and install chains, hex wrenches, cone wrenches, etc. These tools make many tasks less difficult. The most helpful apparatus is the bike stand. It firmly holds the bike at standing work level verses having the bike lying on the floor. Many individuals bring their own bike stand, in addition to the ones the ministry has purchased.

We have found it necessary to construct specialty cabinets to meet specific needs.

- a. One holds all plastic floor coverings and bike cleaning supplies.
- b. Another is used to transport the bike stands from storage to the work areas.
- c. A third serves as the parts supply cabinet.

The areas used to rehab bikes are shared spaces. Our cabinets must be portable so they can be moved from storage areas to work areas.



## 6. Supplies

Supplies are needed both for the process of rehabbing bikes and the repair and replacement of parts on the bike. It will be necessary to acquire “bike specific” parts through a bike shop. It is important that the bike shop understands your goals and objectives and has a shared philosophy of helping provide bikes for those in need. None of the rehabbed bikes will be given in competition to bike shop sales. The ministry should not be rehabbing bikes for your kids, the neighbor's kids or any one driving a "nice" care. A cooperating partnership could have the bike shop providing parts for 10 to 15 percent over cost, plus shipping, in exchange for advertising of where the parts are obtained. It is also helpful if the bike shop would be willing to give technical advice and assistance on "problem" bikes.



- a. Cleaning and lubricating supplies include degreaser, WD-40, silicon spray, wire and nylon brushes, hand cleaner, rags, paper towels, denim strips and patches, rust remover, chrome polish, Goo Gone, rubber gloves, wire ties, electrical tape, talcum powder, hair spray, newspaper, plastic floor coverings for carpeted areas, etc.
- b. Supplies for the bikes would include front, rear and wheel reflectors, handle bar grips and wrap, brake pads, brake cable and housing, derailleur cable and housing, cable ferrules, cable tips, seats, kick stands, tires, tubes, etc.

The goals and objectives of the ministry and the level of rehabbing involvement will determine the selection and stocking of repair parts.



## 7. Finances

Funding and financial support of the ministry is important for its success. The parent organization of the ministry may be the primary source of funds. Other sources would be fundraisers, personal donations, and corporate donations of products that would be used. Donated bikes that are of high quality can be designated to be offered for sale on E-Bay or other outlet sources. The sale of one quality bike could cover the cost of rehabbing 5 or 6 bikes for distribution.



## 8. Facilities and storage

Space is required to allow the operation of the ministry to be productive. Areas that are needed include:

- a. Receiving and storage of bikes to be rehabbed and “partsed out”.
- b. Cleaning area for cleaning frames, gears and chains--can be messy.
- c. Storage of saved parts from discarded bikes.
- d. Storage of the ministry equipment and supplies.

- e. Area to rehab bikes. The number of workers and the number of bikes to be rehabbed will determine the space you need.
- f. Or, the scope of the operation may need to be organized to fit the space you have.

## **9. The rehab process**

A great deal of preparation is required to have a successful and productive rehab day. Conducting half-day work sessions to log in bikes or power wash the bikes is necessary to prepare for the major work session.

### **a. “Logging in” is where each bike is evaluated for its potential as a bike for donation.**

Those that pass the judgmental test are tagged with a numbered check list card that lists the brand, model, tire size, and all major parts of the bike. A set of marking symbols is used to tell if each part is in good condition, needs adjustment or needs replacement. Listings on the card make it possible to keep track of the need and completion of tasks for cleaning and lubricating gears and chains and cleaning and polishing frames and wheels. As these various tasks are completed on each bike during the rehab process, it is checked off as being completed.

### **b. Power washing**

The process of power washing has been determined to be counter productive. The high pressure cleaning process has proven to be too invasive on axles, bearings, chains, etc.

### **c. Supply Order**

Once the bikes to be rehabbed are identified, a count is made to determine what parts and quantities need to be ordered. The supply order should be given to the bike shop at least four weeks prior to the date they are needed.

### **d. Delivering completed bikes**

Delivering the rehabbed bikes on the same day they are completed eliminates the need to store them in your facilities. The receiving agency must be contacted well in advance and the method of transportation planned ahead of time

### **e. Set-up work area**

Preferably the work area is set up prior to the designated work time. This saves a large block of time on the rehab workday. We cover all floor areas with heavy gauge sheet plastic. Bike stands are positioned with tables close by to hold tools. Areas or stations are established for mechanical work, cleaning, bike park space, tire changing area, parts and supplies and a “final check” station.



### **f. Parts Department**

Parts should be set up in an organized arrangement. An attendant has a record of the needs for each bike and helps workers receive the appropriate parts for the bike they are working on. Notes should be made



of the need of unanticipated parts. An inventory should be made at the end of the session, which will be used when making out the order for the next rehab.

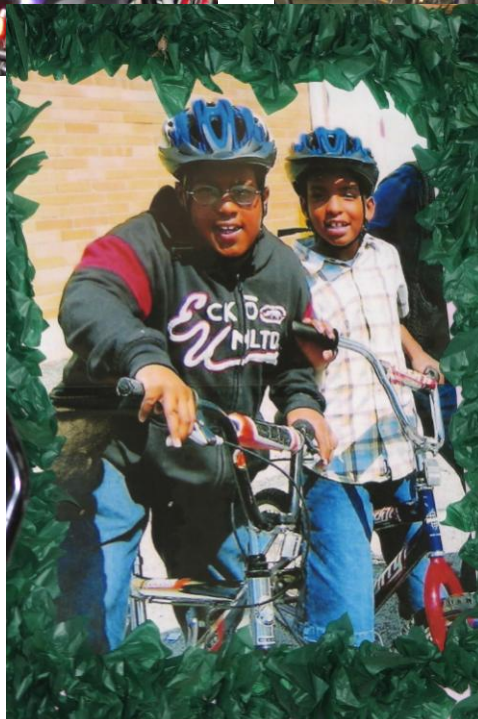
**g. “Final Check” Station**

When all of the tasks on a bike have been checked off, it goes to the “final check” station. This person checks to see that all of the adjustments, repairs and cleaning have been completed. Final small repairs and adjustments are done here; unless it is a major problem and the bike needs to go back to the cleaning or mechanical area.

**h. Safety**

The bikes that are donated must function mechanically as intended by the manufacture. A helmet is provided with each bike donated. We use the phrase that "The price of this free bike is . . . . You have to wear the helmet." When we know that the donated bike is going to an area that requires greater security, a cable lock and key are provided with a beaded chain and key necklace to help deter lost keys.

And finally: If you feel led to be involved in a bike rehab ministry, the most important advice to be given is that you organize and operate your ministry to fulfill your established goals in a way that works best for you as you listen to your inspiration.



**May God Bless**

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