

Newsletter for August 8 to October 16, 2023

Hello everyone.

I'm sorry to report that the long hot summer, that we have gotten used to, is over and a soggy wet Fall seems to be upon us! However, that impending wet weather should keep all our mechanics in the shop repairing bikes for all our needy clients.

Although our volunteer hours are down this month, most of our volunteers are back with a couple of exceptions. Two bike mechanics have returned, one volunteer is still not 100 percent and doesn't do stairs well but still comes in to work upstairs sorting sports gear, one is currently away in his RV, and one had to get off his zebra, trading it for an Air Canada Flight back from Africa. Covid, flu and cold viruses are circulating, and I think all of our volunteers have either been sick or know someone who has. We'll have to evaluate the situation as the Fall season evolves and masking could again be necessary. Hopefully the currently available vaccines will slow the spread of infections.

All the usual contributors, such as Central City Mall, the RCMP, Delta Police, King George Park Tower and our partner in Victoria, have given us bikes. It might be interesting to note that up until now, the RCMP have been auctioning their 'E' bikes but will now be giving them to us. In the past, from all sources, we have only received 5 'E' bikes which isn't really a big deal, although we always have to source a battery charger and cable. Peninsula Runners are a regular source of runners. There's a constant parade of sports gear of all kinds in our front door, donated by schools, the public and Oak Avenue Hub Society. Our two volunteers do wonders sorting, cleaning and organizing all the items ready for us to distribute.

Finding storage space for all items is an ongoing challenge. With excess bikes over and above the ones that go out to our regular clients, we have to continually look for homes for surplus items. We recycle all items that are donated with very little going to the landfill. One of our volunteers distributes excess hockey gear and sends runners, clothes and bikes to "Heart for Africa". The Volunteer from "first Night" takes runners and clothing to be distributed in the Surrey area to the homeless and less fortunate. The volunteer from "Bikes for Humanity" takes excess bikes and bike parts to send to Africa. Our mechanic at large in Oak Bay, Victoria, brings us mostly repaired bikes from his sources there and takes bikes from us to give to William Head Prison for their inmate bike repair program which are then sent to Africa. The SOS Society (SOS Village) takes bikes for their foster kids to get around on.

Looking at the monthly report from September, the large number of bikes distributed reflects two large donations to our partner in Victoria and to "Bikes for Humanity". We sent the regular number out to our usual clients.

This summer One of our volunteers and his wife were kind enough to store upward of forty bikes in their backyard, which we still have not completely found new homes for. "Bikes for Humanity" were late receiving funding for and getting their 20-foot container. Now that they have it, and it's only been a month and a half, it will be full when they get the last 20 bikes we're donating to them. We've already given them 40 bikes. Going forward, we're not accepting large bike donations that exceed our storage capacity.

I've recently contacted both Surrey and Langley Christmas bureaus. Langley can start accepting bikes as of October 24th and Surrey as of the end of the month. Since we save suitable bikes all season long for Christmas donations, distributing these bikes will free up a lot of storage space at the school portable and in our containers.

On Wednesday this week, our partner in Victoria is bring a load of our most popular size bikes, already repaired and ready to distribute. One journeyman mechanic volunteer is coming in to do a final inspection of them. We are currently clearing all those orders already in progress and then concentrating only on Christmas Bureau bikes. I'll be making a trip to Victoria in about two weeks to pick up bikes prepared for the Christmas bureaus by our partner in Vicotria. I have yet to contact the Delta Christmas Bureau. Las year they wouldn't take anything because they said they had liability issues to sort out. Hopefully we sort this out as this shouldn't be a problem as we carry our own insurance and in essence, it is us distributing them. I'll report to the board when we know how this plays out.

