



## **TART Trails, Inc. Recycle-A-Bicycle Program Annual Report 2017 By Program Director Don Cunkle**

As in past years, we close for the months of January, February, and March to take a break from bicycle repairs and pursue winter activities. While R-A-B is closed during this time, I fulfill requests for bicycles through the winter months. We received a request on January 6th and 27th for much-needed transportation, for clients who had recently obtained employment. We had one request in early February and distributed four bicycles. In March, I also helped a couple past clients on March 9th with free repairs on broken bikes; it only took a couple of hours to get them rolling again.



We distributed 23 bicycles in the month of April, to meet requests from several different referring agencies. Some clients came in two and three at a time, and we had up to five clients in a single day. A few times we had to ask clients to return in a few days so we could finish repairs on their future bicycles.

The month of May was busier still, with the distribution of 27 bicycles and nine free repairs, with as many as four bicycles given in one afternoon. Additionally, in May, we finished preparing for our seventh annual Bike Swap on June 3rd in the Old Town Parking Garage. The Bike Swap was a success mostly because of our returning volunteers who help every year. This has become a great community event that attracts well over 400 prospective buyers of bicycles and related items (bike racks, trailers, tag-alongs etc.). The Bike Swap used the time and expertise of 38 volunteers who contributed over 256 hours.

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Throughout the busy period of June, July, and August, we distributed a total of 70 bikes and provided 18 free repairs. September and October kept us nearly as busy as the summer months did, with a total of 34 distributed bikes and 27 free repairs provided.

This fall the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School ACE program is using Recycle-A-Bicycle as a volunteer site for students to experience a different community job or program to learn new skills. They do some clean up in the workshop and we are supervising these students to do some repairs on bicycles like changing tubes, tires and light maintenance like cleaning chains, installing cables, and adjusting brakes. Our long-term volunteers Gordon Rady, Bob Resh, and

Paul Deyo put in over 581 hours toward bike repair throughout the year. We also have periodic volunteers come in to help.

### **R-A-B Needs**

We have many volunteer opportunities, like joining our mass bike repair for one day in the middle of May to fix as many bicycles as possible in seven hours, so we can prepare for the summers high-demand period. Because of the unique service we provide to our clientele, we are always looking for more volunteers who can give two or more hours a week to help with repairs of the many bicycles we have in stock, all of which are donated throughout the year. We also need help stripping usable parts from scrap bicycles, organizing our parts and thinning out the overstock of used parts like wheels, cranksets, chains, bike seats, and pedals.

### **R-A-B Goals**

Our goal is to supply a minimum of 150 bicycles per year to people in need of alternate transportation and provide at least 50 free bicycle repairs to keep these citizens mobile. 2017 was a very productive year at Recycle-A-Bicycle, as we again have exceeded our goals. During the 2017 calendar year R-A-B has given away 168 bicycles to people and families in need of transportation, and supplied 52 free repairs to help recipients remain mobile. R-A-B has benefitted at least 220 people in 2017 and given away 1619 bicycles since the program started in 2007.

This distribution of bicycles has helped us to achieve our main goal of providing opportunities for families to play together, and to help our clients move forward, by removing obstacles such as a lack of independent transportation. R-A-B continues to serve Antrim, Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Benzie, Wexford and Manistee Counties. We have even provided transportation as far away as Roscommon County.

### **Making a Difference**

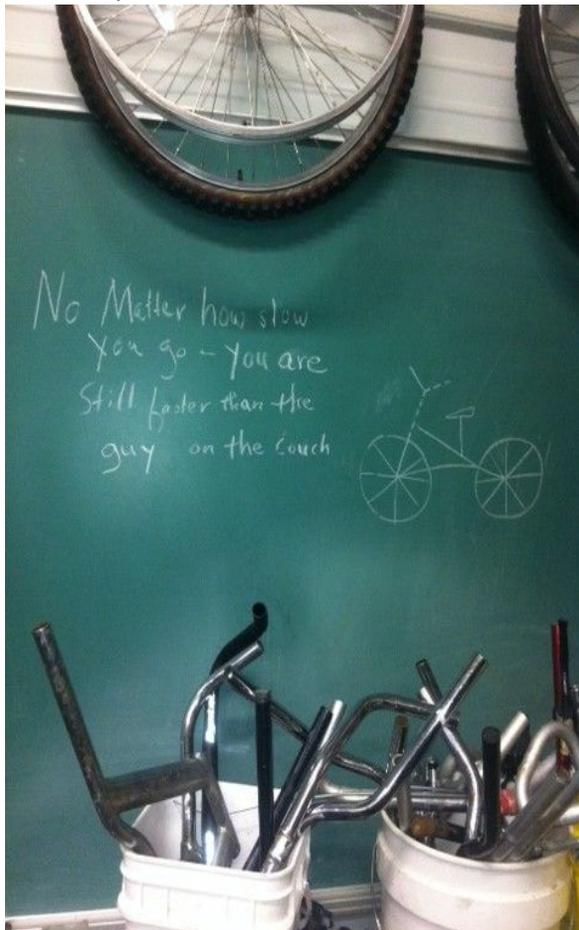
A young man came into the workshop last week and asked if I could fix a flat tire on a bike, which he had gotten from R-A-B about six weeks ago. I said, "Sure, bring it in." He had to go get it at a transition house he was staying at, so about an hour later he brought in the bicycle, and the rear brake and cable was wrapped around the top tube and the rear wheel



was jammed with the tire half off and tube blown out. After I asked him what happened, he told me that he suspected that a housemate might have been messing with his bicycle by loosening brakes and wheels. He then left for a job interview, telling me that he would stop back in a couple of hours to pick up his bike.

After looking over this bicycle I discovered bent wheels, the bottom bracket was loose, the brakes were bent, and the rear tire was trashed. So I scrapped his bike, and found a replacement. Upon returning he was surprised, but happy to have a bicycle that worked again, and told me that he was hired after his interview. I also gave a bicycle away to a church that is sponsoring a young man for Christmas. I like days like this.

Another young man came to R-A-B in the fall with his damaged bicycle in tow. He lives in Interlochen and brought his bicycle on BATA to get it repaired after an accident he had a week earlier. He had forgotten his referral sheet that I normally require to get a free repair, as he wasn't a past client. He seemed worried that he forgot his form but really needed his bicycle



fixed. I went ahead and replaced the front wheel and other necessary repairs to get this young man back on his transportation. What surprised me was he went out of his way to bring his referral form to me a week later on a trip into Traverse. He seemed relieved that he kept his promise. I believe this young man will overcome his challenges someday, and I appreciate his thoughtfulness.

#### **R-A-B Funders and Supporters:**

Many thanks for the many foundations and organizations for your kindness and much needed financial support. TART Trails has provided invaluable administrative support in addition to assistance in applying for grants, and organizing and running the annual bicycle swap.

The Grand Traverse Community Foundation, Campbell Endowment granted \$2,000, as did Cherryland Cares. 4 Front Credit Union and the Cherry Capital Cycling Club contributed \$500 and \$3,000, respectively. Lastly, the League of

Michigan Bicyclists granted us \$700. All of these organizations' contributions helped fund parts, locks, equipment, and repair costs, and have helped facilitate the general operations of the program.