

Completing the Cycle

One children's charity proves that a small bike can make a huge impact on needy kids. BY RACHEL MORRIS



THE DONORS
Tracey March and
Rodney Trepess,
daughter Devon, 11
Bend, Oregon

Give a child a bicycle and the possibilities for imaginative adventure are limitless: It could be a stallion, a race car, a speedy escape from a younger brother. But give a child in a developing country a bicycle and the possibilities could change her life. That's the mentality behind 88bikes, an organization that donates bicycles to children who've been through the types of experiences that put your "bad day" in perspective—war, extreme poverty, and human trafficking, to name a few. For these kids, owning their own wheels can mean getting back a piece of a stolen childhood, a break from the reality of life, or, more practically, a convenient alternative to hoofing it everywhere.

"88bikes is all about connecting people around the world," says cofounder Dan Austin. The nonprofit has donated 2,000 bicycles to date, including ones to the children whose stories follow. If they inspire you to get involved, check out 88bikes.org to find out how your family can become a sponsor.

Mekong Delta, Vietnam

Before the bikes arrived at the Vietnamese orphanage, the director was shuttling kids to school, up to four at a time, on the back of his motorcycle. The donations gave the children, such as those above, the independence to make the journey by themselves—and allowed the director to take a break from the multiple trips he used to make every morning.

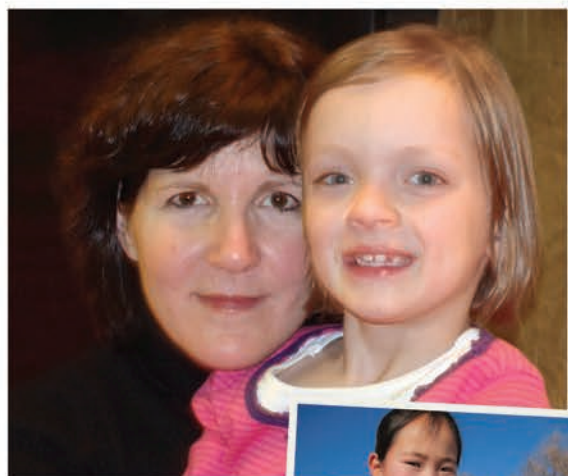
“We started donating to 88bikes when Devon was 7. Now that she's older, we're able to talk about some of the issues these kids face and research the cultures of the countries together. She's gotten a real-life perspective on what it's like to be an orphan, instead of some *Little Orphan Annie* tale.” Tracey March

Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

It's hard not to be inspired by the optimism of the Nepalese orphans 88bikes helps here, many of whom come from a background of domestic or sexual abuse. After receiving the donations, the kids talked eagerly about how the bikes could keep them healthy through exercise and aid the area's pollution problem.

“I've been a cyclist most of my life, so 88bikes is something I really clicked with. The idea that you can bring that much more joy into a child's life with a bike is a great feeling. It gives them the ability to get out into the world, and that's a huge thing.” Ian Pund

THE DONORS
Ian Pund and
Megon Noble, sons
Cameron, now 3, and
Alex, 1 (not pictured)
Seattle, Washington



THE DONORS
Kay Lockwood and kids
Cullen, 20, Patrick, 19,
Bryn, 17, Mara, 13, and
Katherine, 7 (pictured)
Wausau, Wisconsin



Övörkhangai Province, Mongolia

Many of the Mongolian orphans and half-orphans must live in a school dormitory, miles away from their family. But the bikes have allowed them to reconnect with siblings and friends, making the distance much less of an obstacle.

“The donation really had some meaning for me because we adopted our daughter Katherine from an orphanage in Ukraine. You can't give these kids parents or a home, but you can give them a bike of their very own.” Kay Lockwood

Kete-Krachi, Ghana

A majority of the Ghanaian orphans were former child slaves on Lake Volta, the largest man-made reservoir in the world, performing dangerous, even potentially deadly, tasks such as diving deep into the lake to untangle fishing nets. As soon as they received the bicycles they took off en masse on a ride into the African countryside surrounding their orphanage, enjoying the sense of freedom that comes with a bike.

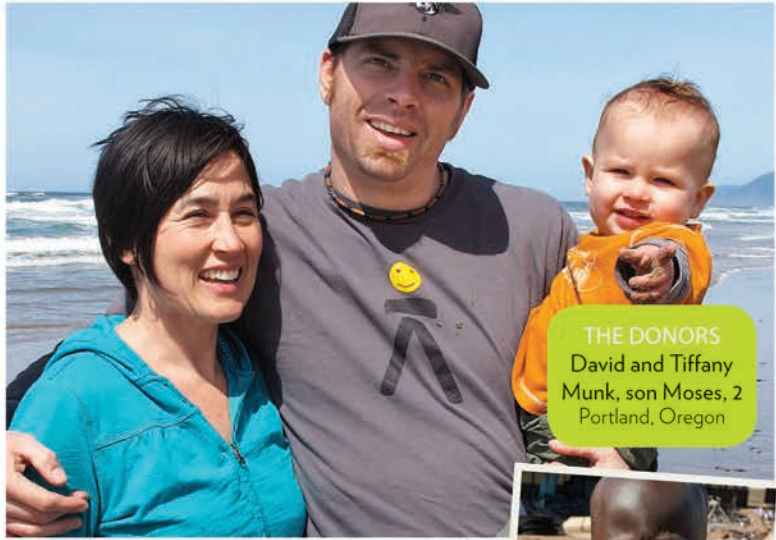
“Our daughter Sadye has a framed picture in her room of the girl who received our bicycle donation. She loves to talk about how we gave her a bike and hear stories about Africa, and Sadye understands that while she loves riding her trike around, not everyone is as lucky.” Sally Krell



THE DONORS
Sally and Jonathan
Krell, daughters
Sadye, 5,
and Amelia, 2
Sullivan Island,
South Carolina



KRELL FAMILY: SIGNATURE PHOTOGRAPHY/CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



THE DONORS
David and Tiffany
Munk, son Moses, 2
Portland, Oregon

Patongo, Uganda

Refugees of the Uganda civil war, many of the children in Patongo are raising their younger siblings because their parents were killed by rebels. Here, the bikes take on a practical element, helping kids transport food or get around town.



“ This is a donation that, unlike food or money, isn't going to disappear after a short period of time. I love that these children now have a tool to transport themselves, find freedom, and experience more out of life. ” David Munk

OTHER WAYS TO GIVE BACK

Global Gear Drive

will help you clear out your garage and do good at the same time. The organization distributes sports and playground equipment as well as apparel to children in underprivileged communities and schools around the world. Box up your balls and bats and GGD will pay for any shipments that are less than \$75; iays.org.

Pajama Program

makes bedtime nicer for children in group homes and shelters across the U.S. by providing them with new pj's and books. It accepts cash donations and has a wish list set up on amazon.com to make giving even easier; pajamaprogram.org.

Soles4Souls

takes new and used shoe donations and sends them to people who desperately need footwear in more than 125 countries. You can also host a shoe drive to make an even larger impact; soles4souls.org.

OneSight

collects gently used specs and sunglasses to improve the vision of kids and adults across the globe, including in countries where a month's salary could equal the cost of a single pair of glasses; onesight.org.