

# CIF FEATURE STORY:

## *Youth Build-a-Bicycle Workshop Series*

June 2018



### **Feature Story:** *Youth Build-a-Bicycle Workshop Series, Bridge City Bicycle Co-op (BCBC)*

The Bridge City Bicycle Co-op (BCBC) Youth Build-a-Bicycle Workshop Series comprises educational workshops for core neighbourhood and newcomer youth, under the age of 18 in Saskatoon, to learn bicycle mechanic skills and apply them to restore a secondhand bicycle to own for free. In these workshops, youth participants are paired with BCBC volunteers, who provide education and encouragement to assist the youth in identifying what needs to be fixed on their bicycle and how to fix each problem until the bicycle is ready for the road. The BCBC further provides all the tools and spare parts for each youth to successfully fix their bicycles.

This spring, the BCBC partnered with St. Mary's Wellness and Education Centre, where 16 of their students (ranging from ages 6 to 12) participated in Youth Build-a-Bicycle Workshops. Each youth participant successfully restored a bicycle, which they will use to train for the Kids of Steel triathlon.

“The workshops put on by the BCBC are something our youth talk about for months afterwards. Watching the volunteers encourage, engage, empower, and educate our youth is a fantastic experience. Through a small amount of time I'm able to see our youth blossom with confidence in knowing that they can learn a new skill and apply it.”

- Tara Desroches, St. Mary's Wellness & Education Centre teacher

**"We believe that bicycles offer healthy physical recreation opportunities and a mode of transportation for youth. However, on average, new low-priced youth bicycles cost between 100-300 dollars, which can be a barrier for many youth in the core neighbourhoods, as well as newcomer families. The workshop series provides youth access to bicycles, which then creates opportunities to participate in regular outdoor physical activities and provide access to community activities. It further provides a mode of healthy transportation for day-to-day life pursuits. When used as a form of transportation, bicycles enable youth to commute to school and/or work and partake in more activities relating to athletics, cultural expression, and/or recreational activities. Moreover, the workshop series provides an experiential learning opportunity for youth to gain some exposure to mechanical skills, which is a helpful life skill"** shared Stan Yu, Co-chair of the BCBC Board of Directors.

For these workshops, the BCBC partners with local K-12 schools and other youth-oriented community-based organizations to identify and recruit the youth participants. The objectives of these workshops are two-fold. **"Our primary objective is to promote opportunities for healthy recreation for youth by providing them access to bicycles,"** shared Stan. **"Our second objective is for youth to obtain mechanical skills and feel empowered to maintain their bicycles in the future. Our ethos for these workshops is to cultivate a fun and inclusive atmosphere, and to encourage youth to try turning a wrench or two, and not be afraid to get their hands dirty."**

Photo Credit: Tara Desroches



BCBC volunteers with St. Mary's Wellness & Education Centre students (ages 6 - 12) and their restored bicycles.