



BIKES NOT BOMBS

Using the bicycle as a vehicle for social change



40TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT

1984 - 2024

A Letter from the CEO, Elijah Evans:

As Bikes Not Bombs celebrates 40 years of impact, I'm honored to look back with you on how it all began. In 1984, our co-founder Carl Kurz hand-delivered three bicycles to Nicaragua, breaking a U.S. trade embargo to support aid workers during a civil war. Those three bikes sparked a movement, and soon, a grassroots community began rallying around the simple, yet revolutionary, idea that bicycles are vehicles for change—both for individuals and entire communities.

Thanks to your generous support over the years, we've sent over 84,000 bicycles to underserved communities across 15 countries in the Global South, bringing access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunity to where it's needed most.

Here in Boston, we've reused, refurbished, and repurposed thousands more bikes. We've empowered over 4,500 youth and young adults with hands-on skills, leadership opportunities, and the confidence to know they can drive real change. In our learn-and-earn Bike School programs, we engage youth and adults in a

supportive environment where they learn to ride, repair, and refurbish a bike of their own to keep. We've also provided hundreds of young people with meaningful, paid work and valuable training in both hard and soft skills as Youth Apprentices. Whether they are placed in the Bike School, the Bicyclists Organizing for Community Action (BOCA) program, operations, our International program or the Bike Shop, our Youth Apprentices build essential workplace skills and craft strategic plans for future success and economic mobility.



As a Vocational Education trainee in 2005



*Above: at BNB Hub at 59 Amory St in 2005, alongside Carl Kurz and Mira Brown.
Right: at the 2023 Building Momentum Breakfast fundraiser for BNB*



In 2025, we're launching the public phase of our Gearing Up for Growth campaign, which has already raised \$5.5 million to support expanded programs and partnerships. Our goal is to raise an additional \$2.5 million to build a new state-of-the-art facility in Jamaica Plain—a hub for youth development, global outreach, and social change. This space will allow us to engage more young people locally, ship even more bikes to communities around the world, and ultimately, deepen our impact. Every dollar we raise brings us closer to realizing this vision, one that I invite you to help build today.



Instructing Earn-A-Bike in summer 2008

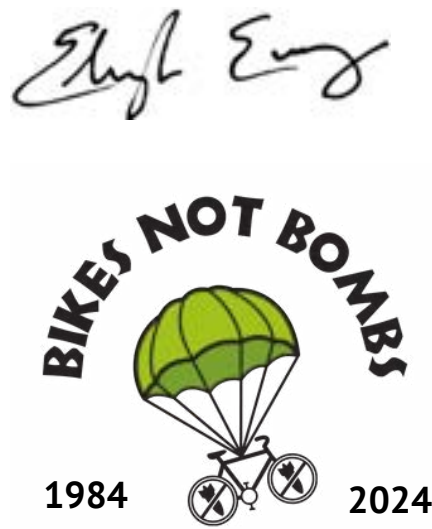
As we mark 40 years, we're not just celebrating what we've accomplished—we're setting the stage for the next four decades! We're deepening our global partnerships, expanding programs like our Youth Pathways Model for the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, and preparing to launch new initiatives, including a Fieldworker Fellowship Program that will allow Boston youth to share their skills across the globe.

Our journey has always been powered by our community—by supporters, partners, and advocates like YOU. Together, we can keep pedaling forward, building a brighter future, one bike at a time.

Thank you for your unwavering belief in our mission and for being part of this incredible journey.

Here's to the next chapter—and the enduring impact we can create together with a simple bicycle.

In solidarity,



Riding at the 2022 Bike-A-Thon



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In this special 40th anniversary report on Bikes Not Bombs history, we invite you to read more about our founding, the evolution of our work, and the impacts BNB has made in Boston and beyond. You'll read stories and testimonials from our co-founders, former staff and board members, longtime volunteers, supporters, international partners, and youth program alumni.

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CARL KURZ

Co-Founder of Bikes Not Bombs

I was crossing the street in Austin TX on July 19, 1979 when I picked up the university student paper, the Daily Texan, and noted in awe that a wide spectrum of Nicaraguan society had rose up and ousted the Nicaraguan Dictator Anastasio Somoza! The fact that youth from middle school on upwards to college students had played a large role alongside the landed peasantry and migrant farmworkers to demand a just society with

greater opportunity, land reform, an end to the death penalty, a dissolution of the corrupt national guard, and a demand for universal health care for all Nicaraguans, basically blew me away. How could this happen in a poor country whose cruel dictator was on the dole for millions of dollars in US military aid and technical training.



Carl in Nicaragua in the 1980s



In Managua, Nicaragua in 1985

I moved to the Boston area in 1980 and began to work at the Broadway Bicycle School; riding from Mission Hill to Cambridge each day for work made me very aware of the vast quantity of bicycles that were being tossed into the trash each week. I had friends forming the organization Food Not Bombs and I thought I should find a way to recycle so many usable bikes for a good cause. After discussing the idea with friends I approached Micheal Replogle, a renown bike advocate and author of a book on the use of bicycles in developing countries. We agreed to start such a recycling and solidarity project in Nicaragua.

My first task was to go to Nicaragua, assess the conditions for using bikes there and find organizations that could help distribute the bike aid. Michael was forming a 501(c)(3) non-profit for an umbrella organization which would host the first shipments of bike aid.

I remember pulling my bike out of the cardboard box at the Sandino airport in Managua, assembling it and helping my friend put her bike in shape and together heading off to find a place to stay. I was immediately aware that the cardboard boxes were taken by folks who were going use them as room dividers in their one room houses.



Preparing to ship the 50,000th bike sent abroad by BNB in 2012

I toured the western parts of Nicaragua on bike, speaking to many regarding the potential for bikes as a mobility solution for many low-income Nicas. Previous bike shop owners and mechanics said that most shops had gone under during the revolution and the lack of repair parts, especially tires, were key to a successful future use of bikes. I formed a partnership with the Nicaraguan Central Workers Union, the CST. Soon after the first few bikes arrived and I had assembled them with help from two Guatemalan refugees living at the CST complex in Managua, Michael made his own trip to Nicaragua and established ties to the National Teachers Union, ANDEN, and the national Health Workers Union, FETSALUD.

Later after establishing a bicycle assembly and repair center in Managua, one of my favorite memories is when a large group of international solidarity activists, sister city representatives from the USA and around the world, and a bunch of Nicaraguan teachers mounted approximately 50 bikes and we rode from the Managua BNB shop to the Teachers Union offices where teachers were receiving the bikes. We were on the nightly TV news and in the newspapers as an example of solidarity.

We have learned so much over the years and one of the most important lessons was made aware to us by Ricardo Navarro of the CESTA, el Salvadoran Appropriate Technology organization. He made us aware how important it is to establish financially solvent bike programs that create good paying jobs and an infrastructure for bikes to play an important role to help solve mobility needs of a country. Moving from charity to sustainable development has been the key takeaway for me as BNB has grown to maturity in the development of bike related projects around the world.

I am thrilled to know that after 40 years we are still providing useful bike aid to international projects and have instituted many programs that provide local youth with hands-on leadership and vocational skills development.

Ride on. Carl

Carl Kurz
BNB co-founder, 1984



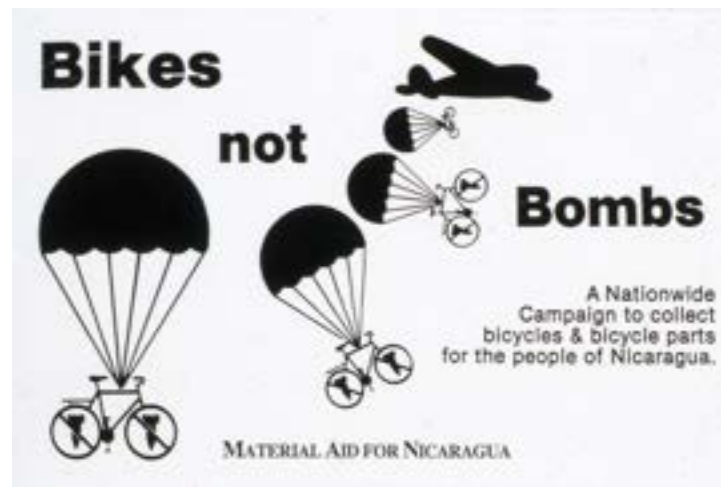
At the 2024 Bike-A-Thon

MICHAEL REPOLGLE

Co-Founder of Bikes Not Bombs

Bikes Not Bombs demonstrates how ordinary people working together can tear down barriers to build local and global solidarity, showing a way to a better world. As Bikes Not Bombs co-founder, I want to honor others who helped give birth to the organization. John Dowlin, who founded and led the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, introduced me in May 1984 to a Boston-based bike mechanic and activist, Carl Kurz. John was a relentless creative visionary for more sustainable transportation and communities. He passed away August 26, 2024, at age 82. Let us honor him today.

In 1984, I was a transportation planner, DC-based bike activist, and Central America peace campaigner. The CIA had just blown-up Nicaragua's oil storage facilities, setting back mobility and the health and education reforms of the Sandinista revolution. I cold-called Carl to see if he would join me in organizing a campaign to send "Bikes Not Bombs" to Nicaragua to spotlight grass-roots opposition to the Reagan Administration's illegal war. We agreed to mobilize volunteers and set a goal of sending 100 recycled bikes to Nicaragua by the end of 1984. I was on the board of the Washington Area Bicycle Coalition, which agreed to be a non-profit umbrella for the Bikes Not Bombs Campaign.



An original version of the current BNB logo



Bike Shop in Managua, Nicaragua in 1986

President Ronald Reagan had ordered a commercial blockade of Nicaragua. We overcome that with the collaboration of Ken Hughes and the Rev. William Callahan. A fellow DC peace activist and bike campaigner, Ken, now living in New Mexico, was active in the Quixote Center, which routinely shipped education and medical aid to Nicaragua, with shipping costs covered by US AID. Ken introduced us to Quixote's founder, Rev. Callahan, who approved inclusion of our bikes in their shipments, with each bike box labeled, "Humanitarian Aid to Relieve Human Suffering."

This courageous dissident Catholic leader was later expelled by the Jesuits and barred from the priesthood for his activities on behalf of gay Catholics, the ordination of women, and on behalf of social justice in Nicaragua. Bill died in 2010. Let us honor him today.

Soon thereafter, I had lunch in Washington, DC to discuss microcredit with Muhammad Yunus, who won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work on microfinance and today is head of Bangladesh's government. We adapted his ideas to turn our charity into a scalable business and began to sell bikes on installment, using the proceeds to pay for shipping, parts, and completely knocked down new bicycles imported from Asia.

By 1989, Carl had set up five bicycle assembly workshops across Nicaragua and we had sent over 10,000 bikes to Nicaragua. I made a second visit to Nicaragua that year to evaluate our program efforts to date. We had founded a viable bike assembly industry in Nicaragua, enabled health and education progress, and advanced sustainable Transportation.



Assembling new bicycles in Nicaragua

On May Day 1985, I incorporated and became long-term president of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

(ITDP), which became the non-profit sponsor for the Bikes Not Bombs Campaign, which would grow to more than two dozen chapters across the U.S. and beyond. I published and edited the Bikes Not Bombs Campaign Update newspaper as a tool for outreach and education.

Under my leadership in 1990, ITDP decided to move away from material aid campaigns to focus strategically on sustainable transportation policy and capacity building. In a friendly split, we encouraged Bikes Not Bombs to incorporate separately with a continued focus on bike recycling, training, and development assistance. ITDP has now grown into a global platform advancing equitable and environmentally sustainable transportation, with a staff of 180, a budget of \$12+ million, with a footprint in more than 40 countries and 100 cities.

I have been delighted to see Bikes Not Bombs also grow and evolve into a most impressive organization which I continue to proudly support.

Michael Replogle

Co-founder, Bikes Not Bombs, 1984

MIRA BROWN

BNB's First Executive Director

I have not had much to do with BNB since I resigned as a staff member in 2007, and launched myself in my tunnel-vision, attention-deficit way into a 70-hour a week science teaching job. But I do think of BNB often. Surprisingly, the things I miss most are the most personal ones: I miss all the ways BNB helped its volunteers, youth program participants and staff form genuine, meaningful friendships. Friendships that would normally be hard to form in a society that so strongly separates us across lines of age, or class, race, neighborhood...

I miss the way that BNB has figured out ways to allow us to see that we are working towards long-term goals of social change while accomplishing very concrete, physical work in the moment, work that we can all see make a difference, here in our own communities and lives, and in the lives of the people overseas where BNB's development projects can really change the transportation landscape.

We need concrete victories along the way, and these are always available at BNB—you work for an hour or seven hours and, voilá, the brakes work on that bike again, or another 2,000 bikes are in the container, off to someplace they'll provide transportation and help fund permanent jobs!

I miss knowing that when our society dished out the latest outrage, I always knew where I'd find a bunch of friends to join me in a bike contingent at the protests, or to organize a protest with me. I miss working with a brilliant bunch of people, figuring out what new, creative project we could take on, and how it would balance helping a group of people meet immediate, urgent needs. And also move us all towards a world where the structures have changed and we do a much, much better job of taking care of everyone.



Mira, Carl, and BNB staff in the 1990s



OK, I said it was some personal things I miss about being involved with BNB, but I guess they are all political things, too!

Love, justice and bikes!

Mira Brown
BNB's First Executive Director

JEFFREY FERRIS

Owner of Ferris Wheels Bike Shop

Bikes Not Bombs got an early foothold at Ferris Wheels Bike Shop in the early '80s as we provided free workshop space, tools, and bike storage space in the basement.

My first knowledge of BNB was that Carl Kurz was starting an organization with the goal of providing transportation for health care workers in Nicaragua to help deal with the oppressive US-backed dictatorship. This was a political goal I supported, but beyond that, Carl's commitment to bikes as transportation was similar to what I was doing in Boston by starting Ferris Wheels Bike Shop.

My first contribution was being part of a caravan—mostly VW mini-vans— that moved about 20 boxed bikes out of Carl's basement on Mission Hill to a commercial trucker for shipping to Nicaragua.

To really support Carl's mission, I offered to hire him as shop mechanic at FWBS and allow him to use our shop space to develop the program. He agreed, working for me during our bike season, and then wintering in Nicaragua to continue developing the program there.

The only bikes they were interested in sending at that time were English three-speeds. They were fairly ubiquitous here and sturdy for the streets of Nicaragua. We then became the designated drop-off point for the bicycle donations.

FWBS became the BNB hub to meet, organize, and prepare the donated bikes for shipping. This helped BNB expand its program quickly. This was the beginning of BNB's Wednesday Volunteer Nights. Two of those volunteers met and later married!

Next door to Ferris Wheels was the Fresh Hair salon. They had a large basement and I thought what does a hair salon need a big basement for?" The owner, Joy Silverstein, agreed to let BNB use half her basement for storing the flattened 3-speeds until there were enough donated bikes for a shipment. The first container shipments happened on Carolina Avenue just outside our shop.



A truck full of bikes en route to Nicaragua in front of Ferris Wheels in 1988

One of my fondest memories was early on, working at FWBS with Carl all night—pretty much until dawn—sorting Sturmey-Archer parts, talking, learning, and sharing. It was a crazy but fun way to spend the night!

I have always had at least one Latino mechanic working, mostly from Colombia. Carl's fluency in Spanish, along with his good nature, helped tremendously. Because of Carl's skills and Spanish knowledge, we were also able to hire a Costa Rican staffer who had just recently arrived here. He didn't know bikes or English yet, but Carl taught him well and he continued to work with us for many years.

After three seasons at Ferris Wheels, Carl left to continue developing BNB full time. The organization continued to use our space another four years until it moved down to 59 Amory St. During that time Ferris Wheels expanded and several BNB volunteers led by Joel Bennett were instrumental in making the new build-out possible.



The First BNB Earn-A-Bike class was held around the corner from Ferris Wheels at the South Street Mall and Tennis Courts in Jamaica Plain

After three seasons at Ferris Wheels, Carl left to continue developing BNB full time. The organization continued to use our space another four years until it moved down to 59 Amory St. During that time Ferris Wheels expanded and several BNB volunteers led by Joel Bennett were instrumental in making the new build-out possible.

Also during that time Ferris Wheels put on a kids' bike training rodeo in the adjacent city ball courts. Several BNB volunteers helped with that project, which also helped them cement the idea of building a youth program.

BNB's mission of using bikes for social change—including environmental, economic, and personal health improvements—resonates with me. Its mission dovetails with my goals in starting Ferris Wheels Bike Shop: to promote the myriad value of bicycles, including health, self reliance, and carbon-free transportation.

Jeffrey Ferris
Owner of Ferris Wheels Bike Shop

DAVID WEINSTEIN

Long-time Supporter, Former Board Member and Volunteer

Bicycling has been an important spoke of my identity since adolescence. So has being an environmentalist and a politically active progressive. In high school and college, I became aware of the struggle for peace and justice in Nicaragua. After graduating and moving to Vermont in 1985, I saw a flyer looking for volunteers to help send bicycles to Nicaragua with a sister city project. Turned out it was me alone, after a brief tutorial, in a very cold dark barn, working once a week to pack bikes for a container loading in the spring.



Outside the first home of BNB at 59 Amory St.

Back home in Boston in 1986, I saw a flyer for Bikes Not Bombs and quickly was a regular on Wednesday nights, flattening bikes for shipment, over at Ferris Wheels. As a regular, along with Susan McLucas, Joel Bennett, and Chris Hager, who always had a baby squirrel in his jacket and an apartment full of bike parts, we were left running things when Carl took off to Nicaragua.

A few years later, my friendship with Carl was well established, and there were many others involved, many more bikes, more frequent containers, and a need to create some structure for the growing organization,

especially given Carl's travels to Nicaragua. So a core group of us set out to incorporate, create a Board of Directors, roles and jobs for people, a budget, a newsletter, and find our own home. Raising money became more important so we could hire staff and pay for shipping containers. So, among other activities, we began hosting and riding a Bike-A-Thon each year.

As a schoolteacher and an activist more interested in the local Boston scene, I helped BNB learn about and establish Earn-A-Bike classes, first meeting on the tennis courts near Ferris Wheels. Somewhere in those years of bike grease and long nights and bike rides and fundraising, I met Lauren, my partner since then, at a container loading.



Staff in the 1990s featuring an early Bike-A-Thon banner

Soon, BNB was settled in at 59 Amory Street, growing wildly, spinning out rides, bike advocacy, hiring more staff, teaching classes, and holding long arduous meetings. I remember a young Max Lee showing up one summer morning, by bicycle of course, with a pocket full of saved dollar bills, to sign up for the first Earn-A-Bike in the new space. Still, Wednesday night work sessions breaking down bikes and container loadings continued.

I stopped volunteering at what had become my second job, as a volunteer, at BNB in 1999, when our oldest daughter Mollie was born. Though our family is now involved only as patrons of the shop, Bike-A-Thon riders, and donors, Bikes Not Bombs is near and dear to me, and I am proud of helping to establish such a perfect organization that thrives into the future.

Perfect? Yes. Bikes are the constant thread and anchor in my life and my world view. BNB combines a love of bikes, bicycling, a push for sustainability, simplicity, doing-it-yourself, advocacy for a better city and a healthier planet, recycling, building community, educating, small scale economic development, fun, exercise, and adventure. And certainly my participation in BNB for 38 years has been an adventure, and my friendships that grew from BNB, with Carl, Mira, Suzanne, and of course Lauren, are integral spokes of my wheel.

David Weinstein



Snapshot of the BNB newsletter in the 1990s

STEPHEN BOSCO

Full-time Volunteer Bike Donations Coordinator, 2003-2014

I made my first visit to BNB in 1994, to donate a few bikes that I had rescued from the trash. I was ushered past the chaotic shop and office mezzanine in the front of 59 Amory Street, and handed off the bikes to a somber young man who added them to what seemed like a 25 foot tall pile of them, with no scheme of organization whatsoever.

When I started volunteering regularly in 1999, I learned that huge numbers of bikes get discarded or abandoned around Boston every year. And I learned that the bicycle is the most efficient mode of transportation known to mankind and is amazingly easy to take apart and package. Sending them overseas seemed like the only sane thing to do!

I was on staff at BNB from 2003 to 2014 as Bike Donations Coordinator. I spent four months in Central America around 2004 and really got to experience firsthand how people get by and how critical bikes are.



*At a 2015 Container Loading for BNB partner
Cycloville in Kenya*

There are a lot of nonprofits in the world who lobby and research and advocate for this or that idea. I've always liked that BNB is an organization that does things.



*At a 2012 Container Loading for BNB partner
Village Bicycle Project in Ghana*

They tell me BNB has been around for 40 years now. Have I really been involved in some way for 32 of them? It may not be sexy to say, but I hope that BNB continues to be a lean and effective organization that gets a high quantity and quality of bikes and bike-related know-how to their recipients.

Stephen Bosco

Unpaid full-time volunteer Bike Donations
Coordinator, 2003-2014

MATT SOYCHER

Youth Programs Coordinator, 2004-2008

I was the brand new BNB youth program coordinator when a volunteer named Jess showed up to help load bikes to ship to Guatemala. Her housemate had told her "Meeting people at bars sucks! Go volunteer somewhere you feel passionate about to see if you can meet a cute guy you share interests with." Having just started my dream job as the youth programs coordinator, imposter syndrome was kicking in hard and my lack of prior teaching experience was not helping.



Instructing a youth participant at a 2005 Earn-A-Bike session at BNB

Alas, not only was she cute, but she was a teacher! This could work on so many levels.

A cross-country ski in the Arboretum, a fateful Fall bike ride on the Minuteman, mountain biking at the Fells, and most of all, working together to teach Earn-a-Bike had me feeling like all my dreams were coming true! Jess was an incredibly valuable volunteer, teaching me how to teach as I mustered the courage to teach our newest volunteers the basics of overhauling a bike, bike safety lessons, and working with young people—all to the soundtrack of the Girls in Action Bike Safety video (bow-ba-wow-wow, bow-ba-wow-wow...).



The infamous 2004 container loading to BNB partner Maya Pedal in Guatemala

And now after 20 years together, we know the roots of our relationship are on Amory Street. Those roots are connected to those that witnessed our commitment to each other in Gloucester at the same site of our BNB youth programs' summer bike and ferry overnighter. Our lives had become intertwined with the joy BNB was bringing to the world. As a suburban white boy from CT, moving to Boston and working at BNB, I was initially out of my element, but BNB pushed me to grow in ways that are core to my beliefs and purpose to this day:

- Learning from those that appear different from you and recognizing that racial and economic justice are a must for a peaceful world;
- Finding joy in a shared success turned the bloodied knuckles and grease and sweat stained shirts into treasured reminders;

- Creating the space for young people to find their voice, lead, and fight for what they believe in, is humbling in the best way possible.

Jess and I are no longer brand new, but we still learn from each other and the young people in our lives everyday. Bikes are still the center of our community and universe. The faces and programs of Bikes Not Bombs have evolved, and I feel so blessed to have had my life mutually intertwined in the roots that will feed the next 40 years. Congratulations, Bikes Not Bombs!

Matt Soycher

Youth Programs Coordinator 2004-2008

FAMILIAR FACES

It's worth mentioning that during Matt's tenure as the Youth Programs Coordinator, two youth participants were starting out at BNB, beginning what have proved to be life-long connections to the organization! Both Elijah Evans and Sara Lawrence completed youth programs at BNB in the early 2000s, progressing into more involved roles in our Bike Shop and Youth Programs, serving on our Board of Directors, and again coming back to work at BNB full-time. We are grateful to have both Sara and Elijah's ongoing commitment to furthering BNB's mission.



Sara at Girls in Action in 2005



Sara at the BNB Bike Shop in 2018



Elijah at Earn-A-Bike in 2005



Elijah at a Ride for Black Lives in 2020

JONATHAN MCCURDY

Top Bike-A-Thon Fundraiser, 2005-Present

When I moved to Boston 20 years ago I was lucky to move close to Bikes Not Bombs. Volunteering there was a great way for me to connect with a new community and start learning about bicycles being used not only for fun and exercise, but transportation! BNB seems to attract a friendly, open, and generous group of people, and I met many friends through the organization. I still feel that warmth and welcoming every time I walk into BNB.

My most important contribution has probably been my fundraising through the Bike-A-Thon. Of course the donations help BNB operate, but more importantly, I hope my outreach helps foster long term relationships with BNB that will grow and create a vehicle for continued support.

To me, BNB represents the goodness that we all have inside of us that we can expand upon if given the right support and opportunities. I think the organization supplies this to the youth they engage through programming and the adults that connect as volunteers and supporters.



Riding and smiling at the 2014 Bike-A-Thon



I hope that BNB is able to continue having a positive impact on those who are involved here and abroad and that other organizations model themselves on BNB to provide services without judgment and in a way that empowers and amplifies youth voices.

Jonathan McCurdy
Top Bike-A-Thon Fundraiser, 2005-present

BOB THOMAS

Long-time Supporter



Bob and family at the 2011 Bike-A-Thon

I first came across Bikes Not Bombs when I asked a friend about what I might do with a child's bicycle we no longer needed. He encouraged me to drop it off at BNB, which I did, and thus started a wonderful twenty-year relationship with an organization that consistently inspires me with its vision and its impact – and which I happily support with my contributions.

Through mutual friends, I was introduced to the then-Executive Director, Samantha Wechsler, who encouraged me to take advantage of some of the volunteer opportunities at Bikes Not Bombs. Next thing I knew, I was asked to co- host information sessions at the Hub for people hoping to learn

more about the organization—regular Saturday morning one-hour Share-the-Love sessions where students talked about what they were learning and volunteers talked about why they felt the place was so special. These efforts led to the first annual Building Momentum Breakfast, which Samantha and I co-hosted. It was a huge success, both financially and spiritually. I've spoken at these breakfasts several times since that first experience, always a fun thing for me to share publicly why BNB inspires me the way that it does.

One of the young leaders I met in the fundraising work was a young man named Elijah Evans. We worked many Saturdays together and became friends. He of course rose up to be the Executive Director himself, proof of what is possible from the richness of the Bikes Not Bombs experience. I am incredibly proud of who Elijah is and what he has become, and proud of what this shows about Bikes Not Bombs: that small, focused, well-run programs can make a material difference in young people's lives, indeed all our lives, and make the world a little more sane and a little more generous of spirit. We need organizations like this, and we need them to thrive. They provide powerful social and cultural counter-narratives to so much of what makes us anxious these days. Long may it run.



At the 2012 Building Momentum Breakfast

Bob Thomas

Long-time BNB supporter, semi-retired attorney and long-time Jamaica Plain resident

DAVID FISCHER

Long-time Donor

I first met the good folks at BNB in 2013, when an enthusiastic biker friend introduced me. She was leaving Boston, and recruited me to be the local “rep” for a very cool charity, BnB! I have been so impressed with Elijah’s passion for your mission...he has successfully infused me with the same passion!



Summer 2014 Earn-A-Bike participants

I consider BNB to be one of my top two or three “partners” in the charitable world. I love how you get youth involved and teach them important skills, while doing very important work for the world.

You address: climate issues, waste, youth enrichment... I would like to spend more time at BNB, and will work on doing so.

David Fischer
Long-time donor



PATRICK CUTRONA

BNB Board Member, 2017-Present

BNB has always just ‘made sense’ to me as if it has always been there – like my bike.

Like a bike, BNB is familiar.

Like a bike, BNB is powered by people.

Like a bike, BNB moves things forward using simple and sustainable approaches.

Like a bike, BNB brings joy.

Some of my favorite memories have been made at BNB and now I am passing that on to my own child.

It is my hope that we can continue to work and celebrate together so that BNB can continue to be there for us and move us forward together.

Patrick Cutrona,
BNB Board member 2017-present



At the 2022 Bike-A-Thon

JEAN CLAUDE MWISENEZA

Executive Director at Learn Work Develop (LWD), Rwanda

On November 8, 2016, Learn, Work, Develop (LWD) in Rwanda was contacted by Manizha Baraki, the International Programs Coordinator at BNB, based on a recommendation from Patrick Cutrona, a BNB Board Member, who was in Shooting Touch at that time.

We were thrilled to learn about this opportunity for a partnership with Bikes Not Bombs, as LWD had been a new organization for just three years since its founding on November 5, 2013. We had not received any funding until that point. Learn Work, Develop works to prevent childhood marriage and teenage pregnancy. The bicycles we receive from BNB have been used to give girls and young women access to transportation so they can get to school to complete their educations. Due to our partnership with Bikes Not Bombs:

- Teenage pregnancies and deliveries in our area have decreased by nearly 50% through our program named “Masenge mba hafi” which means “Please Aunt be close to me”.
- Over four years, the knowledge, mindset, and self-confidence of adolescent girls and young women in Sexual and Reproductive Health have improved, elevating our area from 10th to 1st in family planning.



LWD campaigns to improve the health of young women

- Prior to Learn, Work, Develop initially receiving a shipment from BNB of a large container full of bikes, parts and tools, Bikes Not Bombs worked with its international partner in Kenya, Cycloville, to have their bike mechanics travel to Rwanda. Once here, these Cycloville mechanics taught us how to best unload a shipping container chock full of bikes and parts. These mechanics also taught our LWD team the basics of bike mechanics and repair. We are now completely self-sufficient.



Mechanics from BNB partner Cycloville providing mechanics training to LWD staff in 2018

- Young mothers, who once felt hopeless, are now thriving as entrepreneurs in fields like farming, tailoring, hairdressing, and bike mechanics.
- The credibility and self confidence of young mothers in their communities have grown, and their voices are being heard.

- Young mothers, who once felt hopeless, are now thriving as entrepreneurs in fields like farming, tailoring, hairdressing, and bike mechanics.
- The credibility and self confidence of young mothers in their communities have grown, and their voices are being heard.
- More than 5,000 young girls have been trained at the LWD TVET Center and have secured jobs in various trades. Another graduation is expected soon at the end of the year of the ongoing cohort of 400 trainees in Tailoring, Hair Dressing and Bike Mechanics.



caption



caption

- As a result of our partnership with BNB, two LWD bicycle shops are operating successfully in Rwanda.
- Community volunteers have received bicycles to help combat gender-based violence and assist students in attending school.
- Through the bikes provided by Bikes Not Bombs, LWD sponsors a Sports For Change cycling club of 30 young girls . LWD provides logistical support to this team through the SSARAF (Support Safe Rides in Africa) social enterprise. This team attends local races and performs well.

BNB has been a tremendous support for LWD and its initiatives. Without BNB's assistance, LWD would likely have had to shut down before gaining recognition and eligibility to collaborate with other organizations.

Jean Claude MWISENEZA

Executive Director at Learn Work Develop (LWD), Rwanda

SALOME (SALLY) KANINI

Women's Bike Project | Cycloville, BNB International Partner

I first learned about BNB in 2017 through a friend in the Kenyan cycling community. However, I got to know more about what BNB does through Cycloville-Kenya, one of BNB's international partners.

After learning about BNB's work and its focus on community engagement, I was really excited about the opportunity to promote cycling in schools through Cycloville. It felt like a meaningful way to contribute to the community.

My most significant contribution was serving as a program coordinator for six months in 2019. During that time, I had the privilege of training girls in a school located in Mathare, an informal settlement. I also organized cycling events, connecting these girls to the larger cycling community.

My fondest memory is promoting women's cycling activities and collaborating with other women who were trainers attached to Cycloville. Those moments of working together to empower women in cycling were truly special since I saw us as examples to the girls.



Learning to ride at a Women's Bike Project event in July 2018



Bikes ready to be loaded at a 2017 BNB container loading to Cycloville

BNB represents opportunity, training, and a platform to accelerate women's participation in cycling.

I hope BNB continues to promote women's activities and to create more opportunities for women in cycling.

Salome (Sally) Kanini
Women's Bike Project
Nairobi, Kenya
Cycloville, BNB international partner

JOSEPH PIRES

Bicyclists Organizing for Community Action (B.O.C.A.) Associate and Former Youth Apprentice

Bikes Not Bombs is a safe haven for cyclists, community members, volunteers and people trying to find their place in the world. I first got involved with Bikes Not Bombs in late June of 2016. Taking part in our youth summer program; Earn-a-Bike. Attending this program allowed me the opportunity to learn how to fix, maintain, and ride a bike. As well as keeping it at the end of the program. Having felt a sense of accomplishment, paired with the happiness granted by ownership, no one would have guessed the impact it would have on me.



With staff and Earn-A-Bike participants in summer 2019

As I transitioned out of the program, it felt bittersweet. I wanted to stay involved. I immediately asked how I could continue to participate outside of programming. 2017 began and I made inquiries on the matter. Which led me to the discovery of Volunteer Night. With the experience being described to me as the other end of the spectrum to Earn-A-Bike. Where we would assess parts for sorting, pack and store those parts for future use, and most notably, disassembling bikes to the bare frame. I couldn't have been happier knowing I'd be able to continue using my new found skills for the betterment of others who needed it most.



Speaking at a Ride for Black Lives, summer 2020

Approaching the age where I could begin working, I was constantly told throughout my time being in the space that I should apply. Without a second thought I went through every process required of me, and secured my first title: Youth Apprentice. I began teaching and leading the same program where it had all started for me. It was my full circle moment. I worked through school years and summers, making connections and friendships, most of which I've maintained to this day.



Repairing at bicycle as part of Chain Reaction, summer 2022

Over the course of six years, Bikes Not Bombs has supplied me with the environment, mentors and knowledge to grow professionally. At Bikes Not Bombs I've learned what it means to be a community member, an advocate, and a leader. I went from being a part of many different teams in the organization, to leading my own. This year, I was able to travel to Pennsylvania, Denver, and even Puerto Rico with BNB! All of which involved opportunities to hone my networking skills, public speaking and understanding the larger impact BNB has outside of Boston.

Going forward I want to ensure that the youth I work with are ready to tackle their own leadership roles like I did. By crafting a curriculum that will put them ahead of their peers. This will condense the skills and knowledge it took me years to learn, in a more digestible format. These skills would range from the aforementioned networking and public speaking. That will eventually lead into conversations involving how they can market themselves and capitalize on the many opportunities revolving

around BNBs large network. Helping them take their leadership to the next level. I believe being at BNB is what you make of it, and you truly get out what you put in. BNB teaches you how to be a self advocate. It's the structure I've followed for 6 years, and I'd say it works exceptionally well.

Joseph Pires

Bicyclists Organizing for Community Action (B.O.C.A.) Associate and Former Youth Apprentice



Joseph with fellow Youth Apprentices in 2019

Stay Involved: Build Momentum for Change!

Join us as Bikes Not Bombs marks four decades of using the bicycle as a vehicle for social change. This milestone anniversary isn't just about looking back — it's about riding forward. Help us continue to transform lives, provide sustainable transportation solutions, and promote economic mobility for Black and other marginalized people in Boston and the Global South. Together, we can achieve even more over the next 40 years!



- Donate to support our programs and services
- Ride at the Bike-A-Thon and in our Unity in Community Rides
- Volunteer to get your hands dirty while forwarding social change
- Enroll in our hands-on Bike School programming

Every bicycle repaired or donated, every dollar contributed, and every volunteer hour spent with Bikes Not Bombs directly empowers Black and other marginalized people in Boston and the Global South. By supporting Bikes not Bombs, you are fostering economic mobility and promoting environmental sustainability throughout Boston and across the world.



Questions about how to get involved?

Contact Angela Phinney, Director of Development at angela@bikesnotbombs.org or
Julia Karr, Director of Community Engagement at julia@bikesnotbombs.org

Celebrating 40 Years of Impact!



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