



Sheriff's Re-CYCLE for Kids

By Mandy Ford, Sheriff's Community Liaison, Oakland County Sheriff's Office, Michigan

In April of 2006, Sheriff Michael J. Bouchard of Oakland County, Michigan, initiated a new community program called Sheriff's Re-CYCLE for Kids. This program not only provides children with a unique recreational opportunity at no cost to them or to county taxpayers, but it also keeps incarcerated individuals giving back to the community in an environmentally friendly way. The Sheriff's Re-CYCLE for Kids program was born after a large donation of what amounts to everything one would need to operate a bicycle shop came to the Sheriff's Office. A gentleman named Chuck Morin, of Fenton, Michigan, owned and operated a bicycle shop called "The Repair Srand." It was Mr. Morin's belief that no child should go without the joy of having a bicycle. With Mr. Morin's passing, his family came forward with a large donation of bicycles, parts, and tools from the shop and the idea

of carrying on Mr. Morin's vision was conceived by the Oakland County Sheriff's Office. In February of 2006, the Oakland County Sheriff's Office Trusty Camp began collecting bicycles (new, used, or in need of repair), bike accessories, tools, and parts for this new program, and as a result, many bicycles have been cleaned up and distributed to kids and other individuals in need.

When the first call was issued to the community to donate their bicycles the response was overwhelming. With close to one hundred bicycles donated to the program within the first month, the Oakland County Sheriff's trustees went to work on refurbishing and repairing the bikes. Partnerships were formed with local youth organizations, like the Boys and Girls Club of South Oakland County, Easter Seals of Michigan, the Lighthouse of Oakland County, and Oakland County Youth Assistance to name a few, in order to identify individuals

who would have an economic need for a bicycle.

In April, Sheriff Bouchard and the Morin family kicked off the program, giving out more than 20 bikes to children at a small press event. Since that time, over 75 additional bicycles have been given out and the joy the bicycles have brought to the children is indescribable. Some of the folks from Easter Seals of Michigan use the bicycles as their primary means of transportation, giving them the gift of independence. Donated bicycles continue to trickle in and the trustees continue to repair, clean, and make them like new. Kids and other individuals in need will continue to benefit from this great program as long as bikes are available.

Sheriff's Re-CYCLE for Kids is performed at no cost to taxpayers and is an innovative way law enforcement can use existing resources to make the quality of life of its residents better. ♣