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Sergey Shayevich, The Arizona Daily Star

David Bohm refurbishes bikes that will be given to Women in Progress, a group that helps single parents

Wheels of fortune

Bike maker's expertise helps soften struggles

"I am a small-businessman, but this is what I can do to help. At every turn you need to give something back."
—David Bohm

By Alan D. Fischer
The Arizona Daily Star

David Bohm is brightening needy Tucson youngsters' holidays with bicycles.

Bohm normally spends his days manufacturing precision custom bikes priced at \$1,500 to \$3,000.

But the owner of Bohemian Custom Bicycles set aside his work to refurbish discarded bikes that will be Christmas gifts.

He has repaired 10 bikes that will go to Women in Progress, a program that assists needy single-parent families trying to better themselves through education and career improvement.

Bohm said community efforts to make this a happier Christmas

are important.

"Some of these kids don't have anything. Single mothers have a hard time taking care of the basics like food and rent, much less getting their kids things like bikes," he said.

"This is something I can do to help out. If we all gave back a little bit of what we're good at, it would be great."

The bikes, which came from University Heights Apartments, were abandoned by UA students who left town. "It's sad to see bikes tossed when there are people out there who have no money to buy bikes," he said.

Some were in reasonable shape and others were one step

HOW TO HELP

To contribute to the Women in Progress holiday gift and food drive, contact John Burton at 575-9094, Rebecca Jackson at 742-4408, or visit the group's gift request angel tree at Persnickety's Resale Boutique at 6447 N. Oracle Road.

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The refurbished bikes may not look showroom new, but Bohm restored them to good working order. "Basically they have to be safe. I don't want the kids to crash," he said.

Bohm said repairing the gift bikes was different from making the precision racing bikes he sells but said it is a labor of love.

"I am a small-businessman but this is what I can do to help," he said. "At every turn you need to give something back."

Grace "Mini" Montez, director and instructor at Women in Progress, said the 10-year-old program based at Pima Community College helps single mothers improve their lives in the areas of education and employment.

In addition to educational opportunities, participants get training in self-esteem building, job interview skills, work ethics and other topics aimed at helping them secure better-paying jobs.

The program is offered at five Pima campuses, and 115 participants are accepted each semester. More than 2,000 students have utilized the program, some of whom have obtained graduate college degrees, Montez said.

Montez said that without the efforts of people like Bohm, many program participants would not receive holiday gifts.

"Many of these people are feeling tremendous pressure, they work part time, they go to school and they take care of their families," she said. "Some are timid about participating; they are really shy about it."

"They are asking for basic, basic kinds of things. We had one boy, all he asked for was a pair of purple scissors. One asked for a yo-yo. One asked for white socks and underwear," she said.

Rebecca Jackson said the Women in Progress program will supply holiday gifts for 44 families, including 70 children.

An angel tree at her Persnickety's Resale Boutique at 6447 N. Oracle Road lists gift requests. People are invited to come in, select and fulfill a child's gift request.

She said this is the first holiday fund raiser held for Women in Progress.

"It's such a good program and