

Community & People

Columbia Heights Police Department donates bikes to kids

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Another partnership between the Columbia Heights Police Department and School District 13 provides bikes to students in need.



Community partners who made the bike donation a success gathered at the Columbia Heights Police Department on June 3. (Sun Focus photo by Kassie Petermann)

This year instead of discarding unclaimed bikes from property storage, the police department identified 14 bikes worthy of donating to the Columbia Heights School District. Recovery Bike Shop in Northeast Minneapolis repaired the bikes to make sure they were safe and ready to ride. Repairs included fixing flat tires and other adjustments to make the bikes function better, such as oiling.

“When we can volunteer for something like this, we jump on it. ... This is huge for us to get to help out Columbia Heights,” Recovery Bike Shop Co-owner Brent Fuqua said.

The Columbia Heights Police Association purchased a lock for each bike, and the Columbia Heights Lions Club donated helmets to go with each bike.

A Columbia Academy student tries out his bike on June 3 with Columbia Heights Community Service Officer Tabitha Wood and Columbia Academy Assistant Principal Rick Ostby. (Submitted

photo)

Social workers at the three elementary schools and Columbia Academy helped identify children who would most benefit from receiving a bike. The social workers then contacted parents or guardians to make sure they were open to receiving the gift.

“We’re so pleased to be able to participate in yet another collaboration with the Columbia Heights Police Department,” said Kristen Stuenkel, director of Columbia Heights Community Education.

The 14 bikes were distributed to students at the end of the school day on June 3. Five Columbia Academy students received bikes, and three students at each of the three elementary schools received a bike.

“We have other community programs that we’re involved in,” Sgt. Matt Markham said. “We run into some kids that don’t have bikes, who would enjoy summer a lot more if they did.

“It was fairly short notice,” Markham said of the bike donation. “Everybody came together and worked quickly to get them out before the end of the school year.”

*Columbia Heights Officer
Danielle Pregler helps a
Columbia Academy student with
her bike on June 3. (Submitted
photo)*

City Manager Walt Fehst said the distribution of bikes to students again recognizes the common thread of service to the community – to try and improve the safety, welfare and ability of young people to enjoy their educational experience.

“We like to work with the school district in any way that we can to make that happen. ... If we can fix [the bikes] up and get them to kids who would appreciate them, I think it’s a great program,” he said.

Depending on inventory, the police department plans to make the bike distribution an annual event.

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