

**2010 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**R COMMUNITY BIKES INC.**

SUBMITTED JANUARY, 2011

**MISSION STATEMENT**

“R” Community Bikes is a grassroots, 501c3 organization that collects and repairs used bicycles for distribution, free of charge, to Rochester’s most needy children and adults. Our mission is to meet the basic transportation needs of those in the community who depend on bikes for recreation and also to get to work, school, rehabilitation programs and training sessions. For this segment of the population, quality of life and ability to participate in our community are greatly enhanced when our mission is achieved. “R” Community Bikes also provides a venue for the Rochester bicycling community to conduct educational programs relative to bicycle safety and maintenance.

This annual report covers the 2010 calendar year from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>. It focuses on the third year of operation for “R Community Bikes Inc” as an incorporated entity but does not include the full financial report which would be available on request.

**HISTORY**

What began in the Spring of 2001 as an offer to repair a flat tire at St Joseph's House of Hospitality, has almost ten years later, become R Community Bikes Inc.. Several important stages stand out between that humble beginning and what is today a multifaceted, ever evolving bicycle reclamation and re-distribution program for an increasingly larger segment of Rochester’s population.

After that first flat tire repair, a weekly repair clinic began at St Joseph's. That clinic eventually developed into a clinic/give away program when it was found that some, in need, had no bike to repair. Today, the repair clinic continues but all give aways occur at the Hudson Ave location. In 2005, the warehouse at 226 Hudson Ave was taken over from another not for profit although RCB had not yet officially come into existence.

Following a series of break ins and thefts at 226 Hudson and the press coverage that ensued, the Rochester community came out in force to support the still fledgling effort to provide bikes to the needy. Replacement bikes were donated, cash donations offered and most importantly numerous volunteers came forward to lend assistance to our program. With the increase in volunteers came an increase in ability to better meet the needs of others. Indeed, good had come from evil. However, it was not until 2008 that the entity, R Community Bikes, incorporated and was officially recognized as a 501c3 charitable organization. That entity flourishes today as evidenced by the rest of this narrative.

### **EXPANDED SERVICES**

Throughout 2010, RCB continued the growth pattern shown in previous years and to some extent, that growth was even more astounding than in previous years. As our volunteer base increased, so too did our ability to serve the needs of our immediate neighborhood and those of the greater Rochester community. One major development was in our ability to outreach to other parts of the greater Rochester community through the use of a 14 foot trailer donated by two generous sponsors, Alan Hanford and Arthur Lowenthal. The trailer enables us to travel to other parts of the city to meet the needs of those under-served areas. We became regular attendees at the Westside Farmers' Market on Genesee Street. We also appeared twice during the summer on Arnett Boulevard, once for a repair clinic and once at a street festival where we did repairs and also distributed children's bikes. RCB was very warmly welcomed at all of these events and we have already scheduled some dates for return visits in 2011. Another advantage of having the trailer is that it can be used to pick up multiple bikes when the occasion arises which is quite frequently. Rather than sending one vehicle to a site 5 - 7 times to pick up 30 bikes, the trailer can do it all in one trip. Our sincere thanks to our very generous benefactors!

## **GIVE-AWAYS**

Giving away bikes is what we do best at R Community Bikes and for the third consecutive year, our numbers were phenomenal. In the year 2010, we gave away 2,434 bikes, including those given to both adult and children. This represents an increase of 1,111 or 84% over our 2009 figures. Children received 724 bicycles, while teenagers and adults received the remaining 1710 bikes. Figures for both children and adults represent significant increases over past years' give aways, with the figure for children representing a fifty percent increase over 2009 numbers. Of the 2, 434 bikes given away, approximately 6% received the maximum number of two bikes this year. Over the past 3 years, 3,334 individual people have received at least one bike from RCB. About half of the children received helmets and a very small number of adults purchased helmets. Total number of helmets distributed was slightly more than 550.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

R Community Bikes is a “referral only” agency. Every adult receiving a bicycle is required to have a referral letter stating the individual’s need for a bicycle. Letters can be from a school, church, social service agency, employer or health care facility.

During 2010, referrals were received from 55 different agencies representing a wide range of service providers and geographic areas. Catholic Family Center (285), St Joseph’s House of Hospitality (151) and the Salvation Army (141) provided the largest number of referrals. A significant number of CFC referrals came from the refugee population although exact numbers are not kept to make that differentiation. Both St. Joseph’s and the Salvation Army are relatively close, geographically, to RCB. Children’s bikes were provided to agencies as far away as Brockport and Hamlin. Schools, churches and the neighborhood community comprised the majority of our child centered agencies.

Bikes were distributed to a large number of zip codes although exact numbers cannot be quoted because of errors provided by recipients. The most frequently reported zip code was 14621, an area bounded by the Genesee River, Portland and Clifford Avenues and the Inner Loop. 368 bikes were distributed to residents from this zip code. The second most frequently served zip code was 14605, known as the “Crescent” which is the area surrounding RCB’s warehouse. 342 bikes were distributed to 14605. Other areas of concentration were 14615 and 14613, on the west side of the river and areas with significant refugee populations.

RCB works a twelve month schedule with bikes distributed on Wednesday and Saturdays throughout the year. Other than January and February, average give aways per month was 235. Nearly 200 children's bikes were distributed between November and the end of the year, primarily for end of the year holidays.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Year after year, RCB's volunteer workforce continues to amaze, not only in number but also in its willingness to serve our mission of providing basic transportation to Rochester's citizens. In 2010, 267 volunteers donated 14,717 hours to accomplish our goals. More than 35 volunteers, members of the Century Club, accumulated over 100 hours. Wayne Coleman, who commuted daily from Lyndonville worked more than 1,000 hours!! (Wayne has recently left Rochester for sunny North Carolina and was feted at a going away party in January in recognition of his many contributions to RCB.) In order to meet the demands of our program, we expanded to a five day week, working, officially, Tuesday through Saturday. There was a group of volunteers who because of their personal schedules and a desire to remain active with RCB, came in on Mondays as well. Effectively, we work a six day week!! Volunteers continue to come from various walks of life and they contribute much not only to RCB's mission but also to each other. Volunteer groups from Mary Cariola, Rochester Psychiatric Center and Depaul Mental Services supplement our regular work force and contribute much to our program. Several of our volunteers have come forward to mentor individuals in these groups working one on one or in small groups.

## **FUNDING**

As noted in Bill Cochrane's financial report, available separately, RCB's funding sources remain the sale of high-end bicycles, grants, and individual donations. Fred Sauter has done a wonderful job, overseeing our "sales department" in addition to many other contributions that he makes. Jeff Lewis and Bill Howard have assisted Fred particularly in the area of E Bay sales of parts and specialty items. Thanks to all three for their continued efforts. Because of these sales and the generous donations of individuals, organizations and foundations, our focus can remain on accomplishing our main mission of distributing bicycles. One donation in particular brought special attention to RCB as Dr Cappy Collins, University of Rochester pediatric resident received a 1000 dollar award from the American Academy of Medical Colleges in recognition of his community service and named RCB as his charity of choice! Greater Rochester Health Foundation has again been a major benefactor and our special appreciation goes out to them as well.

Rochester area bike shops continue to be strong supporters of our work. Towpath and Full Moon Vista have joined our long time friends, Pedallers and The Bike Zone in providing us with used bikes, advice and general assistance. Several other shops have also made contributions to our efforts.

## **BUILDING STATUS**

As we enter 2011, our purchase offer has been accepted by the Daniele family, although final details have yet to be worked out and sale is contingent on environmental studies to be done very soon. No problems are anticipated with these studies. This is a very exciting phase for us to enter as we will be able to make some needed changes to both the inside and outside of the building. Our immediate needs will include bringing the building into complete compliance with city code. Our sincere thanks go to the Danieles for their assistance in helping us to arrive at this point.

As our work force has increased in number and also in hours worked, we have found it necessary to store some of our “ready to go” bikes in off site locations. We currently have space at Irondequoit Suzuki on East Ridge Rd and on Flint Street at the Foodlink campus. Our thanks to Angelo Ingrassia and Tom Ferraro respectively in allowing us to share their spaces.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Membership on our Board of Directors remains constant with ten members currently. Each of these individuals brings wonderful gifts to our table and we appreciate their efforts both at 226 Hudson and also behind the scenes working on a variety of projects. It is primarily because of their efforts that we have become what we are as an organization.

## **OUTREACH AND PUBLICITY**

During 2010, Pittsford Rotary conducted a very successful bike drive for RCB, netting over 500 bicycles in one day!!! It was a wonderfully well coordinated project and we are thankful and very thrilled that they have offered to do another drive in May. We look forward to replenishing our supply of bikes and also to working again with the Pittsford Rotarians.

RCB was featured in several local and one national publication. Locally, the Democrat and Chronicle, Catholic Courier, Community Wishbook and Mary Cariola newsletter, all made mention of our community connections. The League of American Bicyclists also granted us a Bronze Award as a bike friendly business. Thanks to Carl Christiansen for his application for this award and the resulting recognition.

2010 also marked the inaugural edition of our own newsletter, “Spokes and Folks” edited by volunteer Eric Marlowe. Two volumes have been produced with a third due out in February.

Finally, RCB has become involved in the Rochester Cycling Alliance which seeks to make Rochester a more bike friendly community by improving riding conditions and educating the biking and non-biking population about bike riding. Our place in the alliance is to make sure that the segment of the population with which we deal is represented in recommendations to be implemented.

### **2011 PROJECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

While 2010 was again a banner year at R Community Bikes, there are still improvements to be made in a number of areas.

- Based on our 2010 successes with west side exposure, we will continue to explore increased involvement with the Westside Farmers' Market and Arnett Boulevard events.
- With the pending purchase of the building, efforts will be made to improve the appearance of the exterior of the building using funds possibly available through City of Rochester grants...
- With new Apprentice/Volunteer Guidelines in place, we will continue to educate our volunteers and also members of our community in proper bike maintenance and repair.
- We will expand our involvement in the community wide Rochester Bicycle Alliance
- Our facility will become a community-wide bicycle education and repair center.

Our third complete year, 2010, continued the trend of increases in all things good for R Community Bikes Inc. With the continued support of volunteers, board members, benefactors and the community at large, we anticipate that 2011 will see us reach new and even greater heights. Sincere thanks to all who have brought us to this point.

Submitted February 3, 2010

Dan Lill, Director