



2023

IMPACT REPORT

FORWARD

As I reflect upon this past year, I realize this report is much more than a collection of statistics and accomplishments. It is a testament to the incredible power of collective action and the transformative impact of individuals coming together to address needs within a community.

This year, our collective efforts aimed to promote the benefits of physical activity for children through riding a bicycle. Furthermore, we focused on providing transportation support for recently housed individuals, those transitioning from incarceration, and relocated refugees. This assistance ensures access to employment opportunities, social services, and crucial medical care, underscoring our commitment to enhancing the well-being of our community.

When WOBC started in 2020 as a hobby in a backyard garage little did we know that in a few short years, we would begin to have a regional impact, covering a 100-mile distance across Southeast Tennessee. Our vision remains simple: to address public health issues in our community by educating, reducing barriers, and increasing access, using a bicycle as a catalyst for positive change.

We have been able to do all of this through our incredible volunteers. Our volunteers have dedicated countless hours and are the lifeblood of our organization.

I extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to our volunteers, bicycle shops, community partners, and donors who have made this possible. Your belief in our mission has fueled our success, and your continued support will be instrumental in shaping the future of White Oak Bicycle Cooperative.

With gratitude,
Blake Pierce
Executive Director



BY THE NUMBERS



Red Bank Elementary 2nd Grade Rodeo

511 bicycles given away

52% were adult bicycles and 48% were children's bikes. This marked the first year we gave away more adult bikes than children's bikes.

89 safety education programs

36 rodeos, 26 skills/ride, 8 rides, 6 "Smart Cycling" classes, 4 learn-to-ride classes, 4 Walk, Bike, and Roll to School days, 4 fair/tabling events, 2 maintenance classes, 1 professional training, 1 conference presentation

3,350 safety program participants

38

other programs held

- 22 mobile repair days
- 9 "friendraising" events
- 3 fundraising/donation drives
- 3 "build" days
- 1 bike valet

102

community partners

- 42 nonprofits
- 20 schools
- 17 businesses
- 16 government agencies
- 7 foundational support/funding

“HILLBILLY’S WILL”

We hear, see, and are involved in a lot of great stories through our work in the community. One homeless man’s dying wish is our 2023 “Story of the Year.” *Words by Kat Volzer.*

High above Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain juts out its sharp nose. Some of the richest people in Tennessee live on the brow, their mansions freckling the mountainside. The view of the iconic mountain is spectacular from Peeples street. If you stand in the right spot, it looks almost as if those mansions have spread their way down the mountain, turning into large striped circus tents as they reach what some people call “Camp Hope.”

At the city-sanctioned 12th and Peeples camp, a hand painted banner on the fence reads “12th Peeples Camp.” Stuck between the chain link fence and the privacy tarp is a large discarded sign from the Family Dollar store only reading “Family.” It might not look like much to the outsider, but at Camp Hope they have everything they need. There’s a kitchen, a basketball goal, an area for art, garden beds, a soon to be dog park, and even a bike shop.

In December 2022, when members of the White Oak Bicycle Co-op donated a load of 12 bicycles, the Peeples Street bike shop was little more than a pile of rusty, mangled metal outside where Hillbilly, the camp mechanic, stayed. With piercing blue eyes and two blue teardrop tattoos to match, Hillbilly was not someone you soon forgot.

“To the normal person, Hillbilly would look scary,” says Ann-Marie Fitzsimmons, Executive Director of Help Right Here, the organization that runs the camp. “He had an incredible heart, but he did not suffer fools. Everybody knew him and everybody respected him.”

“When we dropped off that first round of bikes, somebody asked if I knew Hillbilly.

At the time, I didn’t [know him] but we struck up a conversation and it was apparent he was the camp mechanic. I wanted to know how we could support that,” said White Oak Bicycle Co-op executive director Blake Pierce.

Through several conversations and loads of bikes later, Hillbilly made his intentions clear. He always wanted his own bike shop.

But Jackie “Hillbilly” Lockridge never got the chance. He died of a heart attack on January 6, 2023.



Blake and Hillbilly, December 2022

The night before Hillbilly died, Fitzsimmons picked him up at a local Motel 6.

“He gave me \$100 and told me how much he loved me and said it was for the camp. I still have that \$100 and it’s for the bike shop,” Fitzsimmons said shortly after Hillbilly died.

On February 5, only a month after Hillbilly’s death, several volunteers from White Oak

EDUCATION REPORT

Bicycle Co-op put up tents and helped organize bicycles and parts to make the first iteration of the 12th Peeple Bike Shop. In March, when volunteers went to drop off a work stand, tool box, and tools, the tents had blown down already. Piles of twisted metal lay gnarled and entangled with dirty white tarps and partial bicycles littered the area where the bike shop stood.

“We had to think of the best way to help the shop and the camp,” said Pierce. “They can’t help other people get back out on the road if they spend all their time putting up tents.”

In July 2023, The Unfoundation supported White Oak Bicycle Co-op and Help Right Here with a \$3,000 grant. The funds were used to purchase a resin shed, tools, and parts such as cables and tubes. Laura Roberts, the new camp mechanic, carries on Hillbilly’s will by repairing flat tires, swapping out worn parts, and even wrenching on bikes for kids at the Maclellan Shelter.

“Everybody needs a bike down here. I can’t do much, but I try to give back where I can,” says Roberts. “That’s why I like Ann-Marie and Niki [Keck]. They keep hope alive.”



Hillbilly’s bike stands outside his home.
Photo by Shana Redenbaugh

2023 marked the first full calendar year White Oak Bicycle Co-op has had its bicycle safety education program. The program is funded by the Tennessee Highway Safety Office with the goal of providing bicycle and pedestrian educational programming to children ages 6-16 in low- income populations, minority groups, and underserved populations in the Greater Chattanooga area of Tennessee. Here are some highlights of the program for 2023:

-89 safety education programs were held with 3,350 participants.

-The Red Bank Jubilee was the largest bicycle rodeo Kat Volzer, Director of Programming, has held in her 5 year tenure of hosting bicycle safety programs. 180 children attended and 44 bicycles were given away.

-The safety education program covers all of Hamilton County and every county that touches it. The farthest program to the west was held at Jasper Elementary in Marion County. The farthest program to the east was held in Tellico Plains in Monroe County. That’s a 102 mile service area!

-We’ve partnered with 30 different organizations to bring bicycle safety education to children of the region. Got an idea for a program? Contact Kat at kat@whiteoakbicycle.org.



PARTNERS

We rely heavily on building partnerships in our community to serve a wide variety of people. We've partnered with these organizations for bicycle donations, programming, and operational support. We couldn't do our work without the people on these pages.

Supporters

Footprint Foundation
Ironman Foundation
Jeff Roth Cycling Foundation
McKenzie Foundation
Tennessee Highway Safety Office
Tucker Foundation
The UnFoundation

Government Agencies

Booker T. Washington State Park
Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional
Planning Agency/Transportation
Planning Organization
City of Chattanooga Community
Development
City of Chattanooga Office of
Homelessness and Supportive Housing
City of Red Bank
City of Red Bank Fire Department
City of Red Bank Police Department
Hamilton County Health Department
Hamilton County Homeless Health Care
Center
Hamilton County Recovery Court
Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute
Monroe County Department of Tourism
Outdoor Chattanooga
Rhea County Sheriff Department
Signal Mountain Police Department
Tennessee Department of Health
(Marion and Sequatchie Counties)



Rhea County Safe Journey

Schools

Alpine Crest Elementary
Chattanooga School for the Arts and
Sciences (CSAS)
East Lake Elementary
Griffith Elementary (Sequatchie Co.)
Hardy Elementary
Hixson Elementary
Howard High School
Ivy Academy
Jasper Elementary (Marion County)
Lookout Valley Elementary
Normal Park
Orchard Knob Elementary
Red Bank Elementary
Red Bank High School
Silverdale Baptist Academy
Soddy Elementary
Soddy Daisy Middle
Stuart Elementary (Bradley Co.)
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Wolftever Creek Elementary

Businesses

American Bicycle Group
BeCaffeinated
Chattanooga Lookouts
Clever Alehouse
East Ridge Bicycles
Four Bridges Outfitters
Handup Gloves
Hive Think Media
Mohawk Canoes
Morning Bee Bakery
Owen Cyclery
Pedego
REI
Rise Partners
Suck Creek Cycle
Sweat Club
Trek Store Chattanooga

Nonprofits

Be the Change Youth Initiative
Bethlehem Center
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Bike Walk Cleveland
Boys and Girls Club
Bridge Outdoors
Bridge Refugee Services
CADAS
Centerstone
Chambliss Center for Children
CHATT Foundation
Chattanooga Bicycle Club
Chattanooga Rescue Mission
Children's Hospital at Erlanger
City of Refuge Dalton
Clear Creek Church of Christ
Clean Haven Recovery
Crabtree Farms

Downside Up
Ella Library
Epilepsy Foundation of Southeast Tennessee
Girls, Inc.
Help Right Here
Kingship Chess Academy
Launch Pad
Lula Lake Land Trust
Operation Get Out
One Hart/Emma Wheeler Homes
Metropolitan Ministries
Northside Neighborhood House
Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults
Pilot Club
Project Return
Reach One Teach One
Salvation Army
SORBA Chattanooga
Trust for Public Land
Volunteer Behavioral Health
WeClimb
White Oak United Methodist Church
Welcome Home
Youth Villages Lifeset

A special thank you to the partners
who have housed us:
Mohawk Canoes
Rise Partners
White Oak United Methodist
Church



Victoria Norwood, Epilepsy
Foundation of Southeast TN

IN THE NEWS

The League of American Bicyclists. January 31, 2023

[LCI SPOTLIGHT: KAT VOLZER](#)

Chattanooga Times Free Press. February 1, 2023

[Most Interesting People: 10 Chattanoogaans that prove the many ways to make the most of life](#)

Local 3 News. March 19, 2023

[MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Red Bank nonprofit helps families, homeless by refurbishing old bicycle](#)

News Channel 9. April 24, 2023

[Changing the cycle: Red Bank couple gives refurbished bicycles to kids, adults in need](#)

The Tennessee Conservationist. April 26, 2023

[Chattanooga Co-op Puts Bikes into Hands and Keeps Them Out of Landfills](#)

Local 3 News. April 27, 2023

[Signal Mountain Police team with White Oak Bicycle Co-op for bike safety event Saturday](#)

Chattanooga.com. November 18, 2023

[White Oak Bicycle Co-op Reaches 1,000 Mark On Bike Distribution](#)

News Channel 9: The Daily Refresh. November 30, 2023

[Revitalizing community one bike at a time: The heartfelt journey of White Oak Bicycle CO-OP](#)



Bridge Outdoors received national attention when they were selected as a finalist for the Landrover Defender Outdoor Accessibility and Education Award. As a top 5 finalist, Bridge received \$7,500 to start a mountain bike team in the fall of 2024.



On April 2, White Oak Bicycle Co-op received the Governor's Volunteer Star Award. The award is only given to three nonprofits annually—one from East, Middle, and West Tennessee.