

USAWC international children benefit from bicycle drive

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July 4, 2010 -- More than 25 bikes shared with International Fellows' families new to the United States will make a big difference in the turbulent lives of IF children. If you have a bike that your child has outgrown or doesn't need, please consider donating it this summer or during this year's Fall Yard Sale. It will be put to good use.

Imagine being the child of an International Fellow arriving at a strange new place in another country. The kids in your new neighborhood have a common language, a variety of toys (which you couldn't pack), and bicycles to use for exploring their new neighborhood. This is what Ann Allen noticed in the summer of 2008 in the Keystone Arms subdivision just outside of Carlisle Barracks as the American kids were joyfully riding bikes around the neighborhood and the IF children stood on the sidelines and watched.

Ann and another military spouse, Laura Hume, started searching the Post Fall Yard Sales and found several American families who generously offered to donate the bikes that their children had outgrown.

Pam Lord, an avid Carlisle cyclist, joined the group and linked the effort with Cole's Bike Shop, who checked the bikes for safe operation. The group quickly handed out the bikes to IF children. In that first summer, nineteen bikes were distributed among the IF families. Last year, excess youth bikes were passed on to Carlisle's Project Share Food Bank for children of needy families.

At the end of the academic year, the bikes were collected, were given quick checkups and repairs at



Cole's, and then were stored in the Lord family barn. This year Hillside Storage on Cranes Gap Road in North Middleton has graciously provided a storage unit free of charge to hold the bikes during the transition period between IF classes. Before the International Fellows for the USAWC Class of 2011 arrived, thanks to the generosity of military and community families and with the cooperation of Cole's Bike Store, the inventory climbed to 40 bikes.

In the first week of July, more than 25 bikes were passed on to the new children of the IF community. The word has spread, and there is need for more bikes, especially bikes with training wheels and ones for teens/adults. For more information contact Ann Allen at allencd@pa.net

Indonesian Fellow from the Army War College Class of 2011, poses with his wife and son with bikes provided by the community. The community-wide drive collects bicycles for IF children who may not have been able to bring their bikes to the United States. *Courtesy photo.*

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 06 July 2010