

GIVING OLD BIKES NEW LIFE

WORKING BIKES 2020 ANNUAL REPORT





2020 IN NUMBERS

WORKING BIKES gives donated bicycles new life by redistributing them as tools of empowerment in local and global communities. Since 1999, the amazing community of WB volunteers, staff, partners, and supporters have enabled new life for **100,000 bicycles** across the globe and tens of thousands here in Chicago. Over one hundred thousand people have been empowered to access resources and opportunities that otherwise could have been out of reach – reducing waste, lessening pollution, and improving health in the process. We know that bicycles are the most reliable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly (not to mention COVID safe!) transportation option available, and we're working towards a world where everyone has access to bicycle transportation, whether in Africa or Chicago!



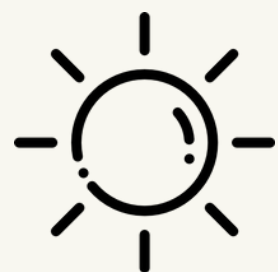
Collected **9,179 bikes** from around Chicago and the Midwest



Loaded **4,848 bikes** into **11 containers** for partners in Africa and Central America



Donated **1,390 bikes** locally. **639 bikes** were refurbished by volunteers, with **751 bikes** going to support the amazing community of partnering bike nonprofits throughout the Midwest.



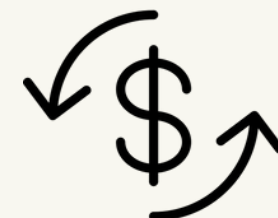
Installed **72 solar panels**, generating electricity to power Working Bikes sustainably!



The Service Department repaired **hundreds of bikes** and hosted **dozens of community sidewalk repair sessions**. These repair popups were great for neighbors looking for quick fixes and were held outside to provide safe direct service



Went through **scores of masks** for volunteers following new safety measures. This year we also saw the establishment of **satellite shops**, with volunteers working on bikes from their home benches.



Sold **1,776 bikes**, meeting the high demand we saw this spring and summer. Proceeds from our shop are rolled back into our charitable mission!

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

The energy in the Working Bikes warehouse on March 14th, 2020 was typical WB. Spring had come early, so folks were buying refurbished rides, volunteers wrenched to build a supply of donation bikes, generous people dropped off donations, local riders got tune ups, parts pickers rummaged through bins, fixie kids hung out, and a line formed at the register. WB is an amazing and vibrant institution -- so hearing one patron play the shop piano while another joined in with vocals from across the warehouse was awesome, not unprecedented. If anything, the energy was *too* positive - newly installed hand sanitizer stations and signs encouraging distancing got little attention. By the end of the day, we knew that to keep our community safe, that Saturday would be the last hoorah of pre-pandemic Working Bikes.

The pace and magnitude of changes that followed were staggering. Within a week, we'd aided an effort to have bike shops recognized as "essential" in Illinois to keep folks rolling through the pandemic, given up thoughts of collecting any bikes during our usual spring collection season, and taken our entire sales operation online with curbside pickup. The adaptations came as fast as the changes. The first "COVID Response" bike donation replaced a nurse's stolen bike and kept her commute safe and off public transit; used inner tubes found new life securing face shields for health professionals; and volunteers started wrenching at home. As this report details, the agility and resilience of the Working Bikes Community - the incredible staff, dedicated volunteers, and generous donors of all types - carried our mission forward through a year of headwind.

I'm humbled that in our 21st year, when our annual brewery-based celebration was cancelled and we raised no toast in person, WB supporters came through with more financial support than ever before. Thanks to all of you, Working Bikes is poised to emerge from the changes and challenges of 2020 not as the old WB, as great as that was, but wiser for the lessons of 2020 -- from the potential for virtual community building, to the imperative to advance equity and dismantle structural racism, to confirming the persistent power of the bicycle through crises. Roll on.

Trevor Clarke, Executive Director



WHO WE ARE

STAFF

Aaron Brown

Production Mechanic

Al Schorsch

Retail & Service Mechanic

Alan Lloyd

Production Mechanic

Anna Henschel

Community Programs Manager

BK Elmore

Warehouse Wrangler

Cauria Duarte Lutton

Community Engagement
Coordinator

Cesar Meza

Production Mechanic & Cesaring

Derek Villanueva

Webstore, Retail, & IT Associate

Filiberto Esparza

Production & Service Mechanic

Devon Snyder

Communications Consultant

John Clark

Production Mechanic

Josh Korby

Bicycle Shop Manager

Mikey Young

Teaching & Service Mechanic

Steve Irwin

Bookkeeper & Tube Doctor

Travis Risbridger

Production Mechanic

Trevor Clarke

Executive Director

Xail Hernandez

Community Bike Repairs Manager

BOARD

Phil Kaplan

President

Amy Little

Vice President

Jim Lindsey

Treasurer

Dave Gorman

Secretary

Lee Ravenscroft

Founder & President
Emeritus

Angela Taylor

Caronina Grimble

Dalia Garcia

Ellen Gibbon

Jerry Cohen

**Michael "Magic"
Santomauro**

A YEAR OF ADAPTING

STAYING SAFE AND STAYING ON MISSION

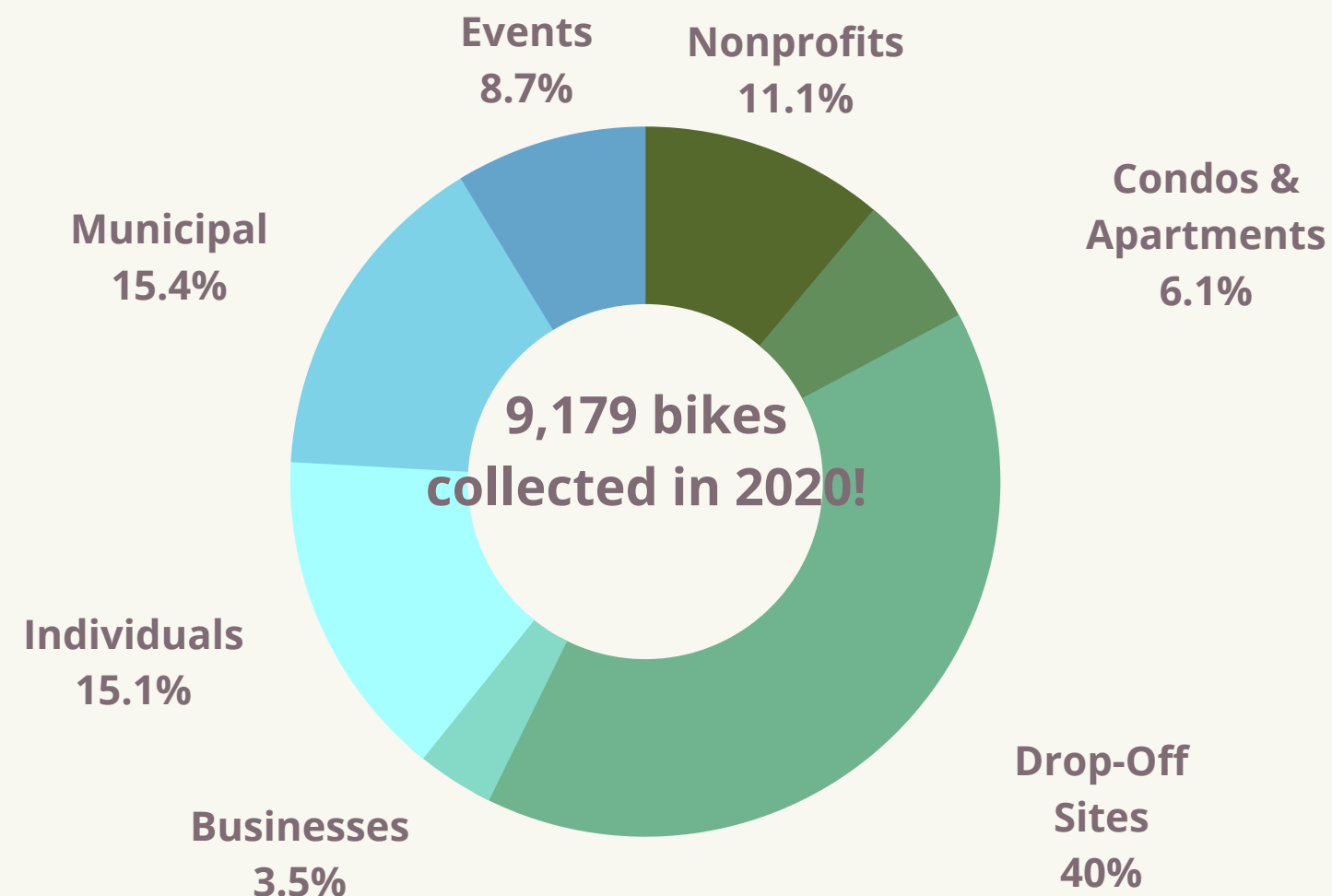
2020 was a year that put Working Bikes to the test. Through the challenges posed by COVID-19, the Working Bikes community adapted by finding new and safe ways to serve, educate, and build community. Staff established contactless appointments for customers and front-line workers. Volunteers wrenched from their home benches. Virtual workshops were held for youth partners to hone their skills. Shipping containers destined for our international friends were also packed with essential supplies.

Beyond our regular programs and services, Working Bikes collaborated with community organizations and mutual aid networks to get resources to neighborhoods around Working Bikes, particularly those without significant government aid. And throughout all the work that went into 2020, we still found chances to ride some bikes, whether it was rolling in solidarity with organizers marching against racism and oppression or riding with our partners in celebration of community. Although this was certainly a year full of new obstacles, our mission of giving old bikes new life remained the same and grew in importance. Now more than ever bikes are a critical means of transportation, employment, and recreation, and we'll be doing our part to help folks get safely where they need to go.



WHERE OUR BIKES COME FROM

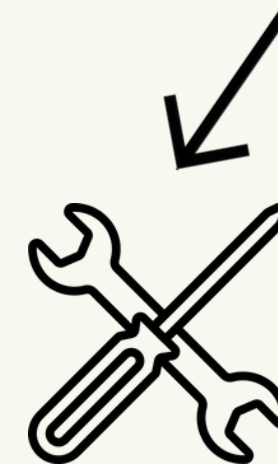
Working Bikes receives and processes thousands of bikes annually, collected from all over the Midwest. Bikes fuel our mission, and the additional donations of accessories, tools, and parts keep everything rolling and looking good. This year, many of the regular springtime collection events we rely on were cancelled. But thanks to the amazing efforts of our [donation drop-off partners](#) and the generosity of individuals, organizations, youth groups, academic institutions, and property managers, we were able to bring in over 9,000 bikes to keep our shop and donation programs rolling!



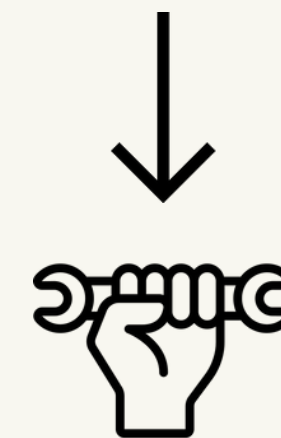
Working Bikes receives bikes from individuals, businesses, other nonprofits, events, and municipal groups.



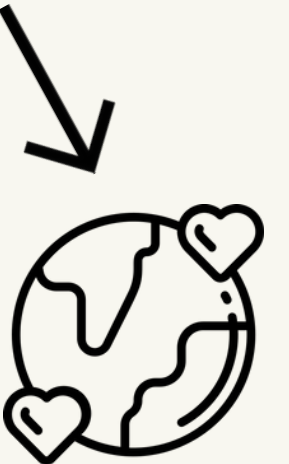
Bikes are brought to the WB warehouse or dropped-off at one of our partnering donation sites and picked-up by our drivers. At the warehouse, refurbishable bicycles are sent to one of three places.



To the production shop, where professional mechanics refurbish bikes to be sold through our storefront & webstore.



To Brandon's Bike Shop & satellite volunteer spaces, where they are fixed-up to be donated locally.



To the dock, where bikes are stored, then prepped for shipment to one of our partners abroad.



BY: CHICAGO
WEST SIDE
* SAN ROCK *
NIA * TOB *
LA

INTERNATIONAL DONATIONS



In a year where donations from other bike shipping organizations were down, Working Bikes provided crucial support in keeping up with the international demand for bicycles and parts. WB did our best to meet that demand, sending **11 containers** with **4,848 bikes** abroad. For these international donations, we partner with organizations that operate bike repair programs in Africa, Central America, and the Middle East. These refurbished bikes often serve rural communities, where access to reliable transportation can be limited and employment options few. This second factor is especially true for women, which is why many WB partners are invested in hiring and training female mechanics to run community shops. Bikes provide a livelihood for mechanics, as they give folks a safe alternative to public transportation when traveling to educational opportunities, medical services, markets, and community resources. Some of our partners have even developed programs to make purchasing bikes easier or to grow a community of competitive cyclists in areas that previously had limited bicycle access.

2020 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



- El Salvador - CESTA (863 bikes)
- Malawi - Africycle (1,222 bikes)
- Sierra Leone - Village Bicycle Project (1,304 bikes)
- Uganda - Bwindi Bike Shop, Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (482 bikes)
- Zambia - Chipego Bike Shop, Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (944 bikes)

INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

VILLAGE BICYCLE PROJECT AND STYLISH

This year posed many challenges for our friends abroad, with the pandemic putting an extra strain on international aid. Village Bicycle Project (VBP) in Sierra Leone not only continues to promote cycling culture across the region, but used the resources provided by Working Bikes to address the public health crisis in country's rural communities. Abdul Karim Kamara, known as "[Stylish](#)," manages VBP's programs in Sierra Leone. He joined us [via Zoom in August](#) and told us how the bikes received from Chicago have been helping the communities get through the pandemic. Bikes offer a safe alternative to public transportation for community health workers looking to reach more people living in rural areas; for students who need a reliable way to travel to school; and for those seeking additional resources. Bikes in Sierra Leone go a long way, as one bike might be used by multiple family members or friends. In addition to sending over 3 containers worth of bikes, WB was also able to ship solar lanterns and water purification kits, which Stylish helped distribute to hospitals throughout Sierra Leone. We hope to someday visit Stylish and the shop to see all the great work being done to promote cycling and community support! Learn more about [VBP's programs](#) and Stylish's work to develop the county's [first elite road cycling team](#).



LOCAL DONATIONS



In 2020, Working Bikes empowered individuals and families throughout Chicago through bikes. Volunteers helped refurbish **639** bikes that were distributed through our Cycle of Power and Cycle of Peace programs. These programs are supported by local partnerships with community organizations, social service providers, schools, and neighborhood groups who help us ensure that bikes are getting to the folks that need them the most. This year, in order to address the growing need for safe transportation, we expanded our local donation efforts, providing bike donations to folks that were impacted by COVID-19 but who weren't plugged in to support networks offered by our partner organizations. Bikes donated throughout Chicago helped riders access vital resources, run errands, and get outside in a safe and sustainable way. We restructured the local donation pick-ups and drop-offs too, being sure to follow safe guidelines like masked curbside pick-up. Working Bikes also supported our friends at Blackstone Bicycle Works, Bikes N Roses, Free Bikes 4 Kidz, and The Recyclery by providing them with **751** bikes for their youth education programs, and donation initiatives.

2020 LOCAL DONATION PARTNERS INCLUDED

- 360 Nation
- Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
- Chicago House
- Esperanza Community Services
- Gage Park Latinx Council
- Franciscan Outreach
- Hines VA
- Howard Brown Health
- Lincoln Park Community Services
- Thresholds



2020 LOCAL DONATION HIGHLIGHTS



This year Working Bikes partnered with a number of community groups throughout the Southwest side, providing bike donations and educational opportunities to inspire riders in our neighborhood! In early spring, folks from Esperanza Community Services worked with WB to set-up a kids' bike giveaway for families in Little Village. We also gained some new partners this year, including Gage Park Latinx Council, who distributed WB bikes to recent high school graduates in their neighborhood.



We rounded out the year with our Kids' Bikestravaganza! Staff and volunteers repaired 250 bikes that were distributed amongst our nearby community partners. Folks from Boxing Out Negativity, YMEN, St. Agatha, UCAN, Stone Temple Baptist Church, Roll Call, and Telpochcalli Community Education Project worked with families in the area to get bikes and helmets (provided by our friends at Disparti Law Group) out in time for the holidays! This annual giveaway was supported by grant funding provided by the Chicago Community COVID-19 Response Fund.

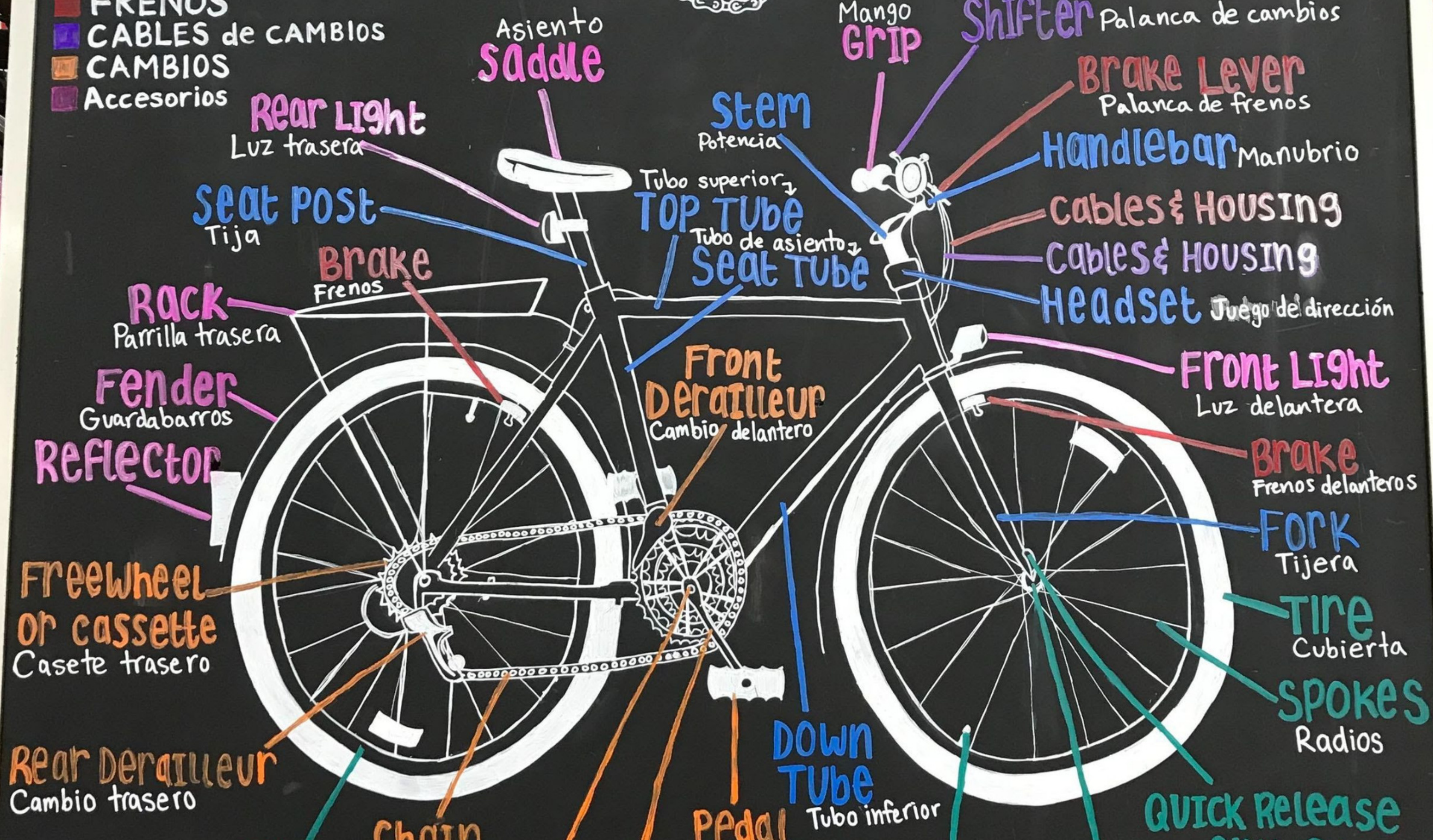
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Empowering riders with mechanical skills is a big part of our mission, so we were very excited to provide resources and opportunities for youth programs this year. Thanks to funds from [QBP's Community Grant](#), WB and the team at [YMEN](#) opened the North Lawndale Cycle Can on the corner of 13th and Pulaski! The Cycle Can will offer residents a place to learn, wrench, and celebrate bikes! Education was a big part of our year as well. In the spring, we partnered with [2 Wheel Gods](#) and [Blackstone Bicycle Works](#) on an online mechanics program for a small group of young riders. Towards the end of 2020, the grant from the Chicago Community COVID-19 Response Fund helped WB pilot a "Cycling Champions" program in North Lawndale. The workshop series passed on bike knowledge and gave stipends and bikes to North Lawndale youth who helped with bike donations and will ride with WB for for years to come.



Although tabling events and festivals weren't on the schedule this year, community slow rolls were a great way for WB staff, volunteers, and partners to safely get together. We joined our friends at [Boxing Out Negativity](#) and [Think Outside Da Block](#) on slow rolls that focused on bringing community members together in celebration of neighborhood pride. WB rode with racial equity organization [Equiticity](#) on several bicycle tours that visited sites of environmental and cultural significance. These rides helped raise morale in a difficult year, and offered fun and socially distant ways to roll with friends and support partner organizations doing critical community engagement work.



VOLUNTEERS



Working Bikes runs on bikes and is powered by volunteers! This past year, we received amazing support from our stellar community of volunteers, who adapted to the changes brought on by COVID-19 and allowed WB to continue to keep up with donations and help customers. We expanded Brandon's Bike Shop to give volunteers more space to safely wrench and prep. In addition to having a new cadre of at-home volunteers, WB also developed some new volunteer roles in the shop, with folks helping staff in keeping the shop organized and filling customer orders.

2020 VOLUNTEER COVID RESPONSE



- **Personal shopping in the warehouse**

Personal shoppers assisted WB staff during the busy weekend rush, when customers would stop by for contactless parts and accessories sales.

- **Established bike shops from home**

For those that wanted to wrench from the comfort and distance of their own personal workbench, WB helped facilitate at-home repairs. Volunteers would collect raw bikes and necessary parts, then bring the repaired bikes back to WB when they were ready to take on another load!

- **WB customers turned volunteers**

Sometimes folks just love WB so much they stick around. We're so fortunate to have a number of regular customers that wanted to give back in 2020 by volunteering their time to keep us rolling.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



EDDIE PAVON

Eddie was a WB customer for years before he started volunteering several years ago. This year, he was incredibly helpful during our Saturday Used Part Sales, enthusiastically picking out the best used parts and accessories for waiting customers. In addition to his upbeat attitude and knowledge of vintage bikes, Eddie is also known for bringing WB family tasty snacks from the nearby Taqueria Tayahua



SOPHIA CALVO

Sophia joined the volunteer community last October. She was a customer who really enjoyed the vibe of the shop and was encouraged by a staff member to join a volunteer session. While she didn't have previous experience working on bikes, Sophia is a fast learner who enjoys working with her hands and putting things back together. Her goal is to know how to build up a bike from scratch, and she is well on her way!



ED KESTIN

Ed, an avid road cyclist, started volunteering about 3 years ago. Since then, he has learned how to work on all different types of bikes and this year was one of WB's at-home mechanics. While Ed missed working alongside other volunteers, he was still able to keep developing his skills as a mechanic by watching tutorials online for the trickier projects. We're glad Ed was able to continue supporting WB from his home shop!

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

JACQUELIN GARCIA, ONE SUMMMER CHICAGO INTERN

Jacquelin joined the team at Working Bikes during our busy summer season! A One Summer Chicago youth intern working with the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, Jackie jumped in to help WB manage customer services. Working from home, Jacquelin answered incoming calls and emails inquires during a time when bikes were flying off the shelves. She also helped staff coordinate local donation applications and schedule pick-ups for folks receiving bikes through the Cycle of Power program. She even rolled up her sleeves to assist with a few shipping parties too! Jacquelin gave WB an extra boost to get through a hectic summer - thanks Jacquelin!

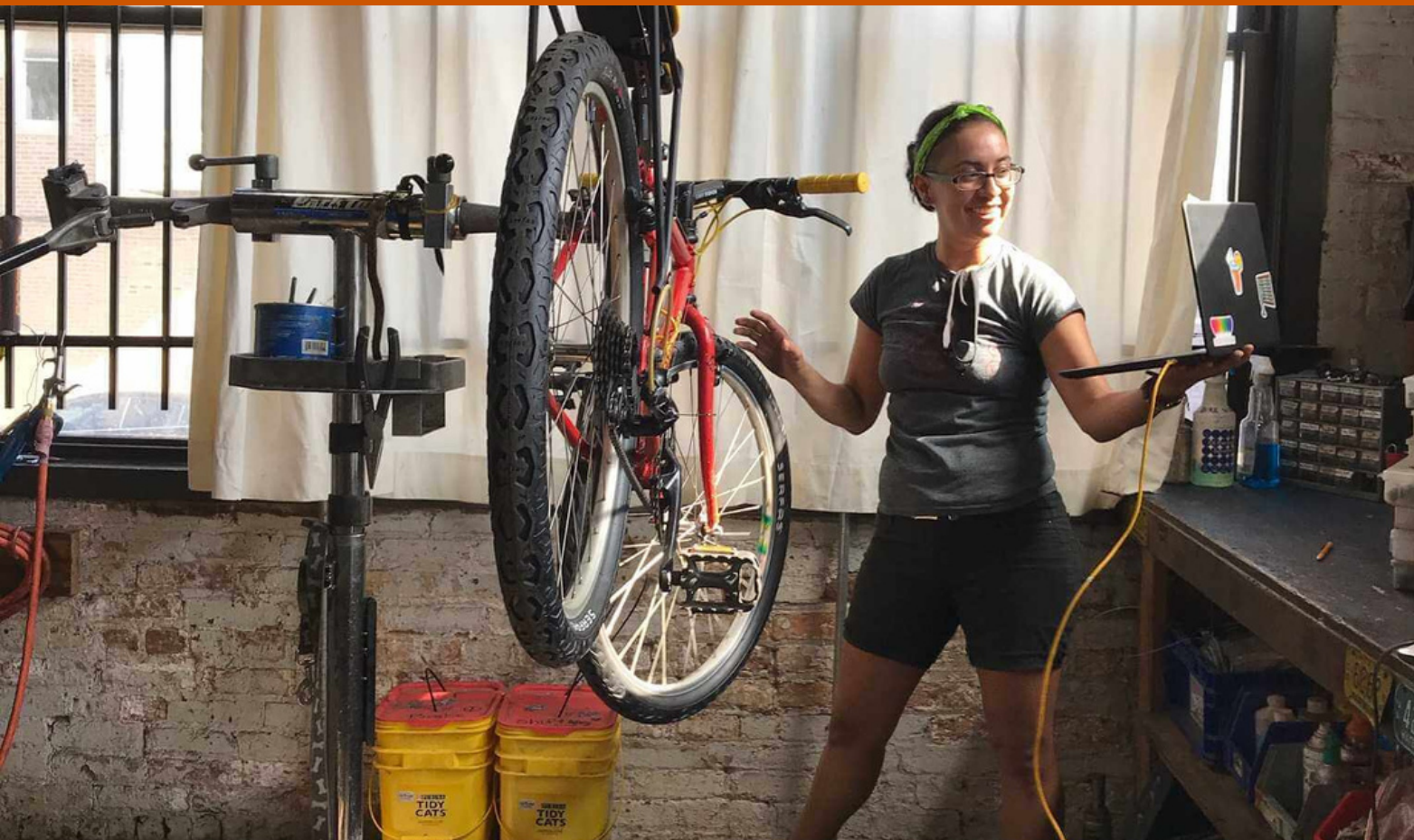


LENA ANSARI, VELO-GAP INTERN

On a gap semester from Yale University, Lena reached out to Working Bikes to offer her skills and enthusiasm. She joined us at the shop throughout the fall of 2020, to assist with the numerous off-season projects that crop up every year. Lena played a critical roll in creating marketing materials, organizing the warehouse and Brandon's Bike Shop, and developing tools to make shopping and wrenching more intuitive. She also lent a hand in the Service Department, picking up some mechanic skills and helping with quick-fixes during our fall group rides with partners. You can see Lena's work throughout the shop and we look forward to having her back at WB as a volunteer soon!



SERVICE DEPARTMENT



The Service Department was in full gear in 2020. The team shifted to online options for customers scheduling appointments for contactless curbside pick-up and drop-off, while continuing to safely serve those who did not have access to online appointment set-up. Mechanics not only managed the regular flow of incoming repairs, but offered resources like online workshops and video conference calls to make it easier for customers to gain some at-home mechanic skills. They also organically became a source of bike knowledge that informed Cycle of Power recipients, customers, and neighbors to promote self-reliability and empowerment. And as always, mechanics ensured that bikes coming through the shop (including local donation bikes) were in tip-top shape!



Spring and summer are always busy at WB, but with the bike boom we had this year, the warmer months saw the Service Department extra booked. To keep the turnaround times for repairs down, mechanics worked with volunteers to oversee quick fixes like flats and brake adjustments. A walk-up repair station was also set-up on Fridays for customers and neighbors who needed on-spot repairs and weren't able to schedule a drop-off appointment online. This Community Repairs Table was also supported by volunteers, who put their Brandon's Bike Shop skills to use and received additional guidance from mechanics in an effort to further develop those wrenching skills.

THE SHOP



Even though our doors were closed to customers, Working Bikes had a busy year ensuring that our community of first-time riders, year-round cyclists, and DIY mechanics had their needs met and shopping lists fulfilled. In the spring, we shifted to selling refurbished bikes through [our webstore](#) for curbside pick-up, doing our part to keep transactions contactless. Bikes were a hot item during the warmer months, and staff on the sales floor and remotely at home worked hard to keep up with customer questions and adapt our online shopping experience to make looking for [a bike approachable for even the most novice cyclists](#). We **sold 1,776 bikes** in 2020, many to new riders looking for a safe way to get around, get exercise, and get together at a distance with friends and family.



With the shop closed to walk-in customers, we took time this year to do some much needed clean-up and reorganization. Staff and volunteers spent weeks sorting through the collection of used parts and accessories, making sure that the assortment we have available for customers is in the best shape and easy to find. Looking ahead, the staff is hoping to create better displays for parts, streamline the salesfloor layout, and develop visuals that help folks identify what items they might need. WB also wants to ensure that the shop is accessible for our diverse community of shoppers and volunteers, and we're looking ahead at possible modifications that will make the shop easier to navigate.



2020 was also a momentous year for the WB homebase. Thanks to the support we received for our Founders' Facilities Fund, we were able to complete vital capital projects that will ensure Working Bikes is around for decades to come! This work included tuckpointing of the 19th century warehouse, a new roof, and a solar array!

GET INVOLVED!

DONATE BIKES

Bike donations sustain our organization, and help support our mission to keep folks rolling! Learn more about making a donation of a bike, parts, accessories, and tools on [our website](#).

DONATE FUNDS

Financial contributions help grow our local and international donation programs, bolster community partnerships, and provide critical funds for Brandon's Bike Shop, the Service Department, and our home in Little Village! Foundations, businesses, and individuals interested in providing financial support can learn more about the different giving opportunities available on [our donation's page](#) or contact trevor@workingbikes.org.

DONATE TIME

We thrive thanks to the amazing community of volunteers that donate their time to Working Bikes. Whether wrenching on bikes at the shop (or at home!), prepping bikes for international shipment, or lending a hand at a bike drive - volunteers help us do what we do best! Learn more about current volunteer opportunities [on our website](#) or email us at volunteer@workingbikes.org.

