



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

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2025

is the beginning of Working Bikes' second quarter century. As we reflect on the first 25 years, we might take measure in many ways: bikes returned to "working" around the world (~150,000 so far); useful stuff diverted from landfill (~2,500 tons); bikes refurbished and sold at fair prices (35,000+); bikes donated locally (22,000+), etc. Big numbers. Big impact. Lots to be proud of. And so much room to do more.

**Yet the true measure of our first quarter century—and the open secret to our success—is found in the relationships we've cultivated with one another and with collaborators in Chicago and around the world.**

As we were pulling this year's report together, we asked Lee to sift through his hard drives and file boxes to add detail and dimension. What emerged were a stack of emails and lists that trace the formation of relationships with organizations such as *Pedals for Progress*, *Bikes Not Bombs*, and *Pastors for Peace*; with like-minded locals including Al Schorsch, Brandon Zagorski, Ron Boi, Aaron Brown, Owen and Alan Lloyd, Alex Wilson and many others; with vital experts such as our first shipping expeditor, Yuki Kistler, and our pro-bono lawyers at Jenner & Block; and with early community allies including Unity Temple, The Resource Center, Old St. Pat's, and New Trier High School. The first international shipments Working Bikes made in 2001 were with the help of Amy and Lee's "compadres" from the peace movement, Peaceworks (to Masaya in Nicaragua) and Pastors for Peace (to Cuba).

Through these early years, the network of relationships expanded out in all directions. WB attracted and enabled the emerging Chicago bike culture: Critical Mass, the Rat Patrol (Google it!), Active Trans (CBF at the time), and other vectors of bike hacking and bike activism. Also drawn into the web were more mainstream lovers of vintage bicycles as well as a host of community groups including Seven Generations Ahead, Mercy Housing, World Relief, SOAR, Heartland Alliance, and Greencorps. We found new global partners including Village Bicycle Project and Bikes for the World, both of whom we still work with today. And our volunteer and friend network continued to grow: Gary Gilbert, Steve Marsala, Paula Levin, Daniel Scarangella (AKA Danny Danger), Jon-Richard Little (AKA Johnny Payphone), Dorian Breuer, Andrew McComb, and so many others.

The pattern was set, and not a year (or really a week) has gone by since then that we have not made a new friend or found a new mentor to fill our gaps. Working Bikes of today is the product of thousands of volunteers, hundreds of financial supporters, scores of drop off and collection partners. Every feature of our current building and operations – from Brandon Bernier's bike shop to Dave Gorman's Bikes for Lesotho to Nikki Patino's El Paseo bees on the roof – proceeds from a community-driven, cooperative ethos.

*And 2024 was no exception.* While we continued to nurture our long-time community, we made so many new and vital connections, adding high-energy new volunteers, expanding our staff, implementing RUEDAS, and shipping to Mexico with FMB12 and CIDHDP.

When Working Bikes was first named, it was as **The Working Bikes Cooperative**. While that has never been our official legal name, it remains our everyday operating principle.

Yours in cooperative spirit,



**Trevor Clarke**  
Executive Director



# STAFF MEMBERS IN 2024

**Aaron Brown**

*Production Mechanic*

**Alex Lamers**

*Bike Chicago Specialist*

**Brandon Alcala-Diaz**

*Production Mechanic*

**Carolyn Weber**

*Bookkeeper*

**Chris Czambel**

*Bicycle Acquisitions Specialist*

**Colette Balas**

*Community Programs Manager*

**Davian**

*Community Bicycle Mechanic*

**Derek Villanueva**

*Webstore, Retail, & IT Associate*

**Finn Holtz**

*Social Media Manager*

**Francesco Gonzalez**

*Community Bicycle Mechanic*

**Francisco Rubio**

*Production Mechanic*

**John Clark**

*Online Sales Associate*

**Josh Korby**

*Bicycle Shop Manager*

**Kyle Hensel**

*Production Mechanic*

**Missael Pale**

*Bike Chicago Specialist*

**Ricardo Barrera**

*Community Bike Repairs  
Manager*

**Roberto Patino**

*Bike Chicago Production  
Mechanic*

**Sophia**

*Community Liason and Mechanic*

**Stephen Oberhardt**

*Production Mechanic*

**Trevor Clarke**

*Executive Director*

# BOARD MEMBERS IN 2024

**Dave Gorman**  
*President*

**Dalia Garcia**  
*Vice President*

**Amy Little**  
*Treasurer*

**Mark Dabrowski**  
*Secretary*

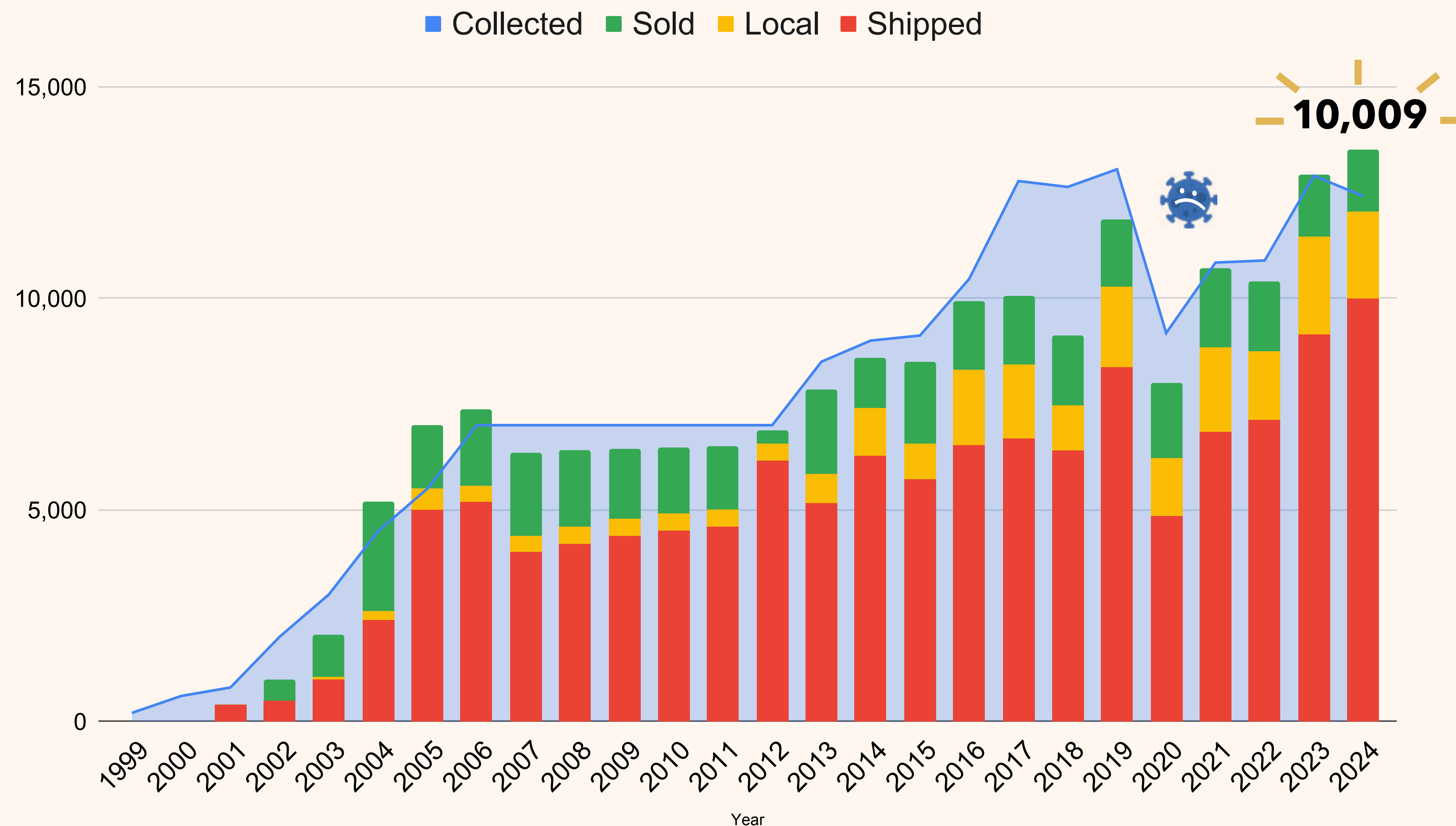
**Lee Ravenscroft**  
*Founder & President Emeritus*

**Angela Taylor**  
**Caronina Grimble**  
**Claire Meyers**  
**Devon Snyder**  
**Faraz Hussain**

**Jerry Cohen**  
**Olin Postlethwait**  
**Phil Kaplan**  
**Reshorna Fitzpatrick**



# THE NUMBERS

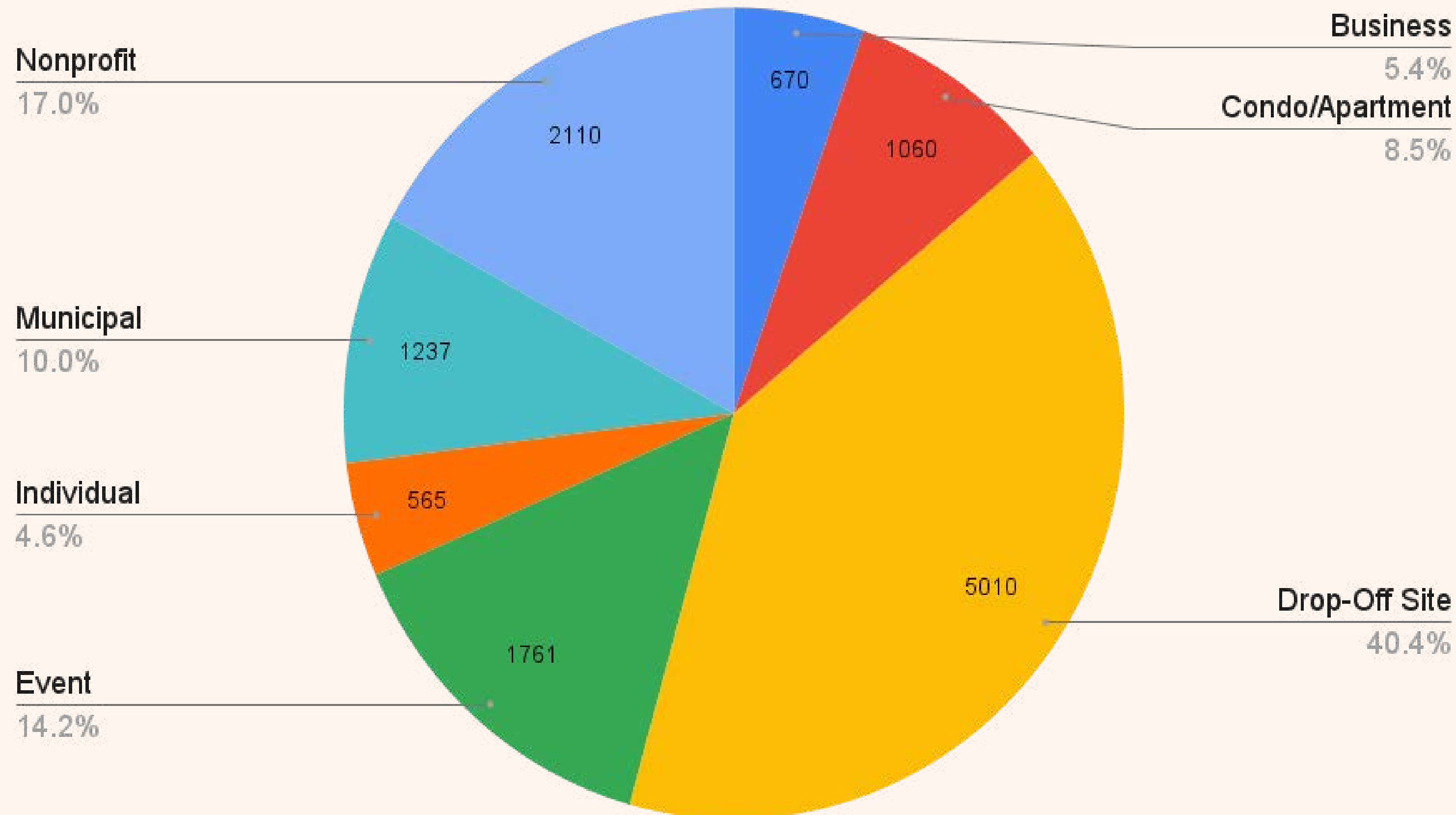


## RECORD YEAR FOR DONATIONS

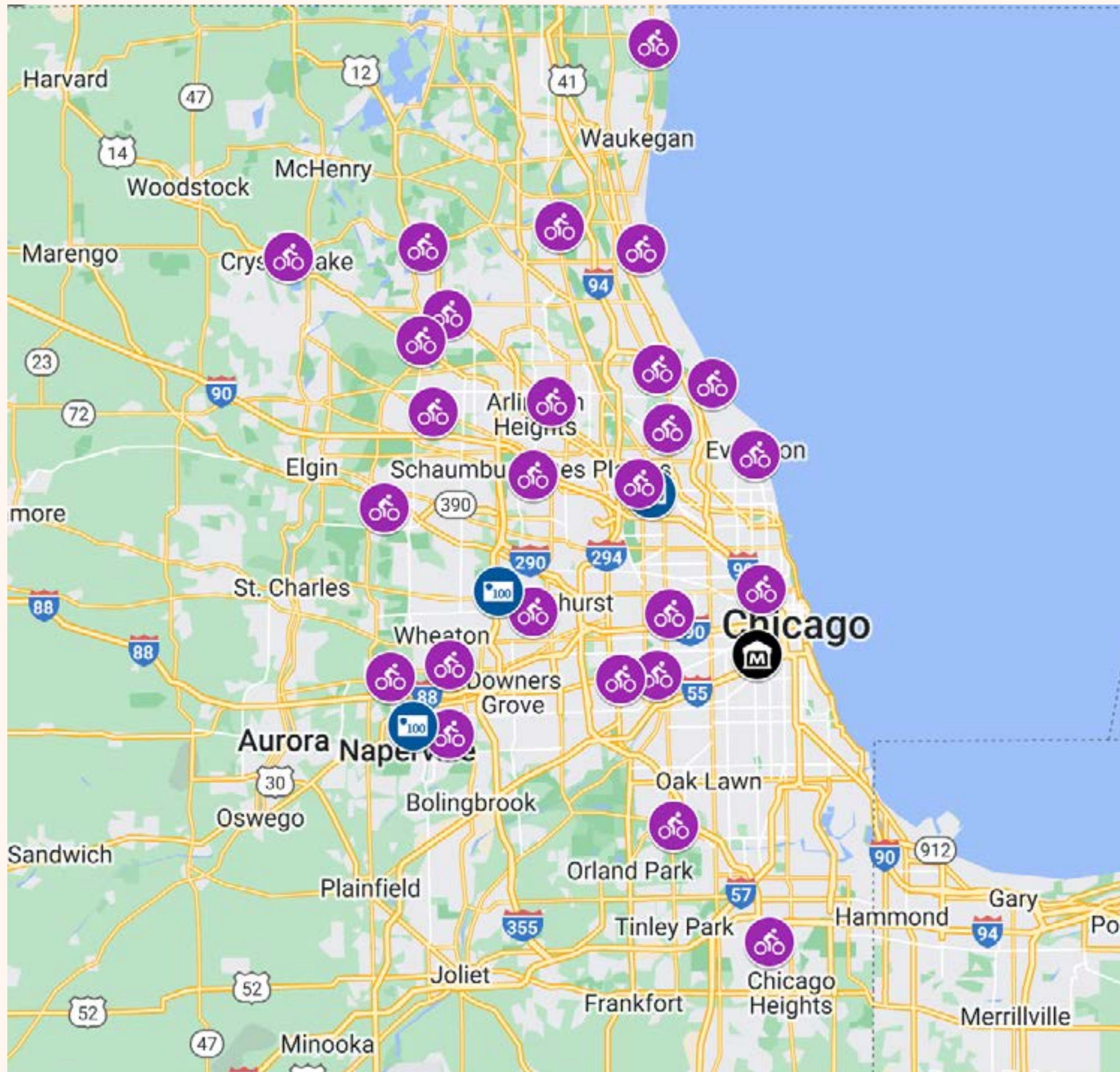
We shipped our first bikes, to Cuba and Guatemala, in 2001. Since then we've sent over **125,000** bikes to our international partners, and have now sent shipments to over 30 countries!

This is our second year of breaking our record, and we are excited to try for a third!

# WHERE BIKES CAME FROM...



Our mission would not be possible without the fantastic relationships we have with our community. From nature preserves to condos to villages and towns, we rely on so many people and organizations to collect these bikes and keep them from landfills so we can give them new life! We appreciate every single bicycle we receive, and deeply value the relationships we have built over the past 25 years.



Bicycles Etc., Lisle  
 Recycled Cycling  
 Village CycleSport, Arlington Heights  
 George Garner Cyclery Libertyville  
 Glenview Cycle  
 Wheel & Sprocket, Evanston  
 George Garner Cyclery Northbrook  
 Wheel & Sprocket, Park Ridge  
 Goodspeed Cycles - Homewood  
 Richard's Bikes  
 7 Mile Cycles  
 Green Bay Cycles  
 Wheel & Sprocket, Oak Park  
 The Wheel Thing

Trek - Wicker Park  
 George Garner Cyclery Lake Zurich  
 Crank Revolution Bike Shop  
 Village CycleSport, Barrington  
 Kozy's Cyclery - Wrigleyville  
 Spin Doctor Cyclewerks  
 Kiddles Sports  
 Beverly Bike & Ski Bike Shop  
 Wheel Werks Bikes  
 REI - Lincoln Park  
 Gears 2 You  
 Zion Cyclery  
 Mill Race Cyclery  
 J & R Cycle and Ski

# OUR BIKE SHOP PARTNERS

Bike shop drop-offs are the largest source of Working Bikes' donated bicycles. Donors who would have a hard time getting to the WB warehouse in Little Village can find donation locations more convenient to them through our [website](#). And folks who bring bikes in to those shops for repair only to find that replacing the bike is a more cost effective path to pedaling again can choose to leave their old ride behind to head to a new home through Working Bikes.

Once a shop hits their capacity for donation bikes, we swoop in with our box truck and haul the donations away. Whether our volunteers fix the donations for local donations, our pros fix them for local sales, or our

international partner mechanics fix them for use in Africa or Central America, *the bikes will roll again!* Shops also help us out with buckets, bags and boxes of used parts from their customers' repairs, upgrades and groupset swaps -- those parts can be impossible to find locally in places like Uganda and El Salvador.

We are extremely grateful for all the bikes and accessories our partners shops bring in, and are always excited to grant them their annual **Top Shop Awards** recognizing the total number of bikes collected over the past year! We're also eager to send folks looking for bike service to our partners.

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BIKE SHOP!**



**427 Bikes**

# 2024 TOP SHOPS

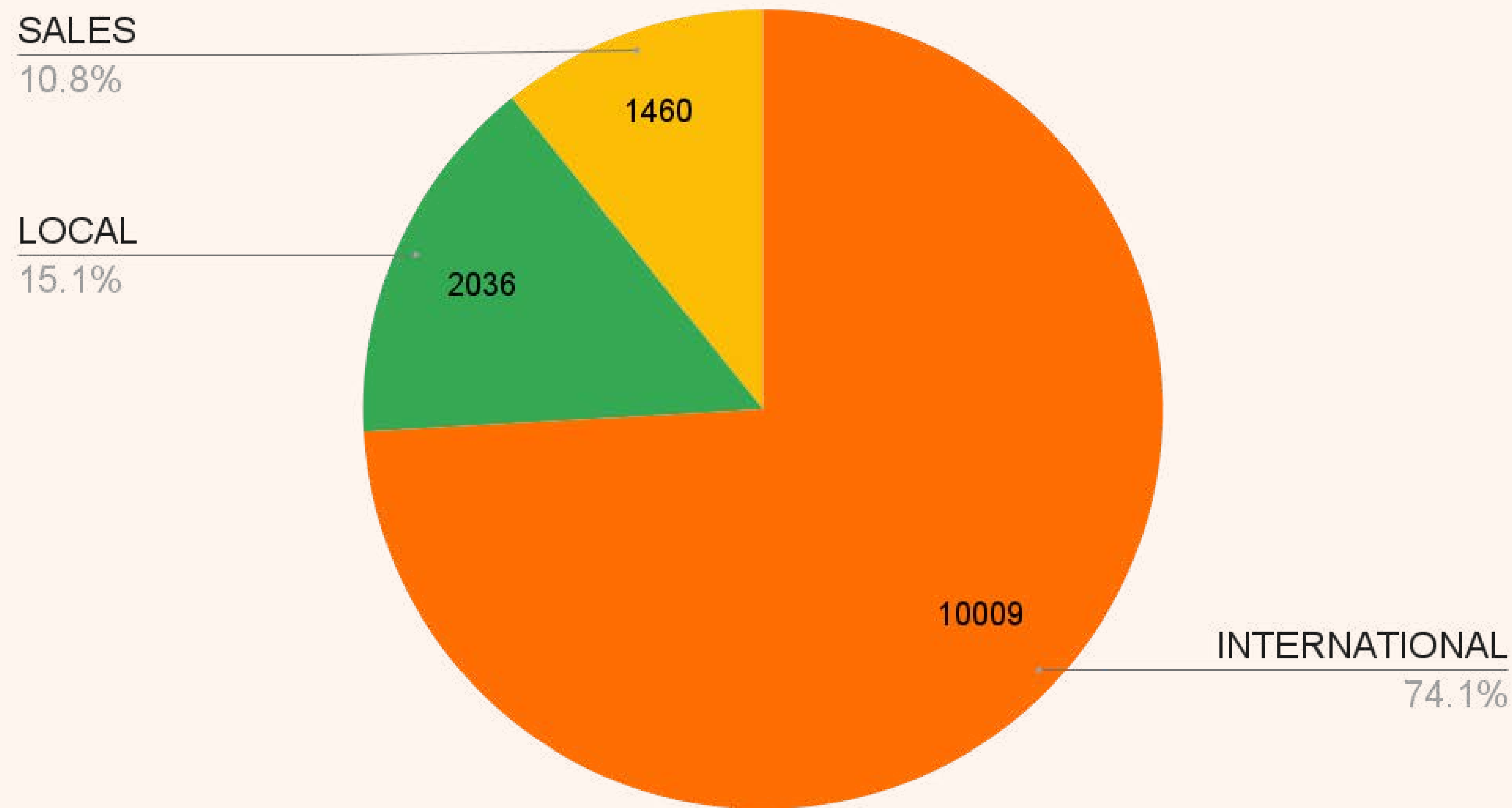
Around the area each year, towns, clubs, and associations hold donation events and bike sales that produce excess inventory. Working Bikes stands ready to take in these bikes.



Throughout the spring and summer, our staff and volunteers spend their weekends harvesting bikes from these events. Thanks to everyone who took time on a weekend, rain or shine, to load up a truck or car with fresh bikes to feed our programs!

# COLLECTION EVENTS

# WHERE BIKES WENT...



## Where does my donation go?

Most of the bikes we receive are shipped abroad to partners in Africa, Latin America, Mexico and ***for the first time this year, Albania!***

A small portion of the bikes we receive go through our production department, where professional mechanics strip them down and build them up again for sale. The funds raised by our retail operations all go to support our work, including our local donation programs [Cycle of Power and Cycle of Peace](#), international donations, and volunteer programming.



# MEXICO

It took a quarter of a century, but we finally got there: ***We sent bikes from Chicago to people who need them in Mexico!***

Previously we'd been thwarted because our usual shipping method—packing full containers and navigating customs and duties with our partners at the ports of entry abroad—is not a good fit for Mexico.

Trade agreements required a per-bike charge which made shipping infeasible.

But last year, thanks to two ingenious and resourceful partners, over 1,000 bikes from the WB warehouse are now in use by folks south of the US border.





*CIDHPDA has provided some fantastic videos of their work, click the image above to check it out!*

## CIDHPDA

Yesenia, Emilio, and the team at [CIDHPDA](#) hook trailers (including one for horses!) up to their pickup, fill them with bikes, and drive loads down to communities in the mountains of **Durango**, where the bikes are helping kids get to school and seeding a training facility to educate bike mechanics

## FORO MUNDIAL de la BICICLETA 12

Samuel and the crew at [Foro Mundial de la Bicicleta 12](#) had a dream, and in 2024 we made it a reality! With a huge assist from Rodart Transportation, Samuel routed a couple of empty containers his cousin was sourcing for resale in Mexico through Chicago to be packed



with bikes. In conjunction with the Mexican Consulate and elected officials in Laredo, Samuel and the team rode bikes to the border, demonstrating they had the people power to get all of the 400+ bikes across into Mexico under the 2-bike-per-person-duty-free loophole. The whole container was allowed to pass and over the course of the year, those bikes made it to new homes in Guadalajara, Mexico City, Oaxaca, and also with the Zapatistas in Chiapas!

# SHIPMENTS FROM MADISON AND ST. LOUIS

Loading containers outside of Chicago has helped meet our international partners' continuously growing demand for bikes.

Partnering with amazing bicycle nonprofits in other parts of the country ensures useful bikes in those communities don't end up at the scrap yard, saves fuel and vehicle wear and tear for the WB fleet, and brings the opportunity to impact lives abroad to communities outside Chicago.

In 2024, Working Bikes helped get 3 containers - 1 loaded in St. Louis and 2 in Madison - to friends abroad from friends stateside.

Patrick and the crew at [BWorks St. Louis](#) had more kid's bikes and mountain bikes than they needed, and our friend Irene at [Cycles for Farmers](#) was in acute need of kid's bikes. With an assist from WB stalwart Jerry, and an amazing group of BWorks volunteers (including former Working Bikes manager Nick Colombo!) the team in STL filled a container with 588 bikes for the team in Kampala.

Up in Madison, WB staff along with Alan, Harvey, Kristi, Noah, Gavin, and a host of volunteers from [Wheels for Winners](#), [Bikes for Kids Wisconsin](#), [Dream Bikes](#), and Trek packed one container in the spring and one container in the fall, over **1,000 bikes** in all, for partners in Ghana and Malawi, respectively. We even had an assist by WB's old friend [The Bike Farmer](#).



# BIKES TO TIRANA IN ALBANIA

A quarter century into our work, word has gotten out: **we've got bikes!** And with a growing social media presence, and growing connections through social media all over the world, we get a few messages a week from people and organizations in Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia (where bike ridership is higher than the US), who could use bikes to support their work and their communities.

Unfortunately, we can't help most of the people who reach out - most folks are looking for the same type of bikes that our existing partners rely on Working Bikes to send.

Most international groups want mountain bikes and hybrids with thick tires and common 559 and 622 ISO wheel sizes.

But we got lucky last year when we heard from our new partners at [\*\*Absolute Bikes Tirana\*\*](#). They had seen our work on our socials and thought we might be able to support their social enterprise in the capital of Albania. And they were happy to accept bikes that had no other obvious homes with our usual partners. Our "basement bikes" – classic Schwinns, Raleighs, and other sturdy steel models with 630 and 590 ISOs – are rolling again in the Balkans!



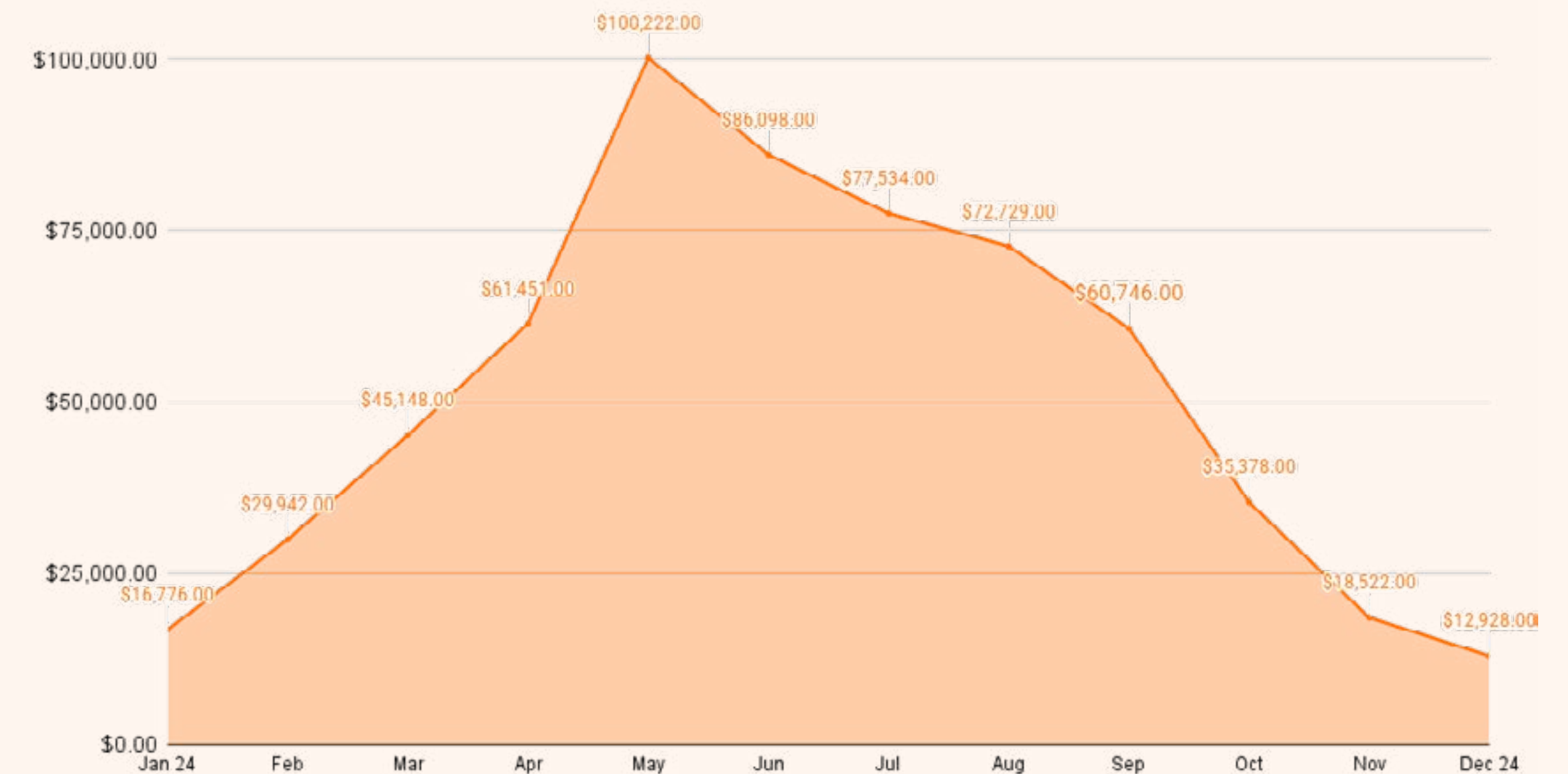
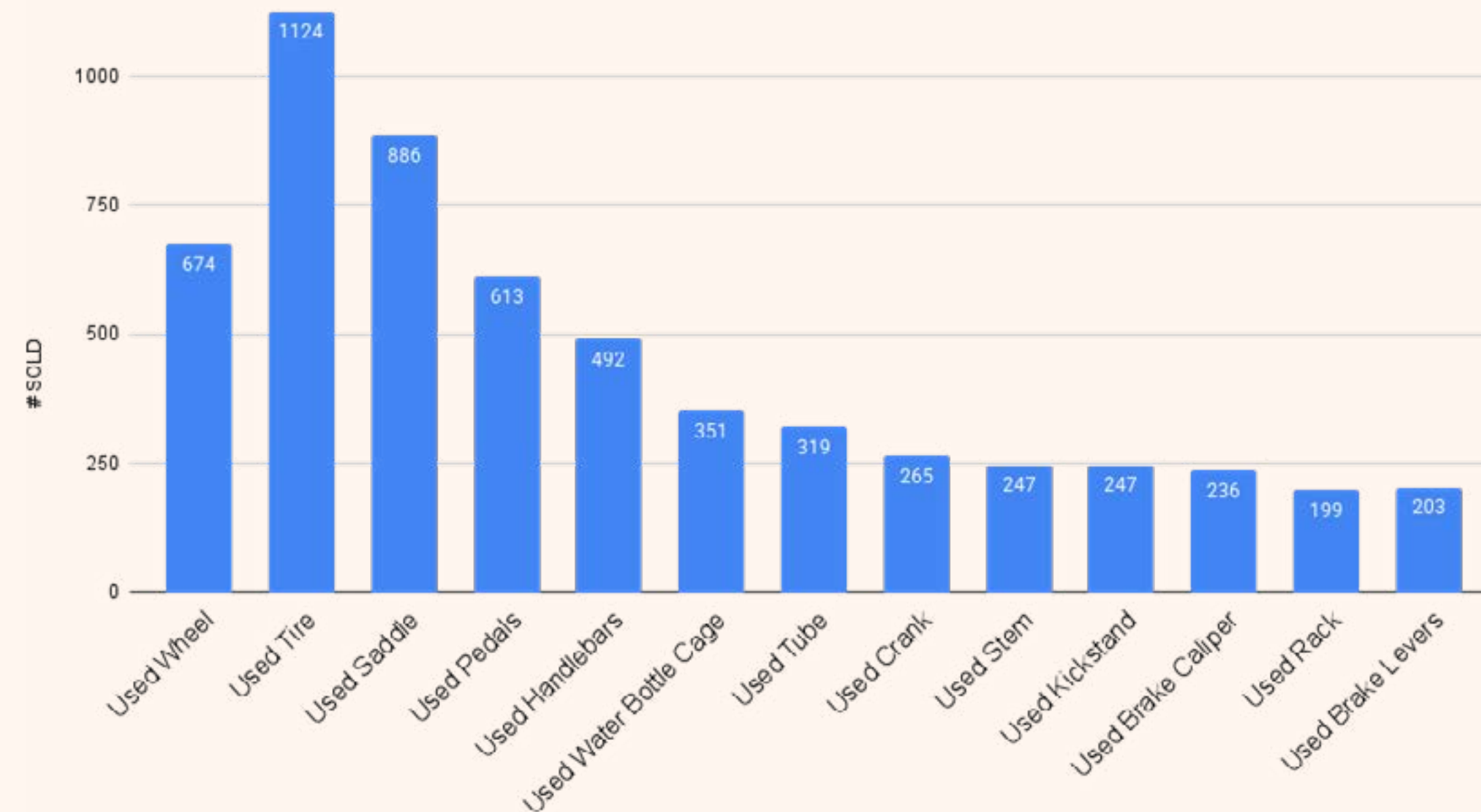


# THE SHOP

# RETAIL

## Reduce Reuse and Recycle

We are proud to re-direct used bike parts from landfills onto Chicago's bicycles, and to have made bike maintenance more accessible for everybody.

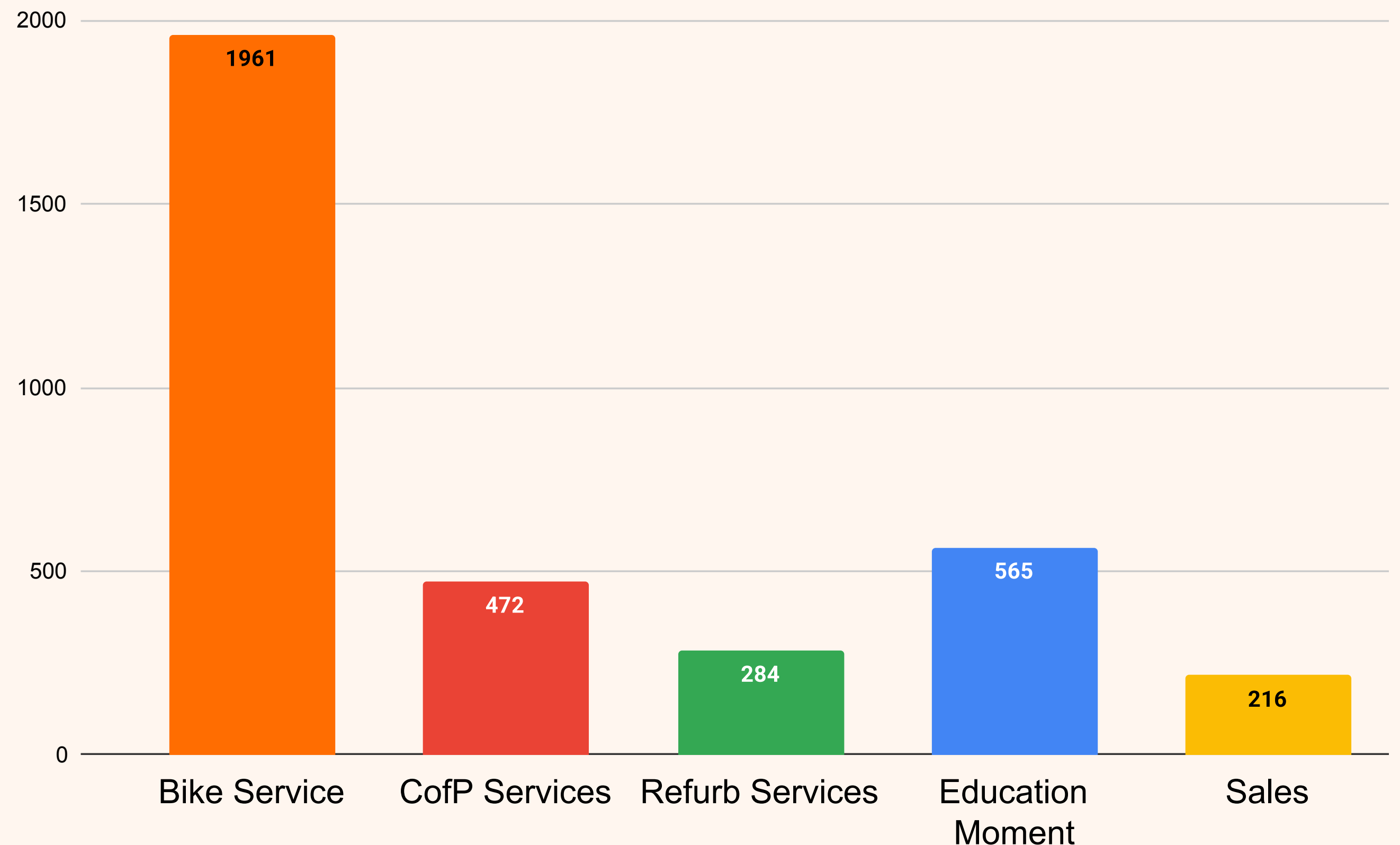


Our retail shop sold **1,460** refurbished bikes, furthering our mission by providing affordable transportation to our community and funding our donations.

# SERVICE DEPARTMENT

## Keeping the Cycle of Power Rolling!

We record data from our service department in order to track and invigorate our commitment to sharing bike knowledge and safety information with customers. In 2024, our mechanics recorded **3,498** total interactions. We serviced **1,961** bikes brought in by local riders and **472** bikes that returned for service after being distributed through our Cycle of Power and Cycle of Peace programs. We became more intentional with COP service, asking recipients to visit after a month with their new bike, so as to catch any problems early and keep the bikes useful as tools.



# BIKE CHICAGO

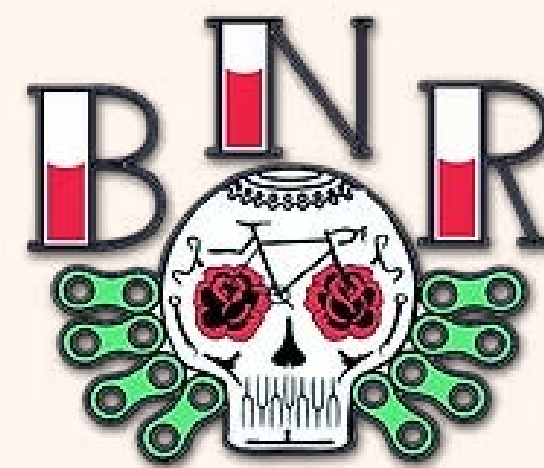
This year, we continued our work supporting this vital program from the **Chicago Department of Transportation** – a push to distribute 5,000 new bikes to people who need them in our city. Over the years, our involvement has grown.

Working Bikes sources the bikes and accessories for the program, coordinates professional bike builds, stores and transports bikes for distribution, and tracks all the donations as the bikes are paired with their new owners.

**1,228 bikes** were donated through the program in 2024, the most given away in a year to date.



*West Town Bikes*



*Bikes and Roses*



*The Recyclery*

Building up over 1,000 bikes for this program would be a stretch for Working Bikes, but our friends at **West Town Bikes, The Recyclery, and Bikes and Roses** are great bike builders, too, and could use more work in the slow season. Those shops put together the majority of bikes distributed (and did an amazing job at that!). And the distributions could not have happened without the stellar work of **Chicago's SAFE Ambassadors**, who notify recipients, make distribution events smooth, and bring amazing education and energy to the program. CDOT makes sure the program runs successfully, and our friends at **WRD Environmental**, home of the GreenCorp Program, host distributions at the **Center for Green Technology** and are the financial link between Working Bikes and the City.



# CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

BASEMENT

LOOMIS

927 S WESTERN

KEDZIE

2434 S WESTERN AVE



**2001**  
First use of  
*Working Bikes*  
as our name

**1999**  
Lee rescues his  
first bike from  
a salvager



**2001**  
First international  
shipments to Cuba  
and Nicaragua

**2003**  
First shipments to  
Ghana and Kenya



**2004**  
Opened our  
storefront

**2008**  
501 c Status  
Obtained

**2006**  
Lee gets  
arrested



**2009**  
Move into  
2434 S Western

**2013**  
Founding of  
Brandon's Bike Shop  
and first non-  
mechanic employee



**2016**  
Cycle of Power  
Program begins

**2024**  
25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



# WORKING BIKES TIMELINE

# 25TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

## Thanks for Keeping Us Rolling!

Working Bikes has been diverting bikes from the waste stream for a quarter century, changing lives both locally and internationally. We had a wonderful group of volunteers, board members, and staff who participated in the Planning Committee to pull off our biggest party to date! Folks on the Committee spent hours coordinating food and beverages, reaching out to sponsors, cleaning and organizing the warehouse, and much much more! The Committee and the Board of Directors set a lofty goal of raising **\$100,000** for the organization, which was more than we've ever raised in a single fundraising event. Thanks to all the hard work of everyone involved, **we raised OVER \$100,000**, making this the most successful fundraising event in 25 years of operation, and we had a blast in the process!



*We asked our community to help us celebrate 25 years, click the photo above or find it on our YouTube channel!*





*Our 25th Anniversary saw the introduction...*



*...subsequent destruction...*



*and valiant repair attempt of the Dunk Tank!*



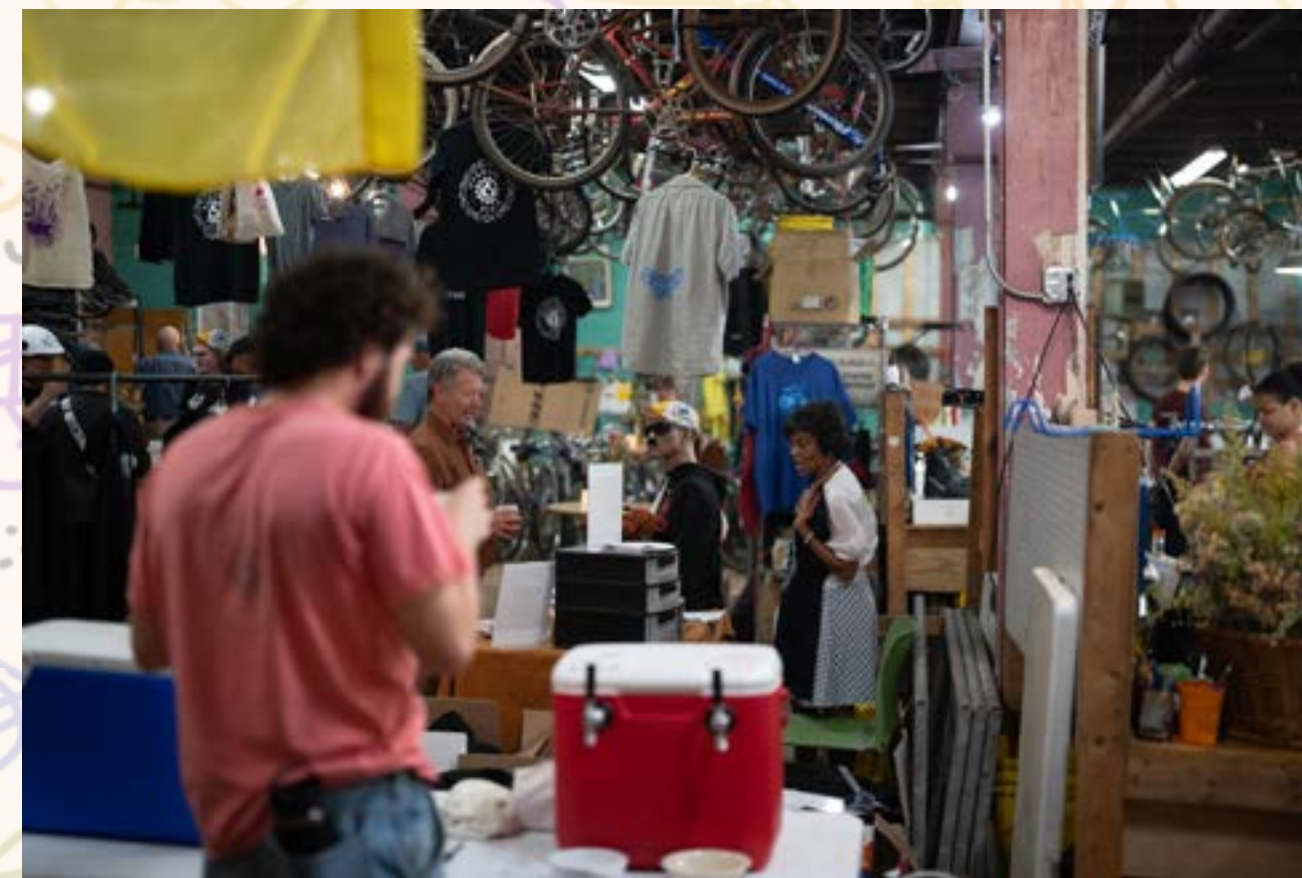
*But mostly it saw the community come together to celebrate*



*With silly bikes...*



*This guy...*



*And lots of great conversations with old and new friends*



# VOLUNTEERS ABROAD

## VISIT TO BWINDI

Tom Mulhern and Kim Erwin had the great fortune in July 2024 to visit with the women of the Bwindi Women's Bicycle Project, a long-time collaborator in Buhoma, Uganda. Tom, Kim and guide, Huza, were welcomed with open arms by (standing, from left), Scovia, Scola, Penelope, and Bridget; as well as by the [Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropies](#) support staff, Dennis (front, right). Tom and Kim carried tools and other gifts from Chicago.



*Click the image above for a link to the presentation Tom gave on their trip to Uganda.*



# LOCAL PROGRAMS



# RUEDAS

**RUEDAS (*Reparaciones Unidas Enfocadas en el Desarrollo y Ayuda*)** is an initiative dedicated to educating newly arrived refugees on bicycle mechanics while fostering their integration into the local cycling community. By providing hands-on learning opportunities, access to reliable transportation, and community engagement, RUEDAS helps empower individuals as they begin their new journeys.

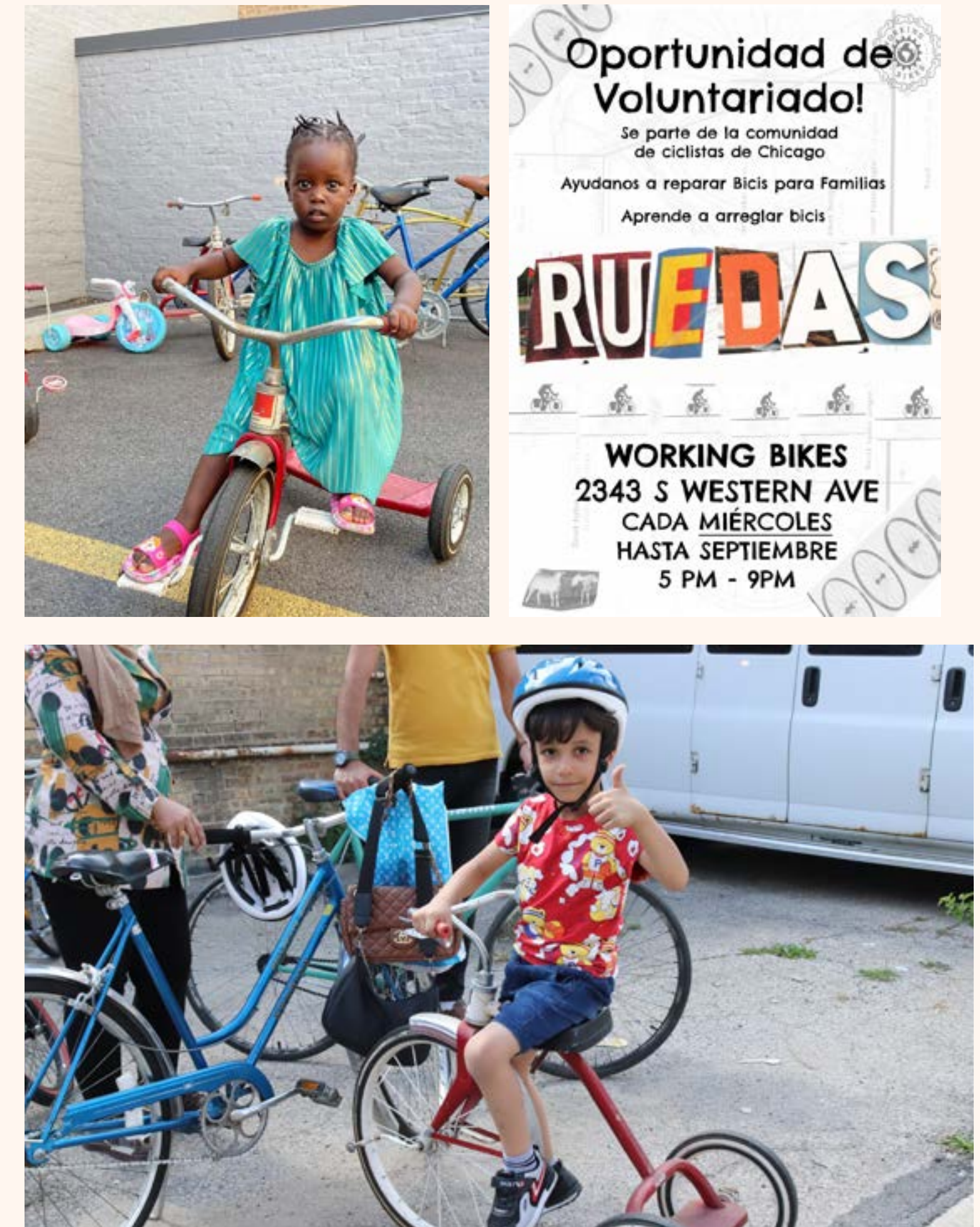
Through RUEDAS Working Bikes partnered with organizations to distribute just over **270 refurbished bicycles to families**. We have hosted multiple pop-up repair sessions at local shelters, equipping new arrivals with essential bike maintenance skills and

ensuring they have safe, functional transportation.

Through this outreach we have formed important relationships with refugee support organizations, increasing awareness and accessibility of our program to those in need.

*Through RUEDAS, we've provided not just bikes, but freedom, empowerment, and a welcoming community for those starting anew.*

A huge thank you to the National Recreation Foundation and Evanston Bicycle Club for making this work possible.



# THE READI CREW



Working Bikes has had the honor of hosting participants in the Rapid Employment and Development Initiative (READI) since 2023. Over **147** individuals come to the warehouse through the program, a handful just for a couple days, more typically for a few months or more. Participants help Working Bikes prep for shipments, organize bikes, and gain mechanic skills in the process. Experience at WB is their bridge to full time employment, whether with the CTA, Target, another large employer, or in the bike community.

A highlight of 2024 was getting to hang out with READI All-Star LeeAndrew at community rides like Think Outside Da Block's Roll N Peace, where he brought the Divvy's in a truck and also brought the wrenching skills he picked up at WB for last minute repairs before the ride.



*Participants in the READI program help all around the shop, from organizing the basement, to prepping and loading shipping containers.*

# LATINOS PROGRESANDO

Working Bikes has a global impact, but loves to build community right in its back yard, too. We're fortunate to have [Latinos Progresando](#) and its **Marshall Square Resource Network** as a key partner to help us do just that! We work with LP (and Santa) to get bikes out in the neighborhood for the holidays and have been honored to receive an MSRN Community Grant to support community collaboration and bike events during the riding season.

In 2024, we partnered with [TCEP](#) to host the Peace Ride in late March. Designed to be the first group ride of the season, over 100 people met up at Saucedo Elementary for some tunes, a ride through the neighborhood, and food to follow.



**LATINOS  
PROGRESANDO**  
LATINOSPRO.ORG



# INTERNSHIPS



*Interns through Urban Alliance:  
Maurice and Jameir*

This year we were lucky to have some fantastic groups of interns from **Speer Academy** and **Urban Alliance**. They were taught valuable bike mechanic skills and we helped guide their personal projects. Maurice and Jameir filmed and edited a documentary video featuring the **Bike Box**, and presented it at our **general meeting**.

One of our Speer Academy interns has transitioned into an employee, and currently assists in our Service Department.



*Interns from  
Speer Academy  
from left to right  
Eric, Davian and  
Soriander*



# NORTH LAWNSDALE READS



*Working Bikes loves books! Our board member Faraz and volunteers helped coordinate the bike raffle.*

We partnered with [Open Books](#) for their annual "Back to School Lit Fest" to encourage reading in North Lawndale. We supported this event with 40 bikes and helmets for a **FREE** bike raffle. Donated kids bikes were given to all kiddos who completed the summer reading challenge bingo card through Open Books and lucky young residents who entered the raffle on the day of the event!



# BIKE BOX



Since 2021, spurred on by a Community Grant to cover bike tools from Quality Bicycle Parts, Working Bikes and [YMEN](#) have brought the bike love to the corner of 13th and Pulaski in the North Lawndale Community.

In addition to years of reliable volunteer support from Murph and Presley, 2024 saw our amazing **Urban Alliance** interns, Jameir and Maurice, focus their summer experience on the Bike Box. They repaired bikes for the community, fixed bikes for sale and donation, and did their part to make sure there were no leftovers from YMEN's Good Grill operation on Wednesday afternoons. Their final project, [a video they produced](#), is a testament to their hard work and the impact of the Bike Box.



# OUR COMMUNITY

# PEACE CIRCLES

At Working Bikes, we use **peace circles**—an approach based on indigenous consensus-building practices—to bring people together through storytelling and active listening. A facilitator guides the conversation, and we pass around a talking piece so everyone has a chance to speak without interruptions.

*It's a simple but powerful way to build trust, work through conflicts, and really get to know one another. And once you get to know someone that well, it becomes a lot harder to accidentally hurt them.*

By meeting in these circles, Working Bikes employees and members have learned about the joys and challenges they share in common, from favorite winter bike modifications to how they approach planning for spring cleaning, and it has



also led to folks getting together after work for game nights and community bike rides.

Working Bikes long-time bike donation partner, [Precious Blood Ministries of Reconciliation \(PBMR\)](#), is a renowned circle-keeping training institution. When Circles were suggested as a tool to build stronger relationships among the diverse groups of people who make Working Bikes all it is, we reached out to PBMR to see if they could help, and did they ever! We've now had 4 Working Bikes staff and board members attend the 4 day circle keeper training in Back of the Yards and are now holding a couple circles at month, with participation by staff, board, and volunteers.

# LET'S KEEP ROLLING FOR ANOTHER 25 YEARS!

LEARN ABOUT  
WORKING BIKES



APRENDE SOBRE  
WORKING BIKES

DONATE  
YOUR BIKES



DONA TUS  
BICICLETAS