



## Community Bike Works: Proposal to Easton Rotary

Community Bike Works teaches life lessons through bicycles to the young people of the Lehigh Valley who could benefit most. Since 1995, nearly 6,000 students have participated in our flagship Earn a Bike program. Up to 500 students each year currently participate in Earn a Bike at our two Allentown bike shops and at Allentown and Bethlehem community schools. In 2019, Community Bike Works was approached by the City of Easton about bringing our programs to the city, to support Easton's focus both on building a bike-friendly city and offering positive experiences to the youth of the West Ward and surrounding areas. In November 2020, the Greater Easton Development Partnership, with support from Air Products, purchased the building at 921 Spruce Street specifically for use as Community Bike Works' community bike shop and youth center. Community Bike Works respectfully requests \$50,000 in capital support from the Easton Rotary to fund Phase 1 renovations to the Easton bike shop and to support the purchase of a vehicle to transport students and bikes.

**BIKE MENTORING AND OTHER PROGRAMS.** In Earn a Bike, students work with adult mentors for a course in bike mechanics and safety. Students begin by learning tool use and safety, and each class teaches how to overhaul one system of the bike, from tires and tubes to headsets and brakes. While working on their bikes, students practice problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, and they experience first-hand the satisfaction of finishing a difficult project. A mid-semester "bike rodeo" ensures that students know how to ride safely. Once students complete their classes, they earn their refurbished bike and new helmet!

All bike mentoring students are invited to participate in our range of enrichment programs, including:

- **DROP-IN.** Students engage in bike work and STEAM activities every weekday year-round. Drop-in offers a healthy meal or snack, and safe space to build relationships with mentors and peers.
- **CYCLING.** Casual rides on the D&L and in local parks introduce youth to the joys of bike rides and the positive health impacts of cycling. Advanced riders can participate in track, road, and mountain biking.
- **YOUTH LEADERSHIP.** Teens engage in deeper learning while finding their voices in their communities. Each year, a fall seminar focuses on college/careers, the spring on civic engagement, and the summer is an arts experience. Youth Leaders also provide direction on the future of Community Bike Works and are partners in our racial and economic justice work.

**IMPACT.** Of the students who completed Earn a Bike in our most recent program year, 91% reported that Earn a Bike helped them improve their problem-solving skills. 93% of students said that coming to Earn a Bike helped them feel better about their future, and 98% reported learning new things. Forty percent of students got their very first bike, and 95% of students would recommend Earn a Bike to friends. We work with the United Way to collect

and analyze data on school attendance; in a typical school year, more than 75% of students who participated in the Earn a Bike program at a United Way community school improve or maintain their school attendance.

Community Bike Works: Easton will build on our more than 25 years of experience in youth bike education to reach up to 150 Easton and Northampton County youth each year; an Easton bike shop will allow Community Bike Works to truly engage youth across the entire Lehigh Valley. Mary, 12, lives in Easton's West Ward and traveled to Allentown for Earn a Bike. ***"Learning how to ride my bike, and about the different parts of a bike, felt really good,"*** Mary told us. ***"It felt like a real self-accomplishment. My favorite part was how supportive Mr. Mac and Mr. Adonis were. They would say things like 'you can do this.' This is the most perfect program out there."***

**A RECORD OF SUCCESS.** Community Bike Works is a strong organization known for our high-quality youth bike mentoring programs. Our Earn a Bike and Junior Earn a Bike programs build connections with students with student-to-adult ratios of no more than 4 to 1. We work with the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and other partners to evaluate and improve our programs on an ongoing basis. In 2016, we opened an East Allentown bike shop, at the request of local supporters, to better engage students there. In this process, we learned important lessons that will inform the development of an Easton location.

At our new bike shop, Community Bike Works plans to engage West Ward, Easton, and Northampton County students in youth bike education as of the summer 2021. We will offer Earn a Bike, afternoon Drop-in, Youth Leadership, and our range of recreational and competitive cycling programs—road, track, and mountain biking. As at our Allentown bike shops, these programs will allow students to earn bikes of their own and develop the skills needed to become safe riders—and healthy and supported youth who have the skills they need to succeed.

**COMMUNITY NEEDS.** Community Bike Works is committed to racial and economic justice and environmental sustainability, which we seek to uphold across all our programs. According to the American Community Survey, 95% of West Ward youth live in families with low incomes and a majority are BIPOC. Data from [nces.ed.gov](https://nces.ed.gov) also tell us that 80% of Paxinosa students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. While these statistics do not paint a full picture of the neighborhood youth, we know that "socioeconomic conditions" and "availability of community-based resources in support of community living and opportunities for recreational and leisure-time activities" are social determinants of health (<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>). Community Bike Works' programs directly address the latter, while working specifically with students from families with low incomes. Providing access to a free bicycle and helmet helps make the Lehigh Valley's roads and trails accessible to all.

**PARTNERSHIPS.** In order to provide the highest-quality bike mentoring experiences for our Easton students, we are developing partnerships with several Easton youth organizations. To date, we have made connections with partners and potential partners including Communities in Schools, Paxinosa and Cheston elementary schools, the Easton Area Community Center, and the Easton/Phillipsburg Branch of the Greater Valley YMCA. We will continue to build relationships with the Boys and Girls Club of Easton, the Easton Area Neighborhood Center, the Children's Home of Easton, and other partners as appropriate.

Additional partnerships include the City of Easton, GEDP, Lafayette College, Communities in Schools and Hearst Publishing. Our partnership with Hearst led Bike Works to be featured in the cover article of the February 2021 issue of *Bicycling* magazine. We are proud to have our students represent the Lehigh Valley in this nationally distributed publication. Siana 12, told *Bicycling*: ***"I didn't know anything about how bikes worked, and all of it was hard for me. Then I learned to fix a tire and brakes, so now I'm confident."***

**PROJECT BUDGET.** Creating a safe and welcoming bike shop at Community Bike Works: Easton will be a two-part endeavor. The first phase of renovations will address necessary building repairs and a vehicle purchase, while the second phase will help us create a welcoming space for our students. Easton Rotary funding will go towards the first phase, and will cover all vehicle-related expenses and a significant portion of the building renovations.

Renovations to the 921 Spruce Street facility and a vehicle for our Easton programs are essential to fulfilling our mission at Community Bike Works: Easton. Currently, the building needs work done to bring the building up to

code. Our high-quality programs will rely on a bike shop that provides a physically and emotionally safe space for students. A vehicle for our Easton bike shop will help maintain our bike shop by transporting bikes for scrap, and provide transportation to different programs and learning opportunities for students when it is safe to do so.

Phase 2 will cover building upgrades, including new flooring and the construction of a kitchenette, and is expected to cost \$225,500, for a total capital cost of \$358,300. We are currently working with Boyle Construction to finalize drawings for the improvements. Planning and design services have been donated by Artefact, Inc., and the City of Easton is donating paving and related services. Community Bike Works and GEDP will work together to raise the total renovation costs, and we recently submitted a request for \$100,000 in Community Project Funding to Congresswoman Susan Wild's office. In addition, we will be diligent with vehicle selection and pricing and, if our expenses come under budget, will use the remaining Easton Rotary funding towards the renovations.

It is important to note that this budget does not include any program-related costs. Operating expenses for Community Bike Works: Easton are budgeted at \$200,000 for the first year of programming, and that budget can be provided upon request. We are working with several local funders, including the Two Rivers Health and Wellness Foundation and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, to support our operations.

### **Community Bike Works: Easton Phase 1**

<b>Building Renovations</b>	<b>\$107,800</b>
Exterior Stairwells	\$15,000
Masonry Repair	\$15,000
Framing/Sheetrock	\$26,000
Repair and Paint Ceiling	\$6,000
Bathroom Plumbing	\$16,000
Electrical Clean-up	\$5,000
Fire Safety Upgrades/Certifications	\$5,000
Construction Management	\$10,000
10% Contingency Labor & Supplies	\$9,800
<b>Vehicle Costs</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
Vehicle Purchase	\$20,000
Wrapping	\$3,000
Insurance Costs	\$2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$132,800</b>

**ROTARY SUPPORT.** Community Bike Works is proud of our long-standing relationships with Rotary clubs, and would be thrilled to expand our ties to Rotary in Easton. In 2015, four local Rotaries (Allentown, Allentown West, Bethlehem, and Morning Star Rotaries) helped us buy our very first vehicle, which bears the Rotary logo on the back and helps us transport students and bikes throughout the Lehigh Valley. As part of the Easton vehicle purchase, we plan to wrap the vehicle with both the Rotary and Community Bike Works' logos. We would also be open to other opportunities to include the Rotary name and logo in the bike shop, and we would be pleased to further discuss options with the Easton Rotary Club.

We would also welcome Easton Rotary volunteers to work with our students as soon as we can safely do so. With your support, Community Bike Works will be able to offer a safe and welcoming place to the young people of the West Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods. Thank you for your consideration.