

Make a Difference Day: Give bikes to help the homeless



1300 Riverside Ave.
 Bike Drive, October 24, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Social Issues reporter Sarah Jane Kyle explains how to get involved on Make A Difference Day 2015. Valerie Mosley/The Coloradoan

 **Sarah Jane Kyle**, sarahkyle@coloradoan.com 12:48 p.m. MDT October 20, 2015



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(Photo: Sarah Jane Kyle/Coloradoan library)

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The Fort Collins Coloradoan wants to make a difference in the lives of our community's most vulnerable this [Make a Difference Day](#) by providing up to 50 bikes to the city's homeless and formerly homeless population.

Transportation can be a huge issue for the homeless community in Fort Collins. Many do not have cars. Relying solely on the bus system can be a challenge when trying to make it to appointments or a job on time.

Bicycles give individuals "independence and flexibility," said Kim Iwanski, spokeswoman for Fort Collins Housing Authority.

Fort Collins Rescue Mission said bikes, coupled with public transportation, are the main mode of transportation for their clientele.

To help alleviate some of these issues, the Coloradoan is asking the community to donate gently used adult bikes to help those in need. Bikes will be tuned up prior to donation and will be donated to four area agencies for distribution: Catholic Charities, Fort Collins Rescue Mission, Redtail Ponds and the Sister Mary Alice Murphy for Hope.

c Here's a look at our recipient agencies and how they plan to use your donations to

make a difference.

Catholic Charities

WHAT: Catholic Charities provides shelter to those experiencing homelessness on a nightly basis. The organization's emergency shelter serves up to 30 homeless individuals a night, or up to 50 a night during the winter months. Its extended stay program, which seeks to help those experiencing homelessness find stability and move out of homelessness, serves about 55 people at one time. Catholic Charities also provides free lunches to the community and a variety of other services to help those in need.

WHERE: 460 Linden Center Drive, Fort Collins

HOW THEY WILL USE THE BIKES: Catholic Charities plans to use the bicycles donated on Make a Difference Day to give replacement bicycles to homeless clients who have lost their bikes or had them stolen. Any remaining bikes will be available to shelter guests on an as-needed basis to allow more people to get to work.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE: Visit www.ccdenver.org/larimer-county-services/.

Fort Collins Rescue Mission



Volunteers work in the kitchen before supper is served at the Fort Collins Rescue Mission. (Photo: Coloradoan library)

WHAT: Fort Collins Rescue Mission provides up to 90 overnight beds and showers to men and women experiencing homelessness each night. The program also offers two free meals a day to those in need and distributes clothing for men, women and children.

WHERE: 316 Jefferson St., Fort Collins

HOW THEY PLAN TO USE THE BIKES: Fort Collins Rescue Mission will do a random lottery for individuals who need a bike and donate the bicycles to the winners permanently.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE: Visit www.fortcollinsrescuemission.org/.

Redtail Ponds



Redtail Ponds provides permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals and affordable units for low-income individuals. (Photo: Kevin Duggan/Coloradoan library)

WHAT: Redtail Ponds is a 60-unit permanent supportive housing and affordable housing complex operated by Fort Collins Housing Authority in south Fort Collins. Redtail Ponds is fully leased, with 25 units rented to formerly homeless individuals with a disability, 15 units rented to previously homeless veterans and 20 units rented to low/moderate income individuals.

WHERE: 5080 Fossil Blvd., Fort Collins

HOW THEY PLAN TO USE THE BIKES: Redtail Ponds plans to create an onsite bike library so residents can check out bikes whenever they need transportation.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE: Visit www.fchousing.com.

Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center for Hope



The Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center for Hope, photographed on May 6. (Photo: Coloradoan library)

WHAT: The Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center for Hope hosts a collaborative hub of nonprofit agencies providing human services to those experiencing homelessness.

It serves about 924 individuals each quarter.

WHERE: 242 Conifer St., Fort Collins

HOW THEY PLAN TO USE THE BIKES: Murphy Center staff and partner organizations will select guests to receive a bicycle on a permanent basis.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE: Visit www.murphycenterforhope.org.

How to help

Donate your gently used bicycle from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24 at the Fort Collins Coloradoan, 1300 Riverside Ave. [Austin Taco](#), a local food truck, will be onsite throughout the day. Donations of new helmets and gently used bicycle lights and locks will also be accepted.

Make a Difference Day

Make a Difference Day is a national effort encouraging community members to volunteer. National Make a Difference Day is Oct. 24. Locally, it is organized by United Way of Larimer County and Make a Difference Day activities last a week, with volunteer opportunities beginning Monday, Oct. 19 and concluding Sunday, Oct. 25.

To register or see a full list of projects, visit www.uwaylc.org/MakeADifferenceDay. The Coloradoan's project does not require advanced registration.

Follow Sarah Jane Kyle on Twitter [@sarahjanekyle](https://twitter.com/sarahjanekyle) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/reportersarahjane.