

Christian Children's Fund

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Pedal Power: Bike Donations Give a Boost to South Dakota Children

Richmond, Va. – June 9, 2009 – Dozens of children on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota are pedaling their way to new adventures and a healthier lifestyle thanks to a recent bike donation from Unity North Church in Coon Rapids, Minn.

The church's youth group gathered donated bikes and purchased used bikes to give to the Christian Children's Fund program in the Cherry Creek community on the reservation. About 40 bikes were given to CCF.

The bike donation is part of CCF's staff work in that area to combat childhood obesity. Almost half the youth on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation have health concerns, such as diabetes, due to obesity.

The children simply see the bikes as fun.

"I love my bike," said 6-year-old Jayla. "My bike takes me everywhere."

Like Jayla, 9-year-old Esperonza enjoys the new-found freedom a bike offers.

"Me and my bike can go anywhere we want to now," she said.

CCF's U.S. National Director Raquel Oliva said children in the small village previously had to "check out" one of the four bikes in the program if they wanted to ride. Now, Oliva said, "the whole community is very excited" about having more bikes.

"Every time I think about the children that day, I get all happy inside," Oliva said of the day the bikes arrived.

"I don't care if I don't get anything else," 11-year-old Angelo said about the donation.

CCF staff is currently working on programs that address bike safety. The church's youth group, Youth of Unity, is currently collecting more bikes to donate to CCF's programs in South Dakota, said Unity North Church Pastor Carol Kniskern.



Christian Children's Fund is a global force for children, helping the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable survive and thrive in order to reach their full potential. Serving children since 1938, CCF works in 31 countries and helps more than 15.2 million children and family members worldwide, regardless of race, creed or origin. CCF is a member of the ChildFund Alliance. It has earned 4 stars from Charity Navigator.

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“They know they can make a difference in people’s lives,” Kniskern said about the youth group.

The CCF program on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota began in July 2008. The reservation is home to the Lakota tribe. The CCF program seeks to provide a nurturing and protective environment for children in the communities of Eagle Butte, Cherry Creek and LaPlant.

CCF programs there include youth leadership, early childhood development, health promotion, reading readiness and life skills.

For more information about CCF visit www.christianchildrensfund.org. CCF will begin operating as ChildFund International on July 1.

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