

Join The Parade

Adaptive bikes give Beaumont kids that beloved childhood experience.

Richard Keldan
Special to the Jewish News

Who doesn't remember their first bike? Mine was a red Schwinn Tiger. I was no different than most other children — I loved my bike and used it on a regular basis, but I took it for granted.

On July 11 at Beaumont Children's Hospital, about 100 children received their first bike, but I guarantee you none of them took it for granted.

All of these children have special needs that prohibit them from having a "normal" bike from a bicycle shop or big box store. In fact, these custom adaptive bikes cost an average of \$1,700 and many are more than \$4,000.

Bike Day could only be described as "inspiring." The children each came with their families while vendors and therapists made final adjustments to their new bikes. Their smiles were amazing. They took their bikes into the parking lot under supervision and went for their first spin.

These bikes not only allow these children to experience one of the joys of childhood and build self-esteem, but will also allow them to participate in family and social activities as well as be integrated into their physical therapy.

Three children with cerebral palsy live in a group home in Detroit and they received their first bike thanks to a generous grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities. When one girl met Kelly Donaldson, board member of Ronald McDonald House Charities, she exclaimed, "It's a miracle!" and gave Donaldson a big hug. Another recipient from last year won two gold medals at the Special Olympics.

This year marks 10 years of Bike Day. The Beaumont Children's Hospital program continues to grow from 22 recipients in 2004 to 101 in 2014. Since its inception, 547 bikes have been given to families across Southeast Michigan at a cost of \$774,518. This is the third year Detroit2Nepal has supported this program.

The annual fundraiser, Miles4Alex, is at the Birmingham Bike Festival Aug. 24. Festival founder Jeff Surnow always says, "It's all about the kids."

Join the bike parade at 12:20 p.m. along a half-mile course in downtown Birmingham. Participants will include children on their new custom adaptive bikes, children from pediatric oncology and children from the community.



Dr. Richard Keldan checks out Justin's new bike.



Isabel looks happy on her new bike.

After the bike parade, all children are welcome at the Rock Companies/ Beaumont Children's Fair from 1-4 p.m. on Martin Street behind the Surnow Building.

Individuals and teams of children and/or adults can sign up to raise funds and participate in the bike parade on Crowdrise.com/miles4alex. Donations can also be made at Detroit2Nepal.org, or checks can be mailed to D2N, 2035 Bayou, West Bloomfield, MI 48323. D2N is a registered nonprofit organization and all contributions are tax-deductible.

Richard Keldan, M.D., is founder and director, D2N: Detroit2Nepal Foundation.