

Thursday, Dec. 06, 2012

Aggie Blue Bikes Teams up With Sub for Santa



Aggie Blue Bikes will donate 15 bicycles to the Cache County Sub for Santa program this holiday season. Jessica Fife photo credit.

The Student Life section of *Utah State Today* highlights work written by the talented student journalists at Utah State University. Each week, the editor selects a story that has been published in *The Utah Statesman* or the *Hard News Café* or both for inclusion in *Utah State Today*.

Aggie Blue Bikes Teams up With Sub for Santa

By [Tmera Bradley](#), staff writer, *The Utah Statesman*, Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Aggie Blue Bikes is doing its part to holiday cheer by donating childrens' bicycles to the Cache County Sub for Santa program.

Susan Rasmussen, director of Sub for Santa, said there were about 25 bikes donated last year, eight of which came from Aggie Blue Bikes.

Rasmussen said parents send in an application with three wants and three needs of the child. The families go through an interview to see if they are eligible for the Sub for Santa program. Eligibility means they make less than 125 percent of the poverty level each year, which is \$24,000 for a family of four, Rasmussen said.

“Last year we served 1,237 children, so there’s a real need,” Rasmussen said.

Stephanie Tomlin, Aggie Blue Bikes Coordinator, said this is the sixth year of collaborating with Sub for Santa. The program is donating about 15 bikes this year.

“It’s really based off of what bikes and resources are donated to us,” Tomlin said. “That really translates into what we can donate to them because we’re also an operating nonprofit, so we donate all the time and the parts that go into them. If we can get a little help in that end, it helps us a lot to get more bikes donated.”

Tomlin said any bike with under a 20-inch wheel is included in the donation for local children. All donations are accepted, regardless of what condition they are in.

“We try to ensure that any bike we take to the Sub for Santa program goes in there looking as close to a newly built bike as possible,” said Ryan Keepers, a student employee at Aggie Blue Bikes. He said they don’t donate bikes that have any major damages or components that don’t function properly.

“We also make sure if there is any significant damage to the visibility of the bike, to the paint or the frame, that we actually have that repaired,” he said.

The bikes are then sandblasted and powder-coated free of charge at Cache Valley Coating, a local powder coating shop.

“It’s really amazing that they do that because that helps us make the bikes look literally better than new when they’re finished,” Tomlin said. “They come out with shiny new paint and new components. We put a lot of work into them, so they’re basically brand new bikes when they come out.”

Even if a bike is not in working order, Aggie Blue Bikes will accept the donation for parts.

“If we decide the frame itself is unusable, we will then actually take all the parts off and use them for a different bike,” Tomlin said.

Along with bicycles, Tomlin said cash donations are a big part in the process.

“We’ve kind of diagnosed all the bikes and we know which parts we need and what we need to buy for them,” Tomlin said. “So at this point we need the means to buy them, so that’s a big factor.”

All donations to Aggie Blue Bikes are accepted year round.

“It’s ongoing, because even if we don’t get bikes in time for us to get them

ready for this year, we'll just save them for next year, and that goes for any of our bikes," Tomlin said. "If we get kids bikes in the summer, we'll just save them for this event so its definitely something that's ongoing and we're always accepting donations."

Aggie Blue Bikes has been in providing bicycles to students and faculty since 2005. Most of the bikes are donations that have been refurbished. Utah State University students can check out a bike for the weekend or even longer.

"We have three month rentals which are all donated bikes," Keepers said. "Those are bikes that we've donated. We've rebuilt the bike, torn it down piece by piece, cleaned it, repainted it, brought it right back together in the best working possible order. Those are the bikes that make up the large majority of our rental system."

Tandems, unicycles and mountain bikes are also available to students free of charge. Keepers said there are more than 300 bikes in stock, but availability varies depending on the season.

"During the summer season we will generally have most of the 24-hours checked out and almost all of our three month rentals," Keepers said. "It's a very very hot commodity in the summer, so we might have 20 bikes on hand at most."

Keepers said they usually have 100 to 120 bikes on hand during the winter since most people don't like to ride during cold weather conditions.

Tomlin said if students or community members want to give their old bicycles or cash donations, they are tax deductible.

"They can just swing by or get in touch with me," Tomlin said.

