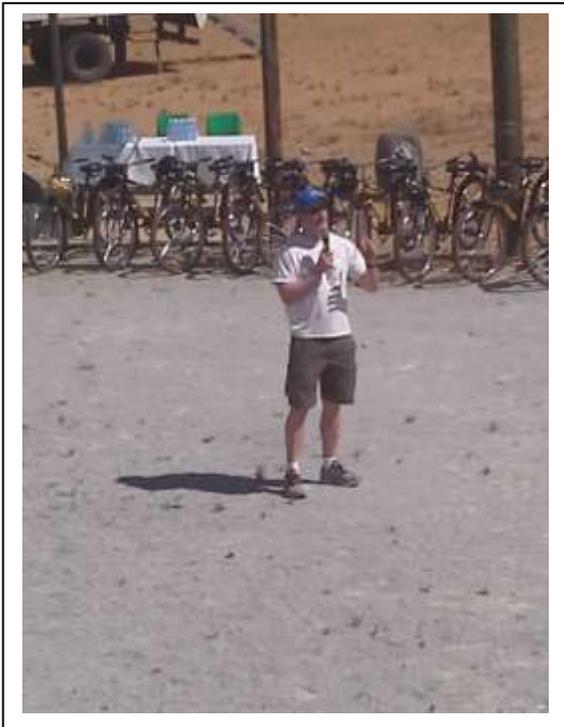


IN COLLABORATION WITH



BACKGROUND:

The African Scholars' Fund was introduced to David Brienza (the driving force behind BikeTown Africa) in **November 2015**, when invited to take part in the Life Choices Bike Project. It was here that we were afforded the opportunity to facilitate a donation of 60 bikes to learners from 3 rural schools on the outskirts of Cape Town. The handover took place in Wellington on Saturday 28th November 2015. ASF Learners from lingcingazethu High School in Ceres; Masakheke High School in Robertson and Noorder Paarl High School were in attendance and left elated with their newly acquired means of transport to and from school. Our relationship with David, who hails from the USA has since grown stronger and we thank Life Choices for the introduction. The collaboration continues to bring much hope and joy to our learners.



August 2016: This year David and the BikeTown Africa donors had 100 bikes earmarked for schools identified by the ASF. We recognised that lingcingazethu High School situated in Ceres had a much greater need than was met with the November 2015 handover. Hence, in addition to the 20 bikes then handed over, we allocated a further 40 bikes to the school. The balance of 60 bikes was earmarked for learners at Saxon Sea Secondary School (in the Westcoast town of Atlantis, Western Cape). Since not every learner was to receive a bike, we decided on doing the handover on a Saturday to lessen the feeling of: “I did not get a bike” that would inevitably be experienced by those looking on. The day was marked with much celebration with the learners of Saxon Sea performing cultural dances. In turn they were entertained by a group of four boys from the gang-ridden area of Ocean View – youngsters that had matriculated the year before and were now “making ends meet” with their dance performances. Precision dancing that was entertaining, yet highlighted the challenges faced in their marginalised community.

It is to be noted that this is not merely a case of bikes arrive and we hand over. No, David and volunteer(s) – pending who is able to accompany him from the States, arrive a day or two before the handover date. They make sure that they are present when the bikes arrive (it is trucked in unassembled). Assembly of the vast number of bikes starts immediately and usually carries over to the next day. Day three is set aside for handover, after which David and his volunteer(s) immediately depart back to the States.



August 2017: Having now cemented the partnership and entering our third year of collaboration, Biketown Africa requested we identify a school situated in the more deeply rural areas. With 370 bikes being made available for distribution, there was a definite sense of: “let’s try and give a bike to as many learners as is possible”. We turned our focus to the Eastern Cape, where small rural schools abound and settled on Thobelani High School.

Thobelani High School has a total of 353 learners registered (2017) so we could confirm with David that every learner would indeed get a bicycle. The excitement ran high when we contacted the school, who immediately informed the learners. They in turn informed their parents and before we knew it, the entire village was abuzz with the news. Not only that every learner would receive a bike, but that each would also receive a windbreaker rainjacket (this was also donated by BikeTown Africa) and a stationery set (stationery was collected by the 2017 Interact Club of Diocesan College (Bishops College)).

This was “big news” for the little village and parents started getting their best dress out for the occasion, which left the school with little choice but to hire a tent to accommodate the expected guests, which included the Ward Councillor (an ex-bursar of the ASF) and 3 Representatives from the Department of Education, of which a contingent also representing the financial, transport, supply chain management & communications sectors presented on the day. The Department of Education donated meat to the value of R1000 towards meeting the catering needs, upon which a further R4500 was made available by BikeTown Africa to ensure that the 353 learners and their parents; donors, guests & volunteers; staff & governing body members be fed. It is unfortunate that the handing out of bikes & jackets to the learners prevented David and his volunteers from joining the guests for lunch, but we have come to know them as “being on hand for the benefit of the recipients before all else”. They left without having lunch in order to make their flight on time.

It was a fantastic sight, at the end of the day, to stand in the school yard looking out onto the village below and see the many, many learners cycling along on their bikes. **Note:** We did the handover on 11 August 2017 – a blistering hot day and a mere 5 days later it snowed in Seymour. The principal immediately emailed a photo expressing how the donation of jackets came “in the nick of time”.

