

Grandfather-granddaughter duo fix, donate used bikes to needy children

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Twelve-year-old Taniyah Days-Hall smiles fondly at her grandfather, Lewis Days, as he spray paints a bright blue bicycle in front of her house.

She smiles out of the respect she has for Days, 78, who has inspired hundreds of other young smiles by refurbishing bicycles.

“For years he has helped kids in our community get bicycles,” Taniyah says proudly. “The community wouldn’t be the same without him.”

Taniyah recently became an apprentice to her grandfather. She helps him repair old bicycles to local youth in Durham.

Her grandfather has been featured in *The Herald Sun*, *Bicycling* magazine, a past issue of the Durham VOICE and on ABC World News.

Days’ passion for repairing bikes and giving them to children in the community began in 2002, when the John Avery Boys & Girls Club on East Pettigrew Street received donated bicycles unfit to ride.

“They had a bunch of bikes, but all of them were worn out,” says Days. “I had the know-how to fix the bikes and I knew then and there this was right for me, for the community.”

After serving in the Marine Corps for more than 20 years, Days, now retired, remembers his childhood vividly.

“I was born in Duke Hospital in 1933 and lived in Durham my entire life,” Days recalls. “Things were different back then...less violent than it is now.”

Bikes, says Days, help



Lewis Days, 78, has spent 10 years repairing and donating bicycles to needy children in the community. In 2010, he gifted nearly 600 bikes.

keep kids occupied during leisure time.

“It straightens their mind out. I do this because I love children, and there is nothing like seeing a smile on a kid’s face when giving them a bicycle, especially if they have never had one,” says Days.

He currently only gives refurbished bikes to children under the age of 15, but his policy may soon change. Taniyah says she wants other people in the community to benefit from her grandfather’s philanthropy.

“I now have some bicycles that will be fixed up and given to senior citizens,” Days says.

The expansion of his clientele may seem like a big

step, but Days’ bicycle track record suggests he’s ready to take it up a gear.

In 2008, Days gave away nearly 100 bikes to needy youth. In 2009, Days donated 250 bikes. And in 2010, Days gave away nearly 600 bikes, more than doubling his output from previous years.

“Day and night I work on these bikes. I fall asleep with bike parts and when I wake up, I am back to work,” Days says.

Carrboro’s Carolina Tarwheels Bicycle Club recently awarded Days with a \$1,000 donation to purchase new materials for the repairs.

“Back in the day, all I would need is a pair of pli-

ers, a screwdriver and some nails to fix a bike,” says Days. “Now, I rely more and more on donations and help from people like my granddaughter in order to make sure kids have the bikes they need.”

Days’ support system may be strong, but he says Taniyah remains his loudest and most loving cheerleader.

“My granddaughter is a good girl. She has been fixing bikes for years,” he says.

When she isn’t helping her grandfather, Taniyah says she loves playing basketball and spending time with her sister.

“Though my friends know of him as ‘the Bike Man,’ he will always be my grandfather to me.”