



2022/23 Year in Review



About Charlie's FreeWheels

Charlie's FreeWheels supports the development of empowered young leaders and self assured cyclists, like [Noma](#), through:

- **Education:** Youth received hands-on bike mechanic and safe riding skills to build knowledge, confidence, and even access employment opportunities.
- **Access:** After completing the course, youth either build or receive a free bike and a helmet, lights, bell and lock for safety and security.
- **Community:** Youth are welcome to come to our workshop for classes (with free meal provided), or to drop-in and continue work on their bike project.



2022/23 in Review

This year was a year of rebuilding for CFW. We were able to run our programs at full capacity for the first time since the pandemic began. Thanks to the easing of restrictions, we were also able to bring back our food program, meaning that every Build-A-Bike participant was able to enjoy a home cooked vegetarian meal at every class.

This year we delivered the following programs:

- Build-A-Bike
- Pre-Employment Training Program
- Drop-in Hours
- Mobile Repair Events
- Group Rides
- Kids Bike Giveaway



CFW Staff

Stephanie Orlando

Programs Manager & Instructor



Kaelin Isserlin

Bike Mechanic (Summer Staff)

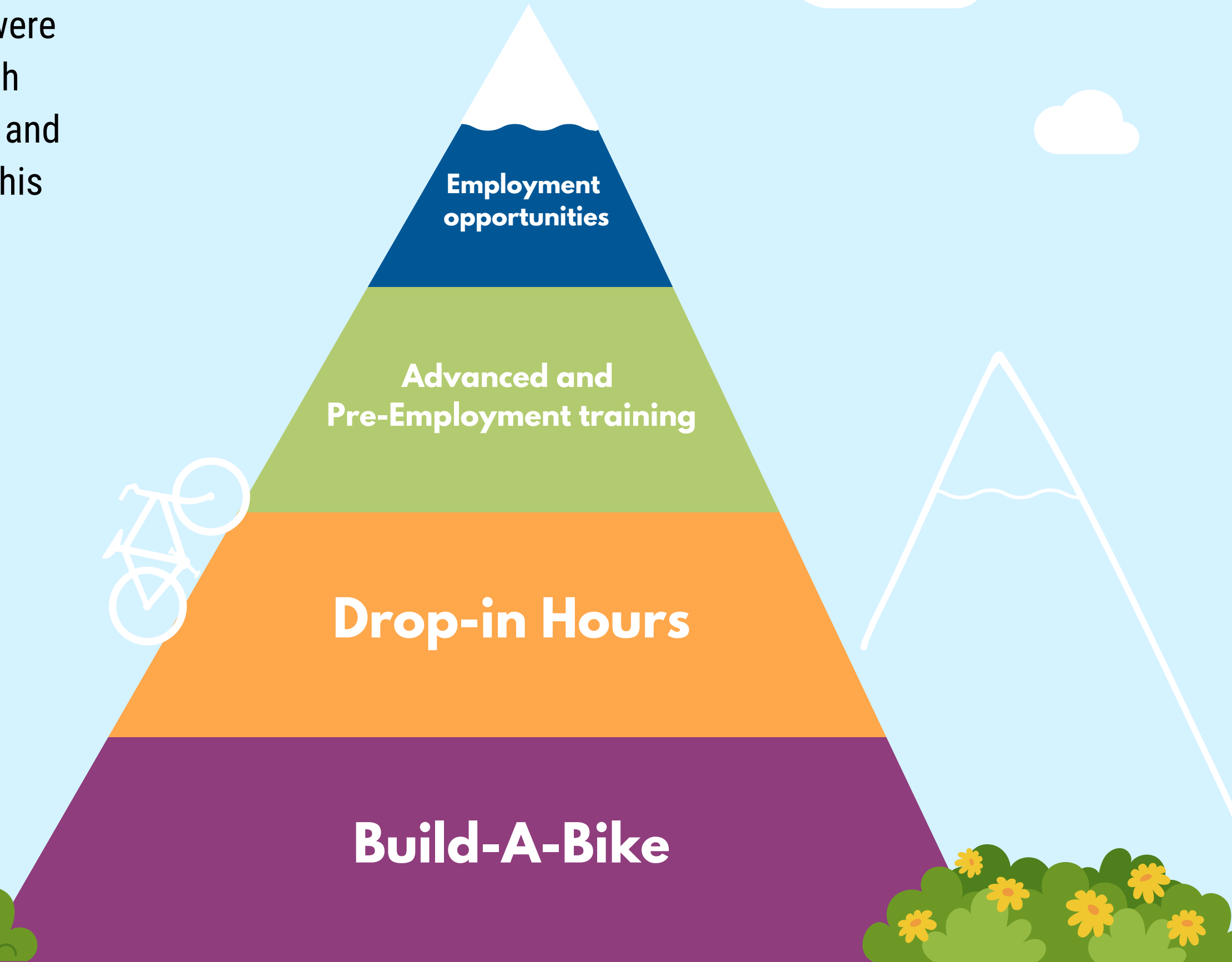


Muminur Rahman

Programs & Administrative
Coordinator (Summer Staff)

Youth Engagement

While returning to our core programs this year, we were also focused on our youth engagement ladder, which helps youth find meaningful community connection and eventually, employment. Both of our summer staff this year were graduates of our Build-A-Bike program.





“This summer I had the opportunity to work as a summer bike mechanic. I still pinch myself thinking about all the amazing experiences I've had. The Charlie's participants past and present made the work itself so enriching and pleasurable. Connecting with community members at markets and public events showed me the impact bike repairs made, specifically for an individual's access to care, work and general quality of life. These past five months have turned this bike novice (me) to a well experienced bike punk. Thank you Charlie's and Stephanie for making an inclusive space for me and others to learn and connect. Charlie's has been solidified as a space to celebrate the tools (bikes) that bring us together. With that in mind, I hope to continue working as a mechanic, whether that's at a shop or for myself, to continue that celebration and make biking an accessible practice for the people who need it.”

-Kaelin Isserlin, summer employee

Build-A-Bike

One of our core programs, we delivered Build-A-Bike to five cohorts of students and had 34 youth graduate from the 30-hour program. Each participant built their own bicycle using recycled parts that they were able to take home with them, along with a new helmet, lock, lights and bell.



Along with the open Build-A-Bike classes, we also hosted separate classes for girls, trans and non-binary youth, who have traditionally been marginalized in the cycling community. We have had 13 participants graduate from these classes so far this year.

Build-A-Bike Testimonials

“My experience at Charlie's has been incredibly positive. I always found the space incredibly welcoming and am so happy to have found this community!”

“Excellent experience! Always looked forward to Tuesday classes. I feel like I learned a lot but also had fun, building community. Also, the food is a nice bonus.”

“To be honest, I love everything about the program, one thing I love the most was how helpful everyone was.”

“It wasn't what I expected, it turned out to be a lot more. I learned way more than I anticipated about bicycles and how to maintain them. It was a great workshop space and I liked the snacks.”

“I will always appreciate the skills I have learned, but one of the greatest parts was the support and enthusiasm over every little victory. And figuring out brakes was so annoying but so satisfying!”

Pre-Employment Training Program

This 36-hour program teaches youth who have graduated from the Build-A-Bike program—or who have prior experience with bike mechanics—everything they need to know to be successful in a retail bike shop environment. Eight participants graduated from the program and have been hired the following shops or contributed to community spaces such as:

- Ya Bikes!
- Velofix
- MEC
- Bike Pirates
- Charlie's Freewheels



Drop-in Hours

This season we resumed our weekly open shop hours where youth could work on their bikes on their own time, with staff available to support and answer questions. Some Build-A-Bike participants also used drop-in hours to get ahead or catch up on their bike builds.



71
unique visits
during drop-in
hours

60 hours
of unstructured
shop time offered

Mobile Bike Repair

What started out as a COVID-19 pandemic measure has turned into a season staple. This year we attended weekly community markets such as the Cabbagetown Farmers Market, Taste of Regent Park, and Moss Park Market and performed bike safety checks. Our services were offered for free for youth and by donation for everyone else.

155
bikes safety
checked

47
youth bikes

107
adult bikes



Group Rides

Our summer staff guided youth through weekly group rides this season. Some of the group ride destinations included:

- Corktown Common
- Trinity Bellwoods Park
- Woodbine Beach
- Tommy Thompson Park
- End of Summer Picnic/Bonfire in Dovercourt Park



Kids Bike Giveaway

Because small children's bikes tend to be quickly grown out of, every year we end up with numerous kids bikes that are too small to be used for our Build-A-Bike classes. Instead, we held a kids bike giveaway where we refurbished and found homes for 18 small bicycles!



Ya Bikes!

We are incredibly grateful to have an wonderful partner in Ya Bikes! who on top of sharing shop space with us, keeps us anchored in the community and shares their wealth of knowledge with staff.



Thank you to our funders, partners & supporters!

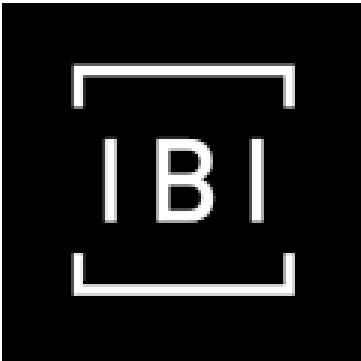
None of this would be possible without your support.



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Ya Bikes!



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...and many more wonderful individual donors!