

Blue Zones

'All the money in the world can't buy you back good health.' – Reba McEntire, country singer



SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS

Giving the Gift of Mobility with Build-a-Bike

Kelly Wild Special to the Naples Daily News

It is no secret that riding a bike, when performed safely, is a healthy activity. While many use this mode of transportation solely for the notable benefits of improved health outcomes, there is a large segment of our local youth and adult population that are dependent on a bicycle as the only source of transport for access to jobs, goods, and services. According to U.S. Census 2016, Golden Gate City alone reports 13% of households are without a vehicle, leaving many in need of alternative modes of transportation. That is a reason why United Way of Collier County created their Annual Build-a-Bike, a community impact event that provides bikes, helmets, locks, and bike safety training to those in need.

Last year with the help of nearly 150 volunteers, 500 bicycles were assembled and given away to children in need throughout Golden Gate City. One of United Way's partner agencies identified recipients by asking them to draw their dream bicycle. Children who struggled to draw a bike because they did not know what one looked like, were selected to receive this gift. This year, United Way of Collier County is including adult bicycles to support whole-family activities while also addressing transportation barriers within this walking community.

On Nov. 23, also known as Family Volunteer Day, United Way will be hosting its third annual Build-a-Bike event at Golden Gate Community Center. This is a great opportunity for families and individuals to volunteer and support our community by expanding opportunities for those without vehicles. Need more reason to volunteer at Build-a-Bike? According to a report issued by the Corporation for National and Community Service, "The Health Benefits of Volunteering," those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression in later life than those who do not volunteer.

Join Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida in supporting United Way of Collier County at Build-a-Bike this year! Support comes in many forms and your participation is welcome through sponsorship or volunteering to build bikes. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved please reach out to Kelly Wild at kelly.wild@uwcollier.org or sign up to volunteer through the Blue Zone Project eventbrite page at <https://bzip-build-a-bike.eventbrite.com>.



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