

Using the Bikes for Books Program

Getting Started

As your lodge considers participating in the Bikes for Books Program allow yourself the luxury to start small. Maybe only decide to provide one bike and helmet to one boy and girl in one class. This will allow you to get used to working on the program and gaining confidence and momentum for the ensuing years.

Decide who will run the program for your lodge. This should consist of a workgroup and not just one person. Preferably this should have at least one person who has a good relationship with the school and one who has a good relationship with the community.

Your lodge should decide how much you want to spend on the program. Do not let this be a roadblock to your lodge's participation. There are lodges that have had great success in providing the program and have never spent any of the lodge's money. This is done by raising funds locally either through individuals, including lodge members, and local businesses and organizations. You can also raise funds through fundraising events and activities. These raised funds can be used to apply for and receive matching funds from the Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation's "Community Charities Program". Funding the program in this fashion will not require money from the lodge budget and will allow the lodge and its efforts to gain more exposure in the community through your fundraising efforts. One thing to keep in mind is that donations to lodges are not tax deductible as lodges are not a 501c3.

Price the bikes and helmets either through a local bike shop or a local Meijer or Walmart. Many times these stores will give you a discounted rate because of the nature of the program. Let them know that you will include them in any media releases, promotions and activities involved with the program as a true partner with the lodge in the program.

Working with your school

Approach your school or schools where you would like to provide the program. Usually you will want to start with the Principal or maybe the District Superintendent. Once they are on board with the program they will probably direct you to a teacher and class where they would like to see the program provided. You can also present the program at a School Board Meeting to gain extra exposure and support. You will then meet with the teacher assigned to the program and you will determine a time frame and number of books to be read in that that time frame to make a student eligible for a bike. You will also want to establish the date of the bike and helmet awards.

There are three ways in which you can provide the reading incentive portion of the program. First, lets say that you will be requiring the students to read seven books over a seven week period. Each child that achieves this will have their name placed into a drawing pool for the purpose of awarding the bikes and helmets. Another way to approach it would be that each time a student reads seven books in that seven week period they would have an opportunity for their name to be placed into the drawing pool. For example if the student read 49 books over the seven week period they would have their name placed in the drawing pool seven times making their odds greater for receiving a bike and helmet. The third incentive standard would be for the lodge to award a bike and helmet to each child who reads the required amount of books over the required period. This would obviously require very strong financial resources by the lodge.

Awarding the Bikes

Put out a press release to your local print, radio and tv media with a brief explanation of the program, listing program partners as well as announcing when and where the bikes and helmets will be awarded. Be prepared to also provide a post awards event press release with awards photos and quotes from principal participants. The bike and helmet drawing and or awarding will usually occur at a school assembly with the principle program

partners such as the retailer you used also present.

Post program reporting and looking to next year

When the program is completed you will want to be sure to provide all required post program reports to the program director at The Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation. You will want to be sure to provide the Community Charities Program application form for matching funds to the Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation if you have not done so already.

You will also want to be sure to have your lodge's program workgroup meet not only with themselves but also with the primary contacts at the school to discuss how things went and to make plans for next year.

Bikes for Books Program Contact at the Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation

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