

Low-cost bicycle repair shop opens in Cloverdale

Cloverdale Community Cycles starts up in church parking lot

Malin Jordan
Cloverdale Reporter

A new bike repair shop has opened in Cloverdale.

Cloverdale Community Cycles is the brainchild of Matthew Campbell, the director for the Cloverdale Community Kitchen.

"First and foremost, when we first thought about this, it was to be able to fix our homeless friends' bikes," explained Campbell. "We saw that there was a need, as they really rely on bicycles to get around town."

Campbell found that when a homeless person's bike would break, the bike would just end up in a ditch because they couldn't afford to pay for repairs.

Campbell feels the shop has already made a difference.

"One of our homeless friends – she lives in the middle of the railway tracks – got a bike from us. And she said she wanted everyone to know that it was the first time, since she's been on the streets, that she's ever had a bike that wasn't stolen."

She told Campbell it gave her a sense of pride to know "it came from the right place."

After the shop opened, Campbell

quickly realized there was an even greater need for cycle repairs that stretched beyond the homeless community.

"Tonnes of people, who have \$200 bikes, can't go to another bike store and spend \$79 to fix a bike. So these bikes just sit in a basement or a backyard and collect dust."

Campbell noted people can come to his shop and get a repair done for \$25 and get back on the road and start enjoying biking again.

Kevin House is the shop mechanic at Cloverdale Community Cycles. House built the shop, which sits in an old shipping container, with the help from a lot of friends.

He said the repair shop started out slowly several weeks ago, but now it's very busy.

"At first, it was just friends of the church and the church itself, but once we went on Facebook, it really took off. It blew up."

House said there is a backlog of work now, but he doesn't turn anyone away.

"The community reaction's been great," said House. "People have been very generous. As you can see from all the bikes, I'm running out of places to put 'em."

House said they might get another



Kevin House (right) chats with a customer at Cloverdale Community Cycles. House is the chief mechanic at the low-cost bike repair shop which recently opened in the parking lot of the Pacific Community Church. (Photo: Malin Jordan)

container or two and he hopes they get a few more volunteers to help out.

"It's been hectic, but I'm trying to keep my head on straight."

The goal for the cycle shop is to provide low-cost and no-cost repairs for the public.

"People in great need get their bike work done for free," explained Campbell. "People who are low-income will get a very, very reduced rate, and people who can afford to pay can make a donation accordingly."

Campbell said they also does swaps.

"Yesterday, a single mom came in with her kid's bike – it was too small for him – and she traded it in for a bigger bike."

He said another woman came in to get her 10-year-old son's bike repaired and Campbell found out she really wanted to start biking again.

"She was thinking about buying a bike, but she'd just been laid off two weeks ago," added Campbell. "Her son came up to me and said, 'I've always wanted to be able to go for a bike ride with my mom.' So we looked through our extra bikes and we were able to find

one for her for free."

Sheena Ram saw the cycle shop's services advertised on the Pacific Community Church's Facebook page. Ram also came down to make a trade. Her daughter's bike was too big for her, so they swapped it for a smaller bike.

"This is a community bike shop," added Campbell. "We work on donations, so it's affordable for anybody at any level. If people can afford a lot, they can make a higher donation, if they can't afford a lot, then they can make a lower donation."

Campbell said they are always accepting donated bikes, whether they run well or are in need of repair. He added they are also looking for some volunteers to help out with repairs.

Anyone who wants to volunteer can contact Campbell through the Cloverdale Community Kitchen website and anyone who wants to donate bikes, can bring them by Cloverdale Community Cycles.

Campbell also said the repair shop has proven to be quite popular.

"We were only open a couple days a week, but demand has literally exploded. Yesterday, we had over 50 people come through here. It's gone from, 'Okay, we're doing this,' to 'Hold on!'"

Cloverdale Community Cycles is open from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and is located in the parking lot of the Pacific Community Church at 5337 180 Street.