

## **The Mike's Bikes Foundation and Bicycle Warehouse partner to send over 400 Bikes to Southern Africa**

**Novato, CA and San Diego, CA - May, 21, 2014** - The Mike's Bikes Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting bicycles as sustainable transportation in sub-Saharan Africa, and Bicycle Warehouse, a leading chain of bicycle retail stores in the San Diego area, have teamed up to send over 400 donated bicycles plus helmets and bike parts to Africa. The bikes will be shipped to Botswana, and then distributed to various Mike's Bikes sister shops to end up in the hands of children, students, AIDS workers, commuters and even bike racers.

Debbe and Mike Simmons, owners of Bicycle Warehouse, decided to get involved with the project after discussing it with their friend and colleague, Ken Martin, CEO of Mike's Bikes and the Mike's Bikes Foundation.

"I knew right away when I learned of the Africa Project that it was a perfect cause for us to support," said Mike Simmons. "These bikes give dramatic improvements to people's lives."

Since 2007, The Mike's Bikes Foundation has shipped over 11,000 bikes to Southern Africa, most from Mike's Bikes customers donating old bikes that were sitting in their garages. Some have also come from Mike's Bikes' vendors, who have sent overstock to the sister shops rather than liquidating the stock in the US market. As success of the Africa Project grew, demand for bikes began to outstrip the supply from Northern California, so Mike's Bikes looked to form partnerships to run bike drives in other markets to satisfy the growing need for reliable transportation in Africa.

"The bicycle is the most efficient transportation device ever created, and it's the absolute perfect solution for Africa," said Ken Martin of Mike's Bikes. "But as this idea caught on, our project became a victim of its own success, and we just couldn't supply bikes fast enough. I challenged Mike and Debbe to run their own bike drive and they jumped in right away. This model of collaboration between shops is just awesome and I want to replicate it in other markets."

All Bicycle Warehouse stores in San Diego began collecting donated bikes in March 2013. To house the bikes until there were enough to fill a container, Bicycle Warehouse built a special storage unit, which they plan to use for all of their future container loads. The Bicycle Warehouse staff has rallied behind this ongoing project, and Simmons says the team loves monitoring the countdown of donations until a full container load has been reached.

"This will be an ongoing venture for us because it has been so well received by the community," said Simmons. "Many times our guests decide to buy a new bike instead of repairing an old one. We now have a perfect way to give their older bikes new purpose while improving lives."

Donation bikes continue to be collected at the eleven Mike's Bikes stores in Northern California as well as at all six of the Bicycle Warehouse locations. Bicycle Warehouse has committed to filling at least another container for the project. The Mike's Bikes Foundation is focusing on finding more bike retailers and manufacturers across the country and around the world to partner with in order to expand the reach of the program.

“Bicycle Warehouse ran their own Africa Bike Drive - they rallied their staff around a common goal, and they built huge goodwill in their markets”, said Martin “Then they turn the bikes over to us and we handle everything from there. It’s the ultimate win-win.”

The first container of Bicycle Warehouse’s donated bikes left San Diego on May 8, and is expected to arrive in Botswana’s capital of Gaborone on July 17.

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### **About the Mike’s Bikes Foundation**

The bicycle is the most ecologically and fiscally sustainable vehicle ever created. It provides freedom, mobility, and positive change in the lives of people who need it most. Based on their belief that bikes can change the world, The Mike’s Bikes Foundation has created a self-sustainable model to build a bike culture in sub-Saharan Africa. Donated bikes are collected at Mike’s Bikes 11 stores in Northern California, and shipped to Africa where they are distributed through a network of Mike’s Bikes Sister Shops, where they find new homes in local communities and change lives, one bike at a time.

To learn more about the foundation, visit [www.MikesBikesAfrica.com](http://www.MikesBikesAfrica.com)

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### **About Bicycle Warehouse**

Since their founding in 1992, Bicycle Warehouse has been dedicated to getting people actively involved in cycling and to being their best source for information and equipment. Owners Mike and Debbe Simmons operate 6 locations in greater San Diego, and they remain committed to exceeding their guest’s expectations every day.

For more information, visit [www.BicycleWarehouse.com](http://www.BicycleWarehouse.com)

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