



CADE
museum
for creativity & invention

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Bike U partners with the Cade to equip kids with mechanical skills and a new bike

Gainesville, Florida, June 29, 2021—Everyone has heard that old adage, “You never forget how to ride a bicycle.” Through the Cade’s new partnership with Bike University (Bike U), kids will grow up remembering how to fix a bicycle, too.

Bike U is setting up shop in the Cade’s garage to lead classes in bicycle repair. Qualifying students enrolled in the bicycle program also receive a free Cade Museum Community Membership so that they can visit the museum anytime at no cost.

“Our goal is to teach a new generation of bike mechanics,” said Bike U co-founder Gary Sinkus.

For 15 years, Sinkus and Bike U partner Steve Shrum have volunteered almost every Sunday afternoon, repairing bicycles in several Gainesville neighborhoods. Around five years ago, a game-changing idea kicked into gear: teaching kids to be bicycle mechanics.

“We started by finding interested children one neighborhood at a time,” Sinkus said. “We brought them to the Freewheel Project where they selected from a vast collection of used, donated bikes in disrepair to disassemble, clean, lubricate, reassemble and keep for their own.”

Bike U started in underserved communities where Sinkus and Shrum worked with kids who showed an aptitude for understanding bicycle mechanics. Training kids to be “the neighborhood mechanics,” Bike U still imparts the importance of helping neighbors with projects and supporting the community as a whole, but it is now open to anyone who wants to participate with no income requirement.

The program emphasizes expertise and unintimidating hands-on instruction. Instructors work one-on-one with students during the 6-8 week course. By the time they complete it, students are equipped to build a bike from scratch. At the end of each session, Bike U serves lunch to the class.

Previously taught at the Main Street location of the bike co-op, the Freewheel Project—which has closed—Bike U now convenes at the Cade’s garage building across from Depot Park

Kids who cannot tell the difference between a wrench and a screwdriver needn’t shy away: Bike U requires no mechanical skills whatsoever, and all that’s needed is a willingness to learn and the dedication to commit to six weeks of classes says Sinkus.

Spark wonder.
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Transforming communities by inspiring and equipping
future inventors, entrepreneurs and visionaries.



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On graduation, students take home their bike, a lock, a complete tool kit, a pump, and a diploma.

“To this date, we have taught students from ages 10 to 25, and we are now finding some of our graduates working in bicycle shops around town,” Sinkus said proudly, adding that all of Bike University’s instructors are volunteers and come to the program with “vast amounts of patience and bicycle knowledge.”

The Greenhouse Church, Bike U’s major sponsor, provides donations of bicycles, tools, time and money, which Sinkus says “are gratefully accepted.” Through the Cade’s sponsorship, participating children receive a free family membership to the Cade Museum.

Currently, the program is open to youth ages 10-16; however, older teens and adults can inquire and be considered on a case-by-case basis. No children younger than 10 are permitted.

The fee for the course is \$200 per person; full scholarships are available on request. Although Bike University is currently in session through July 10, Saturdays from 8:30 am. to 12:30 p.m., courses are ongoing all year round.

Get updates on Bike U at facebook.com/bicycleuniversity. To donate a bicycle, attend or volunteer for Bike U, call Sinkus at 352-258-3353.

Monetary donations can be made at Greenhouse Church. Mark the donation for Bicycle University.

About the Cade Museum

In 2004, Dr. James Robert Cade and his family began work on the Cade Museum for Creativity & Invention in Gainesville, Florida. The Cade’s mission is to transform communities by inspiring and equipping future inventors, entrepreneurs, and visionaries. Dr. Cade, a physician and professor of medicine at the University of Florida, was best known as the leader of the team that invented Gatorade in 1965. The Cade Museum is located at 811 S. Main St., Gainesville, FL 32601. An independent 501(c)(3) public foundation, the museum receives no operational funding from federal, state, or local governments, or the University of Florida. Visit CadeMuseum.org for more information.

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