



**Teacher Tyler Farrand works with one of the Bike Program’s mentors last spring.**

## **SDCF grant helps LSEC program fix bikes, promote a healthy lifestyle and develop community**

A grant from the Selkirk & District Community Foundation helped the Lord Selkirk Education Centre’s (LSEC) 10-year-old Bike Program get back on track last year, after being derailed by Covid.

Under the program, older students learn how to repair and maintain bikes and then go to Grade 5 & 6 classes in the Lord Selkirk School Division and teach younger kids how to do the same.

Teacher Tyler Farrand, who started the program with colleague Stephen Grahame, says the grant allowed them to buy tools and hire experts from WRENCH to instruct the older mentors.

“The students from LSEC become masters and they get to go and show younger kids in their community how to fix a flat tire and tune up their own bike,” Farrand said.

“And if the young kids don’t have a bicycle, we’ll find a bike for them and they fix it up together.”

The Foundation is accepting applications for this year's grants until Sept. 30.

The students no doubt learn how to fix bikes, but they get much more out of the program. They learn work skills, problem solving skills, how to ask for help and how to work together.

Farrand says it's been a successful program.

"It builds the idea of independence, and mastery and generosity," Farrand said.

"The students are proud, they've got this mechanic's shirt with their name on it and they're going to go and teach their skills to someone younger in the community."

Esther Van De Walle, Director of LSEC's Youth Program, said students gain so much from the program.

"They benefit from the learning and how to apply the knowledge. They learn how to fix a bike and then they can show other people how to fix a bike and that gives them a sense of pride," Van De Walle said.

"They also have the ability to fix up their own bike in the future and for a lot of our students bikes are freedom, it's a way to get around, a way to get to a job, a way to get to school. Having the skills to take care of and maintain your own bike is helpful."

Van De Walle says it's a lifelong skill and as the students become adults, they'll pass along their bike skills to their own kids.

Bev Clegg, Executive Director with the SDCF, says the power of granting is demonstrated every year through recipients like the Bike Program.

"We love to tell the stories of the groups that receive grants, because without fail, they are positive stories," Clegg said.

"In the case of the LSEC Bike Program, well that's one that warms everyone's hearts. To know that older students are sharing their knowledge with younger ones, developing that big brother or sister type of relationship is huge and then there's the aspect that we're getting kids outside and riding bikes, it's a fantastic program and the Foundation is proud to play a part in its success."

Farrand says the mentors definitely build a relationship with the mentees.

"They make that connection in the community, the kids say, 'oh, that's the guy that taught me how to fix my bike. I've seen that happen. It's really cool.'"

Over the years they've amassed a number of bikes through donations from the community. If there are kids without bikes, the program donates to them.

"Part of the idea is, how do we make the community more active?" he said.

"Selkirk is really progressive in its active transportation system...and as someone who lives in the community I want to see the community become more healthy and better."

Applicants for a SDCF grant must be a non-profit organization or registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency, providing services within the City of Selkirk, RM of St. Andrews or St. Clements.

Applications are accepted only online at [sdcf.ca](http://sdcf.ca) before Sept. 30.