



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BACK AFTER A 5-YEAR HIATUS, THE *BIKES FOR YOUTH* EVENT DISTRIBUTES 70 BRAND NEW BIKES TO WEST ISLAND YOUTHS LIVING IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS.

National Bank, in partnership with the co-presidents of the *Bikes for Youth* campaign: La Fondation Bon départ de Canadian Tire du Québec, Structube and Tootsi Impex, as well as gold partners: Broccolini, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and Hugessen Consulting are proud to announce a donation of \$80,000 net to West Island Community Shares.

Pierrefonds, June 10th, 2024 - A day filled with action and emotions at Pierrefonds' Gerry-Roberston Community Center for the fourth edition of *Bikes for Youth* event, benefiting West Island Community Shares. An original campaign spearheaded by National Bank to raise funds and distribute new bicycles - complete with helmets and locks - to vulnerable West Island teenagers.

Since its creation in 2017 by the National Bank, over 500 children and teens have benefited from the *Bikes for Youth* initiative.

“For teens, a bike is much more than a means of transportation; it offers the opportunity to participate in activities, the autonomy to get to a first job and the thrill of catching up with friends, all while getting moving and enjoying the benefits of physical exercise! National Bank firmly believes in West Island Community Shares’ mission and this campaign is a demonstration of its support.” — **Xavier Lalonde, Regional Vice-President, Corporate and Private Banking, National Bank.**

“We enlisted the help of the community organizations part of our network to identify teenagers who would benefit from the program. These youths live in vulnerable situations. Most of them come from low-income families, often single-parent or newly arrived in Canada, for whom purchasing a new bike is virtually impossible on an already restricted budget. A bike gives these teenagers the freedom to discover, to grow and to spread their wings!” — **Meagan Somerville, Executive Director, West Island Community Shares.**

The day kicked off around noon with the arrival of some 60 volunteers from partnering companies at the Gerry-Robertson Community Center in Pierrefonds. After a short lunch break, the troops quickly got busy assembling the 70 new bikes to be given to vulnerable West Island teenagers.

Once the bikes were assembled, it was finally time to welcome the guests of honour: **the teenagers!** It was a moving experience to see them straddling their new bikes for the first time. Some of them, less at ease than others, quickly got used to their new wheels, and they were all thrilled.

Thanks to Kirkland-based Canadian Tire Owner Mark Vandzura, West Island Community Shares received support from the Fondation Bon départ de Canadian Tire du Québec Charitable Giving Program, created to help charitable organizations in the communities of Quebec's 100 Canadian Tire stores. The \$10,000 donation enables the purchase of bikes, helmets and locks offered to the youths.

About Fondation Bon départ de Canadian Tire du Québec.

The Fondation Bon départ de Canadian Tire du Québec is dedicated to the development of children and adults living in vulnerable situations by offering respite stays and camps at its Base de plein air Bon départ. It also supports community organizations to improve the quality of life of children and their families, notably by contributing to the development of healthy lifestyle habits and well-being. Since its creation in 1990, the foundation has donated more than \$30 million to its charitable assistance program and its Base de plein air Bon départ.

About West Island Community Shares

West Island Community Shares is a registered charity dedicated to building a strong, resilient, inclusive and healthy West Island community. We do this by raising funds for over 40 local community organizations focused on six key areas: building strong, resilient children and youth; supporting vulnerable populations; promoting healthy minds and bodies; providing basic necessities; empowering women; and supporting green initiatives. We focus our efforts on ensuring that our community groups have the resources they need to meet the growing and ever-changing demand for their services.

West Island Community Shares is accredited by Imagine Canada for excellence in accountability, transparency and governance as a charitable organization.



From left to right: Meagan Somerville (West Island Community Shares), Pascale Maisonneuve (Structube), Solange Mendes (Structube), Xavier Lalonde (National Bank), Ali Shayesteh (Tootsie Impex), Philippe Cardinal (Kirkland Canadian Tire).

Photo credit : Philippe Ouellette

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