Bike mechanics are about more than just the nuts and bolts of a simple machine. Teaching mechanics also teaches patience, communication, and leadership—skill sets that are needed in today’s job market. Which is why, this past spring, we launched a new Job Skills Training (JST) program.

In partnership with Interagency Academy—a network of alternative Seattle Public Schools serving students who have faced extraordinary challenges in their lives—our first class took on eight students. For 11 weeks, these students learned the ropes of bike mechanics, all the while acquiring the skills needed to become responsible, valued employees in any job. The class was a huge success.

Adrian, one of the students, loves to ride BMX but had never worked on his bike before. “I liked how they actually taught us hands-on work,” he said—a welcome departure from what he’d thought of as school work. Half of the original graduates were hired to work in our new BikeMobile, and also assisted in teaching the next group of JST students over the summer. Together, the JST program and the BikeMobile provide a long-term pathway for youth to stay engaged as students, mentors, employees, and valued community members.

One graduate, Tristan, described his first time teaching bike repair: “It went from me sitting down and listening to me doing the talking. It was cool. I never did anything like that before. Usually I have stage fright. Actually teaching someone about how to do stuff—that was pretty crazy.” Tristan has been working down at the New Holly housing development with the BikeMobile. It is his first “real” job. Lots of kids have been coming by with their bikes in need of some love every week. “If kids don’t have any money, sometimes we won’t charge them. We will have them help us do the work. They can leave knowing something and we leave feeling good about it because we helped out a kid who needed help with his bike,” he explained.

It’s incredible to see a transformation take place in real time. Seeing these youth progress from students to employees to mentors shows us that our program is working. And for students like Adrian and Tristan, they’re learning that their skills can help others and contribute to a more just world.
Two years ago, Nikki was a novice bike commuter at UW. Instead of writing a final paper for class, her professor gave her the option of doing some volunteer work. She took that opportunity to volunteer at Bike Works.

At first, she helped out in the office, but really, Nikki wanted to learn bike repair. She started coming to our Volunteer Repair Parties, helping to fix bikes, and learning bike repair herself. “When I walked into Bike Works, I felt like I was home.”

Nikki advanced quickly. She started volunteering in the warehouse to support our recycle and reuse efforts. Just as her mechanics skills were improving, a bike shop customer service job opened up for the summer. Nikki applied and got the job!

“I am a much stronger individual now, especially biking ten miles each way to Bike Works and then working on bikes all day. If I can do this, I can do anything,” she said.

Since last summer, Nikki has enthusiastically stepped into other roles, too. She co-taught our Bike Repair 101 classes for adults, and assisted in our new Job Skills Training classes. We’re very proud of Nikki’s growth as a rider, as a mechanic, and as part of the Bike Works family.

“Way to go, Nikki!”

This past spring we brought back our RIDES Club (Ride, Investigate, Discover the Environment & Society) as an all-girls session! This after-school program focuses on developing riding skills while exploring topics like sustainable transportation, environmental justice, youth leadership, and the values of giving back to your own community.

Five incredible girls made up this past RIDES Club. When asked what they wanted to explore, they said they wanted to learn more about our relationship to food. So we developed a curriculum for them that included visiting local community gardens, markets, and produce stands by bike. All throughout, they grew into stronger, more confident riders.

One of the girls reflected back to an instructor, “You know, you guys inspired me. First I thought I’d try to ride to school for Bike to School Day ’cause I didn’t think I could actually ride there. Then my friends and I decided to try to ride to school twice a month. Then I realized how easy it is and now I’m going to ride to school at least twice a week.” Let’s hear it for the girls!
In memory of kids, bikes, and the people who ride them...
In honor of
Amid Cham-Pinder
Jan Chapman &
Michael Chaves
Anthony & Shang-Chien
Joel Chelsea
Shawn Chubak
Jim & Karen Cline
Susan Clark &
Mark Cline
Gloria & Frank DiSanto
Deborah Cowley
Mark Dexter &
Kathleen Roach
Marty Delismon
Stephanie Brunner
Sue & Jim Dehmlow
Jennifer Davis
Diane & Jeffrey Davis
John Daly &
Mike O'Leary
Libby Cunningham &
Breesa Culver
Jeff KenKnight
Julie Creahan
Rachael Crickman
Gordy Comer
Arielle Coffin
Mardi Clements
Marianna Clark &
Matthew, Christine &
Mona Ching
Mark Chinen
Aiden Chang-Miller
Sarah & Sue Galbraith
Lyanda Haupt
Tim Furtwangler &
Michael Harris
Carrie Schonwald
Tim Font
Laura & Brian Foley
Andrea Flatley
Tamara Layton
Ed Ewing
Craig & America Everhart
Margaret Evans
Lawrence Evenson
Sean Patrick Engle
Lance Eike
Ruth Egger & Mark Epstein
Prentis Hale
Kevin Eckert
Duke's Greenlake
John & Julie Duggan
Kevin Coluccio
David Wiegand
Eleanor Hamburger
Bob Hall
Debora Halasz
Lauren Thorne
Finn & Aria Greatorex (2)
Marina Granger
In memory of Trent Graham
Barbara Gordon
Google
Daniel & David Gonzales
In honor of
Susan Gleason &
Glass-Hastings
Jim & Cassie Glacler
In honor of Sarah Gill
David Gillin
In memory of
Tim & Carin Glass
Google
Suzanne Holland
Matthew Dean Holcom
Kathleen France
Edenberg
Elisa Law
Amy & Aaron Lavin
Bill Bloxom
Kathleen Shannon
Paul Lambert &
John & Mimi Lam
Michael Lakeman &
Andrea Kurtzman
Udai Kumar* & Shamila Jiwa
Shana Moran Kruse
Vicki Neumeier
Erik & Cathy Koto
Mary Jean Kotleba
Japhet Koteen &
Courtney Koster
Marcia Koren
Peter Goldman
Martha Kongsgaard &
Chris Carr
Kyle Knudson
CM Mike O'Brien
In honor of Brian NYC 2005
Melanie Noel
Shirley & Bob Nixon
In honor of Liz Nixon
In honor of
Vera Nielsen
Brook Nelson &
In honor of Stan Nelson
In honor of the
Michael Nail
Alice Mulvihil (2)
Jonathon Moulton
In honor of
Lindsey Morck
Margaret Moore
Rob Mohn &
Rudy & Barb Moeller
Jeff & Tina Mix
Eric, Kim & Mike Miles
Rob Motter &
Shelley Morrison
Bree Moore
Carey Moran
Kristeina Moraves
Lindsay Mork
Kim & Geena Mustrow
Will Persson
In honor of people who like to know how things work and how to fix them everywhere
Jim & Sam Myers
Vera Perlman &
Sara Pertson
Susan Payne & Ben Porter
Phillip Katzen &
Emily Kathrein
In honor of Ellie Kasznia
Kristina Lang
Kyle Lange
Deborah Laszlo
Michelle Lasker &
John Holgate
In honor of Susan Gleason
Chris Laszlo
Melanie Landon's Mar
Fleur Lasen
S. Neil Lansen
Amy & Len Long
Elisa Lee
Stuart Lawrence
Mark Lauter
Samantha Colson
Ashley Freeman
Hannah Foster
Bryan & Rebecca Papé
Christine Page & Joel Jornlin
Gordon Padelford
Katie O'Sullivan
James & Janice Osborne
Jeffrey O'Sullivan
Graham O'Sullivan
Patricio Raveino
Stefana Raveino
Joel & Marilyn Ray
In honor of the
Richard Ray
Myra Ray
Paul Ray
In honor of
Thomas Ray
John & Madalynn Ray
Zoe & Gea McAlpine
James & Lindsay Ray
Lanita Ray
Cleva Ray
In honor of
Tina Ray
Randy & Ruth Ray
In honor of
Mary Ray
In honor of Brian Ray
In honor of
Jeff Ray
In honor of
Kendrick Ray
Joseph Ray
In honor of
Raymond C. Ray
Dorothy Ray
In honor of
Rayna Ray
In honor of
Suzanne Ray
In honor of
Wendy Ray
In honor of
Shawn Ray
In honor of
Sarah Ray
In honor of
Lynn Ray
In honor of the
Brenda Ray
In honor of
Yvonne Ray
In honor of the
Kathleen Ray
In honor of the
Heather Ray
In honor of the
Mediterranean Ray
In honor of the
Elizabeth Ray
In honor of the
Ken Ray
In honor of the
Steve Ray
In honor of the
Virginia Ray
In honor of the
Raynaj Ray
In honor of the
Rayna Ray
In honor of the
Kathleen Ray
In honor of the
Ken Ray