Truscott Elementary first-graders surprised with new bikes

By Paul Albani-Burgio
Report-herald Staff Writer
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted:Tue Nov 27 20:13:41 MST 2018

Unwrapping gifts may feel a little holiday ho hum this year for the first graders at Loveland's Truscott Elementary, who will likely remember what came Tuesday behind the screen as much as what awaits later under the tree.
That's because their first surprise of the season came early when a screen was pulled up in the school's gym on Tuesday to reveal new bikes and helmets for each of the school's 39 first grade students.

The bikes were given to the students by the Can'd Aid Foundation, which has donated over 2,500 bikes to students around the Front Range through its Treads + Trails program, which seeks to promote healthy lifestyles in underserved populations.

Can'd Aid Outreach Coordinator Alyssa Lile said the organization gives away the bikes as a way of promoting those lifestyles and a love of the outdoors.

"A bike gives them a sense of freedom and something that is just their own," said Lile. "A lot of times these kids don't have a chance to get a brand new bike or a brand new anything and this is something that gives them a chance to explore their neighborhood and explore the outdoors."

Tuesday's event at Truscott began with the first-graders arriving in the gym for a demonstration by professional BMX biker Mike Murfitt, who talked with the kids about bike safety and demonstrated several tricks. It was only after that demonstration that a screen in the gym was lifted to reveal the bikes behind it, leading to many shrieks and surprised looks.
"This is super cool," said Truscott first-grader Janelle Corkins. "It’s super fun to ride and now I can practice without training wheels."

Lile said Can’d Aid chose Truscott because it wanted to do a bike giveaway at a Loveland school, where it has never previously done one. Truscott is a Title 1 school, meaning it receives supplemental funds because of its high concentration of low-income students.

Can'd Aid typically gives bikes to first-grade classes, Lile said, because "they are at an age where they can grow into the bikes and ride them for at least a couple of years and hopefully beyond that."

Murfitt said the fact that the bikes were hidden behind a separator leading to a big reveal made the event one of the coolest bike giveaways he has been a part of — though he always enjoys seeing the joy on the kids faces.

"It's awesome," he said. "Your first sense of freedom is riding away from your parents on a bike, and being able to give that to a kid is really important. It can also give kids who don't have a good home life or anything like that an outlet."

Helping to fund the donation of the bikes was Infinite Monkey Theorem, a winery that is in the process of opening a new taproom in Fort Collins. The winery also provided a place to assemble the bikes and supplied several of the volunteers who helped out with both the build on Monday and the event at Truscott on Tuesday.

The school's principal, Karen Hanford, said she was thankful for the generosity of Can’d Aid and Infinite Monkey Theorem.

"It honestly brought tears to my eyes when they raised the separator," she said. "I was crying because of the gift they have given us. What an incredible opportunity for our kids."

Paul Albani-Burgio: 970-699-5407, paulbani-burgio@reporter-herald.com