LUMINARIES STAR VOLUNTEER

Aaron driving force behind ‘Pump Us Up!’ program

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Bike Walk Indian River County Inc. is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) community coalition working to make Indian River County a safe, more accessible and more comfortable place for people to ride bicycles and walk.

Laura Aaron is one of the coalition’s founders and an active board member and officer. She participates in every facet of the organization, providing insight and expertise to advance its mission. True to her cycling role of “stoker” on the tandem bike, Aaron has endurance and strength, provides the power to climb the hills and keeps the organization centered on its cause.

One example of Aaron’s quiet leadership occurred earlier this year. Bike Walk Indian River County awarded bicycles to local boys who had accomplished certain academic and behavioral milestones. The agency’s volunteer League Cycling instructors taught them bike safety and basic bike maintenance.

Upon learning that the boys did not have access to air pumps or any of the basic tools necessary to keep their bikes operating properly, Aaron was inspired to raise money so that the agency could purchase and install a bike maintenance work station with an air pump in the boys’ neighborhood. She named the new project “Pump Us Up!”

Aaron, herself, was already “pumped up” with enthusiasm for making the stations a reality.

Aaron immediately started writing grant applications and implemented grassroots efforts to generate support for her “Pump Us Up!” program. She initially hoped to raise $1,500 to cover the cost of one work station. So far she has raised over more than three times that amount, including a “PeopleForBikes” grant and significant contributions from Sunrise Rotary Club, the Live Like Cole Foundation, Dyer Auto Group and many private individuals.

Aaron also recruited Malcolm Allen, owner of Orchid Island Bike and Kayaks, who generously agreed to order, assemble, install and maintain the work stations at no cost.

So far, two work stations have been ordered. One is being installed in the boys’ neighborhood at the Gifford Youth Achievement Center and the other is being installed adjacent to a bus stop at a local community health clinic.

Through Aaron’s fundraising success, Bike Walk Indian River County is planning at least two additional work stations: one to be installed at the local transit hub and another near the newly completed community multi-use trail.

Many cyclists take for granted having the ability to maintain their equipment, either with tools they own or at their local bike shop. Aaron’s initiative and new awareness of the lack of these resources resulted in this tremendously successful campaign to keep bikes rolling in Indian River County. Work stations provided through “Pump Us Up!” will benefit the entire community.