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YMCA, Family of Woodstock and Habitat for Humanity Announce Bicycle Reuse Program

Kingston, NY: The YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County, Family of Woodstock, Inc. through its Kingston Cares program, and Ulster County Habitat for Humanity are rolling out the “Lend-A-Wheel” bicycle reuse program on Sunday, May 4th at the First Annual YMCA Bike Fest. The ceremonial first bike will be presented to Megan Weiss-Rowe of Kingston Cares at the Bike Fest and will be given to a local resident to facilitate transportation to employment.

“The Lend-A-Wheel program gives people who have old bikes, or ones they aren’t using, to be put in the hands of those in our community who need basic transportation,” said Heidi Kirschner, President and CEO of the Y.

Members of the community will have the opportunity to bring their used bicycles to the YMCA, who will refurbish them and make them available to Family of Woodstock for local residents who cannot afford other forms of basic transportation. Family will identify individuals and distribute bikes to those in need. Bikes previously donated to Habitat will also be reconditioned and given to Family.

“We are fortunate to live in a community where local residents share their resources to enable those struggling to survive the opportunity to acquire basic transportation. We are fortunate that the City of Kingston provides an environment in which local agencies share resources for the betterment of our local citizenry,” said Michael Berg, Executive Director of Family of Woodstock.

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"This innovative program will allow for increased biking in the City and I am thrilled that the Everette Hodge Community Center and our partner, Family of Woodstock, can assist," said Kingston Mayor Shayne Gallo. "This program compliments our Kingston Connectivity Project which is aimed at improving non-motorized transportation around the City through complete streets and rail trails," continued Mayor Gallo.

"Lend-A-Wheel is a good fit for Habitat's mission, which is to offer a hand up to those in need. The bikes we sell at our ReStore thrift center will help build homes in Ulster County. But we have many more donated bikes to share. Teaming with the YMCA and Family will get them back on the road helping to serve basic travel needs in our community," said John Lavallo, President of Ulster County's Habitat affiliate.

"The Y will coordinate with local bike shops and volunteers to assist in repairing these bikes," said Tom Polk, Chairman of the Y's Bicycle Committee. "Anyone who makes a bike donation will also be entered into a raffle for prizes and receive a letter for tax purposes," he added.

The Bike Fest will be held from 11am to 3pm at the YMCA, 507 Broadway in Kingston (entrance on Pine Grove Avenue). Presentation of a ceremonial "First Bike" will be made at approximately 2:30pm. In addition to the Lend-A-Wheel program, the Bike Fest will also feature community bike rides, a youth Bike Rodeo, maintenance clinics and an Adult Re-Learn To Ride program. All activities are open to the public free of charge.

The YMCA is an open, inclusive interfaith movement founded in 1866 which advocates Christian principles through programs that build character, respond to community needs and help build spirit, mind, and body for all. YMCA membership is open to all in the community. Programs are open to the public and YMCA Members, and scholarships are available to those in need.

Family of Woodstock, Inc., is a network of individuals who provide crisis intervention, prevention, and support services to help consumers achieve self-sufficiency and self-respect. The common ground which unites us, both helper and helped, is greater than the differences which divide us. Everyone deserves the respect and support of our larger community.

Ulster County Habitat for Humanity is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a non-profit housing ministry dedicated to the vision of a world in which everyone has a decent place to live. It is the mission of Habitat to build affordable homes, better lives, stronger families and safer communities through partnerships with people and organizations throughout Ulster County, regardless of religious preference or cultural background.

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