

Bikes for Tykes pedals for children's charities

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Bikes for Tykes' 2018 event

The donors: Fred and Marni Hamilton

The gift: Raising \$3.6-million

The cause: Children's charities

When Toronto lawyer Fred Hamilton got involved in the Molson Indy Festival Foundation several years ago he wanted to do something to raise money for children's charities during the annual race weekend.

His idea was to put stationary bicycles in the courtyard of the Toronto-Dominion Centre during lunch hour the day before the race and encourage people to ride and raise money. With the help of his daughter, Marni Hamilton, he organized the first Bike for Tykes in 2000 and attracted 22 teams which raised \$15,000. The event grew quickly over the years and when the foundation discontinued its activity in 2007, the Hamiltons kept it going on their own. Last year's Bike for Tykes drew 1,400 participants and raised \$424,000. In total, Mr. and Ms. Hamilton have raised \$3.6-million.

They initially donated proceeds to the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital but since 2012 they partnered with the Coast to Coast Against Cancer Foundation, a Canadian charity that supports programs for children with cancer and their families.

Ms. Hamilton said that it's become too hard to get enough stationary bikes and they've had to stop the event. "We made the tough decision that 2018 would be the last one," she said from her home in Toronto. She added that she and her father are proud of how far the event had come. "When we started it we had no vision in mind of where it was going," she said. "It was really the people involved and the people that we met along the way who made it what it was."

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