

TRANSPORTATION, NOT RECREATION

"We started something we couldn't stop," Hines said.

The shop could not absorb the cost forever.

"We couldn't keep paying for tires and tubes out of the business account," she said. "We had to do something."

That reality pushed Pedal Forward from informal help into a nonprofit structure, built around a clear line that Hines does not blur.

"This is transportation. This is not recreation," she said. "This is about getting to work, food, doctors, and shelter. Basic needs."

"If you don't have transportation, you can't get off welfare," she said. "That's the answer."

Making that work depends on having bikes that are not just rideable, but reliable. That is where Casey Hines comes in. A career bike mechanic, who previously worked in shops in Prescott and Texas, Casey handles the technical side of the operation, repairing and refurbishing donated bikes to ensure they are safe and street-ready.

His role is essential to the mission. Each bike that goes out the door has to work, not just today, but tomorrow, because for the people receiving them, failure is not an inconvenience. It is a setback.

Pedal Forward is a Qualified Charitable Organization (QCO) in Arizona, certified by the Arizona Department of Revenue, which allows donors to receive a dollar-for-dollar Arizona state income tax credit.

"QCOs have to be for basic human needs," Hines said. "And transportation definitely qualifies."

WHO PEDAL FORWARD SERVES

Most referrals arrive from sys-



Carmen Hines in front of bikes donated for Pedal Forward (Cynthia Cooper/For the Courier)

tems already stretched thin and often at capacity.

"Most people come from reentry, rehab and veterans services," Hines said.

Veterans with PTSD are a familiar sight in the shop.

"We give bikes to veterans with PTSD who can't stand being inside," she said. "Four walls can feel like a cage."

"A lot of people have mental disabilities," Hines said. "That's not something to judge."

"These bikes are their lifeline."

WHAT \$100 CAN DO

"They fill out an application," Hines said. "I don't need their personal information. I just need enough to keep it legitimate."

When a bike that fits becomes available, it may be gifted. Many come from Stepping Stones or other thrift shops and typically cost around \$75.

"If I had \$100 donated for bikes, it would change everything," she said.

"That extra money can cover

the bike, tubes, tires, sometimes a chain or cables," Hines said. "With more money, we could give them locks, racks and pumps."

"These are things people don't think about," she added. "But they matter."

Behind the scenes, much of that work happens at the hands of Wyatt Wilson, a local high school senior who helps repair and prepare bikes for Pedal Forward. Wyatt started coming into the shop at 14, unpaid at first, because he wanted to learn. He cleaned, watched, asked questions and stayed. Now he helps bring donated bikes back to life, one repair at a time.

HELMETS, HUMOR, AND HARD LINES

Hines does not negotiate on safety.

"I don't allow anyone to do a test ride without a helmet," she said. "I don't care what they're willing to sign."

"I've seen traumatic brain injuries. I've seen what happens."

Pedal Forward's helmet supply gets a boost from the Prescott Valley Police Department, which partners with the nonprofit during twice-yearly Bike Rodeos. The department provides helmets, Pedal Forward helps with bikes, and kids leave safer than they arrived.

Hines insists on helmets, full stop. The partnership also matters because it helps kids see officers as helpers, especially when safety and trust are built simultaneously.

A BIKE SHOP THAT LETS PEOPLE IN

People come for resources as much as repairs.

The shop has a community area with resource lists.

"If someone needs food, water, laundry resources, shelter info, they come here," Hines said. "And we always have snacks

and bottled water."

"Most bike shops won't even let these people in," she added. "We do."

PAYING IT FORWARD, LITERALLY

"Once people get jobs, they start paying for their own repairs," Hines said.

When they no longer need the bike, they return it.

"When they get a car, they bring the bikes back instead of selling them," she said. "That's Pedal Forward. They pass it on."

THE COST OF CARING

"Pedal Forward has zero paid staff," Hines said.

She manages the administrative side herself.

"I didn't even have a board when I started. I was just doing it," she said.

That clarity about limits shapes how she thinks about growth.

"Nonprofits should not be competing," she said. "The food bank doesn't do what I do. I don't do what they do."

"If you know someone who can't get to food, send them to me," she said. "I'll get them a bike."

"THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD WORK."

Why she keeps going

"Starting a nonprofit was never part of the plan," Hines said. "But we just couldn't stop helping people."

"This is not charity," she said.

At the bottom of every Pedal Forward application is a line she chose carefully: Keep moving forward. You're worth it.

Behind the counter at C and C Cyclery, business looks a lot like belief, belief that a bike can be more than a bike, belief that a shop can be more than a shop, and that sometimes the most sustainable business decision is simply refusing to turn someone away.