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The 11th annual Bike for Boys and Girls Club

by A. David Dahmer

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The 11th annual Bike for Boys & Girls Club coming up this weekend is a vital fund-raiser for the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County.

Boys & Girls Club President and CEO Michael Johnson is hoping the event will raise more than \$350,000. Over 900 bike riders have registered for Bike 4 Boys & Girls Club this year already which is the largest to date.

“The Boys & Girls Club does not get a lot of federal and state funding ... it doesn't get a lot of funding from the local municipalities. In order for us to do all of the work that we do throughout the school day,



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after school, weekends, and during the summer, we have to raise money through events like this which is our largest fund-raiser of the year,” Johnson says. “Anything under \$350,000 is unacceptable. Our kids deserve the resources that they need and so this bike ride is very critical.”

The annual Bike for Boys & Girls Club is a fun time for families and begins and ends at Edgewood High School, 2219 Monroe St. The event includes three distances: eight, 25, and 50 miles. Riders may sign up as individuals or join a team, with all ages and abilities welcome. Participants pay an entry fee and agree to raise pledges of a certain amount.

Riders also have the opportunity to earn a variety of prizes for meeting different pledge levels and everyone who rides receives a 2013 Bike for Boys and Girls Club goodie bag filled with a T-shirt, restaurant certificates, nutritious snack, and water bottle.

A post-ride party at Edgewood is open to all riders, with food, beverages and live music. Event sponsor Trek Bicycles will give away prizes.

“It's a family-friendly event. The 8-mile [course] should take about 30 or 40 minutes to do,” Johnson says. “When they come back [from the bike ride] there will be free beer and ice cream and a bouncy house for the kids. We will have live entertainment again. [Former Madisonian and current Portland Trail Blazers basketball player] Wesley Matthews will be there. It's a fun, fun event.”

To further raise money for the event, Johnson will be on the rooftop of Metcalfe's Market on Thursday and Friday sleeping on top of a trailer until his goal of \$350,000 is reached. “I'm pretty much not going to come down from there until we raise \$350,000. Even if we don't raise it by Saturday, I will stay up there until we raise those funds,” Johnson says. “Pizza Hut will be selling pizza with all of the proceeds coming back to the Boys and Girls Club. It's going to be very, very exciting.”

Is the set-up nice up there on the roof? Does Johnson have a large flat screen and air-conditioning? “No, no, no, no,” Johnson smiles. “I'm really roughing it up there. I'll have some power up there for my cell phone, but that's it!”

Thousands and thousands of cars come through University Ave. every hour and Johnson knows that is more and more chances to raise money for the Boys & Girls Club. “If we hit \$350,000 that first hour, I'm coming down!,” Johnson says. “But I anticipate a longer stay up there. I know our community will step up and support our kids.”

These past five months or so, Johnson himself has been on a biking mission and a mission for better health getting up at 4:30 a.m. every day to bike 20-25 miles with a group of cyclists. “I had gained about 80 pounds since I've taken this job. The job is so demanding and the kids need so much support... but I realized that I can't take care of the kids unless I take care of myself,” Johnson says. “One day I started working out with [Metcalfe's Grocery Owner and President] Tim Metcalfe and we started biking and pretty soon it became an everyday thing.”

Johnson says that he's since become addicted to biking. “I've gone on a 50-mile ride and a 94-mile ride. It's very therapeutic for me,” he says. “It's a great way to burn calories. It's a great way to get in shape. I've lost about 33 pounds in the last 5 months just biking.”

Proceeds from the 11th annual Bike for Boys and Girls Club will go straight to supporting the youth activities and programs of the Boys & Girls Club. The annual event serves as the club's largest campaign to raise funds

“People can go to any Metcalfe's or any PDQ or Dunkin' Donuts. You can go to our website and make a donation,” Johnson says. “No donation is too small if it's a dollar or 50 dollars. We're hoping people will step up so that we not only meet our goal but exceed our goal this year.”

The flyer is for the 5th Annual Black Women's Wellness Day, organized by the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness. It is held on Saturday, September 21, 2013, from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM at the Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way, Madison, WI. The admission is \$35.00, which includes refreshments and materials. Limited scholarships are available. The event features a 'Doozy Prize!', 'Goodie Bag!', 'Free Massage!', 'Life-changing Workshops!', and 'Inspiring Guest Speakers!'. Registration is encouraged via the website www.bwvday2013.eventbrite.com. Sponsors include Alliant Energy, St. Mary's Hospital, and various community organizations.



The annual Bike for Boys & Girls Club is Saturday, July 20, at Edgewood High School, 2219 Monroe St. For more information about the event or to register or make a donation, visit www.bike4bgc.com. or call Janine Stephens at 257-2606 ext. 723.

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