



**THE BIKE  
BRIGADE**

# **YEAR IN REVIEW**

# 20

# 21

# OUR COMMITMENT

Most of us in the Bike Brigade community live, work and ride across the City of Toronto (Tkaronto). Tkaronto is the traditional land of the Haudenosaunee, the Mississauga, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Huron and a diversity of other Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island. This land is governed by the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum belt covenant - a treaty formed between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee nations before European settlement.

Grounded in the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace, the dish represents shared land and resources; the spoon represents sharing and responsibility; and no knives are depicted to represent peace. The Dish With One Spoon symbolizes three principles: take what you need, leave some for others, and keep it clean. While this may be a simplified representation of Haudenosaunee land ethics, it is important for us to remember and understand how to act in accordance with it.

Not all, but the majority of folks in the Bike Brigade community enjoy the freedoms and liberties as Canadian settlers in the Dish With One Spoon territory. Because of this, we have the opportunity and responsibility to deepen our understanding of broken treaty agreements and how colonial violence continues to be perpetuated against our Indigenous communities. This concept of humans being part of the land - and these values of collective stewardship and reciprocity - is something that has been lost in many of us today.

As a settler colonial state, we must also recognize that many folks from African descent are from ancestors that were forcibly brought to these lands as part of the transatlantic slave trade. Anti-Blackness and generational racism still exists in our communities.

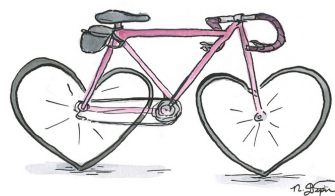
# OUR COMMITMENT

The structural and systemic violence of settler colonialism - manifesting through capitalism, neoliberalism, white supremacy and the patriarchy - continues to impact Indigenous sovereignty and the safety of Black communities, as well as refugees, migrants and other racialized peoples, women, trans and queer folks, and disabled people. Food insecurity and poverty remains pervasive in these marginalized communities by design. This underscores the importance of knowing that delivering food and essentials to our most vulnerable community members is only our first step towards a more equitable future in this City we call home.

At the Bike Brigade, we strive to follow our partners that embody the values of mutual aid - a long-standing practice rooted in Black and racialized communities building networks for survival outside of charities and government agencies. In pursuit of this, we commit to holding each other accountable: to value the diversity of cultural worldviews; to talk about basic needs as feminist and climate issues\*; to interrogate how we engage with hierarchies, classist narratives and respectability politics\*; to understand individual positionality and leverage access to privilege and power; and to centre the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, Black communities and other marginalized groups as we seek collaborative survival.

Solidarity Not Charity.

By Rachel Jai-Sho Wang  
Executive Director, The Bike Brigade



\*Mikki Kendall (2020). Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women that a Movement Forgot.

# WHERE WE'VE BEEN

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The Bike Brigade emerged in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the first month, 200 volunteers answered the call put out by our friend David Shellnutt (also known as the Biking Lawyer). Dave saw an opportunity to mobilize the Tkaronto cycling community in supporting those most vulnerable and isolated, particularly seniors during the pandemic. Just like that, a seed was planted!

Since March 2020, the Bike Brigade has seen over 1,500 volunteers sign up to ride with us. As we grow, we become stronger and more resilient. When one of us is unable to deliver, we know there will be another who can fill that role. These values around solidarity, reciprocity and community care didn't just come to be - they have been built and strengthened by those within the Bike Brigade community. In 2021 we stood at 472 active volunteers.

As stressed by our partners, the pandemic only highlighted existing inequities across our City. Before COVID-19, City data showed that 1 in 5 households in Tkaronto are food insecure; and 31,000 households in the lowest income areas are more than 1 km from the nearest supermarket. To compound the already under-resourced food security efforts, 70% of food bank services then shifted to a home delivery service during the pandemic (Food Banks Canada, 2020). In response, there was a disproportionate burden placed on food banks and mutual aid groups to fill these gaps for food and delivery. We have been told the need for our volunteer delivery services will continue as we rebuild in the 'shadow pandemic' and beyond into a post-pandemic green recovery.

# OUR IMPACT

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As we reflect on our impact in 2021, we feel immense gratitude. Whether someone did 1 delivery or 100, the time, energy and care from each cyclist was incredibly valuable. We recognize everyone's capacity to participate in volunteer work is varied and ever changing. This is why our community has become so important - together we can make a big impact, bigger than what any one of us could accomplish alone.



## 472 Active\* Riders

We reached an all-time high of active riders in June, and continued delivering into December with 70 winter riders. Total distance travelled (carrying cargo) was 38,200km! \*Active: at least 1 delivery



## 12,940 Deliveries Completed

This included 8,138 FoodShare Good Food boxes, 3,453 food hampers, 29,265 meals, community fridges filled 956 times, 842 grocery bags, and 405 essential items.



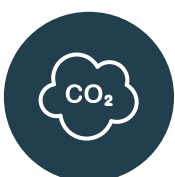
## 1,954 Unique Recipients

98% of deliveries were food, including food hampers, groceries and hot meals, while 2% of deliveries were non-food, including menstrual products, therapy supplies, PPE and donations.



## 38 Partners

This included This Way Up, Parkdale Community Food Bank, Uplift Kitchen, Maggie's, Encampment Support Network, Avenue Road Food Bank, Sistering, the 519, Community Fridges TO and many more!



## 9.23 T GHG Emissions\* Reduced

This is equivalent to the weight of 26 polar bears!

\*Greenhouse gas (GHG) tracking is informed by the World Resources Institute GHG Protocol.

# BEHIND THE SCENES

## LOGISTICS TEAM

Ever wonder who delivers if no one signs up? Or how many people are behind the Bike Brigade phone number sending out emojis, jokes and good vibes?

For their dedication and commitment to community care, thank you to Chiara Rossi, Jack Comerford, Kerri Scheer, Katie Edgerton, Darlene Paguandas, Max Veytsman, Jon Gruber-Benaich, Cecily Lo, Ilse Kramer, Mika Harada, Jenna Blumenthal, Chad Mohr, Lois Bennett, Meike Jourdain, David Shellnutt, Michael Longfield, Twoey Gray, Sarah Nightingale, Riley Marshall, Melissa Bryanton and Rachel Wang. Also thank you to our Canada Summer Job hires: Victoria Yang and Pravina Palanisamy!

Learn more about them at [www.bikebrigade.ca/team](http://www.bikebrigade.ca/team)

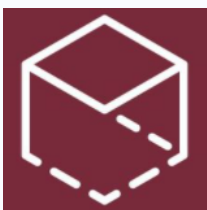
## TECHNOLOGY TEAM

Did you know the Bike Brigade developed its own Dispatch Application software?

We use this App to manage our back-end delivery logistics, including auto assignment, route optimization, text correspondence and data tracking. Our founding engineer Max presented our App at the ElixirConf 2021. His talk was entitled "[Distributed Real-time Pandemic Response: Building a Non-Profit on Phoenix LiveView](#)".

Thank you to our wonderful tech humans: Max Veytsman, Jenna Blumenthal, Serena Peruzzo, Ben Moss, Josie Pynadath, Chad Mohr and Diana Kagotho.

We also extend our thanks to Valkyrie Savage, Mattia Gheda, Bert Muthalaly and Adam Kelly for their tech contributions.



Special thank you to Mihok Systems for sponsoring a contract for Diana Kagotho to join the Tech Team as a web developer!

**Bike Brigade  
Source Code:**  
[github.com/bikebrigade/dispatch](https://github.com/bikebrigade/dispatch)

**Bike Brigade  
Tech Blog:**  
[spoke.bikebrigade.ca](https://spoke.bikebrigade.ca)

# BEHIND THE SCENES

## BIKE MARSHAL TEAM

The Bike Brigade Marshal Team was formed out of the #NotAnotherBlackLife 2020 Juneteenth sit-in at Toronto Police Headquarters. Since this action, the team continued to support and learn from BIPOC community organizers as they took to the streets in the name of justice. We supported the Palestine Youth Movement, Maggie's Sex Workers Action Project, Encampment Support Network, Fridays for Future, and other organizers at dozens of actions.

As bike marshals, Bike Brigade volunteers supported organizers by ensuring

demonstrators were safe to exercise their right to protest, and offered a safe alternative to police.

In response to an action with overt police aggression and hostility, direct concerns were raised about the performance of Bike Brigade marshals. We entered into an accountability process prompting us to develop resources, host trainings, and deepen our understanding of how to be active participants in anti-oppression work. **We remain dedicated to movement building and abolition.**

## RESEARCH TEAM

This year the Bike Brigade partnered with Mitacs to fund two research projects in collaboration with the University of Toronto and York University.



**Lead: Kerri Scheer | Supervisors: Valkyrie Savage, University of Copenhagen & Paula Maurutto, UofT**

Exploring the composition of Bike Brigade volunteers and the factors that support or inhibit engagement with deliveries.



**Lead: Jess Nachman | Supervisors: Rachel Wang, The Bike Brigade & Lyndsay Hayhurt, YorkU**

Exploring the experiences of Queer, Trans/Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (QT/BIPOC) volunteers in the Bike Brigade.

In 2022, Kerri and Jess will be organizing a panel for the Canadian Sociology Association Annual Conference: "Towards a Sociology of Mutual Aid: Building equitable communities during COVID-19". The Bike Brigade will also be partnering with York University and Associate Professor Lyndsay Hurst as a Community Partner to support senior-level Kinesiology students.

# WHERE WE'RE GOING

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In January 2021, the Bike Brigade was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization by Rachel Wang, Darlene Paguandas, David Shellnutt and Max Veytsman. This was our way of saying: the Bike Brigade is here to stay!

In 2022, we intend to expand the Bike Brigade Board and develop a 3-year Strategic Plan. Under 4 cross-cutting themes, we will continue to build off the momentum we've created as a community since March 2020.

## 1. CLIMATE ACTION

- Offer last-mile bike deliveries for our community partners
- Track GHG emissions reductions
- Support equity-informed climate programming and community funds
- Support cycling advocacy efforts for safer streets

## 2. TECHNOLOGY

- Build out functionality and features of the Bike Brigade Dispatch App
- Update source code on GitHub
- Exchange and share knowledge at conferences and on our tech blog
- Build partnerships to improve access to tech for mutual aid organizing

## 3. ANTI-OPPRESSION

- Explore the use of the bike as a tool for individual and community safety
- Stand with communities fighting for justice and radical change
- Support cross-cultural dialogue and programming that enhances the protection and safety of the communities we deliver for; increases anti-oppression awareness and trauma-informed competencies of our delivery volunteers; and builds relationships, solidarity and mutual aid within and across communities

## 4. RESEARCH

- Become a research hub to facilitate connections between academia and community efforts
- Partner with Mitacs and academic institutions
- Attend and participate in conferences and other knowledge-sharing platforms



# THANK YOU FROM THE BIKE BRIGADE!

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## Volunteer with us

[www.bikebrigade.ca/volunteer](http://www.bikebrigade.ca/volunteer)

## Check out our merch

[www.bikebrigade.ca/shop](http://www.bikebrigade.ca/shop)

## Connect on social media



## Contact Information

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