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Ex-con receives new life with Jesus Bikes

- **Jesus Bikes launched 10 years ago**
- **Gallegos credits God, Renfrow for fresh start**
- **Program provides bikes to those in need**

By ANDREW KISER

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Christopher Gallegos considers much of his past life to be like the bicycles he works on for Jesus Bikes that provides bicycles for those in need.

The bikes turned down on their backs in the dirt are the same as when he was addicted to drugs and living in squalor, he said.

The way they were confiscated and lockup by the Montrose Police Department is similar to his past when he was convicted of aggravated robbery and almost facing a 96-year prison sentence, Gallegos explained.

When the bicycles come to Jesus Bikes, a program founded by Jim Renfrow, they get worked on and flipped back on top, exactly like he felt when he found Christ in his life in 2005, he said.

He recalled his past self as a violent man and a lieutenant with Sureños, a gang affiliated with the Mexican Mafia. But now, as he talks eagerly about Jesus Bikes, the Bible and God, there's not a single trace of ferocity left in his voice.

"All I ever wanted to do was hurt people," Gallegos said. "There was so much hatred built up. I was looking at two double sentences; my family disowned me



Christopher Gallegos with Jesus Bikes tests the brakes of a bicycle he's working on April 26 to give away inside the shop on South Townsend Avenue. Gallegos has been part of the movement since the beginning of the year. (Andrew Kiser/Montrose Daily Press)

because all I did was get into trouble and I was in and out of prison. But God saved me and gave me a new family."

Gallegos, who once was once deemed

a "gangster," now spends his days building bikes for the homeless, people on work-release, families and children. And he's not asking for a dime in return.

"When we give them out for free, people say, 'Free? Nothing's free,'" Gallegos said. "Oh yeah, salvation is free, brother.

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Free 3D mammograms at MMH

STAFF REPORT

Bosom Buddies and Montrose Memorial Hospital are celebrating Mother's Day by giving free 3D mammograms the week of May 14 – 18.

Regardless of insurance status or age, anyone who registers by calling 970-252-2540 will receive the procedure free that week courtesy of Bosom Buddies. MMH has reserved more than 150 appointments for this week so those interested are encouraged to call early.

Montrose Memorial Hospital offers 3D mammography, which gives providers a wider view that allows them to see tissue with greater clarity and depth as never before. This gives patients the greatest advantage in the war on breast cancer. Because the image clarity of 3D mammography leads to more accurate breast cancer detection, women are diagnosed with fewer false positives and don't experience the worry of follow-up tests.

The cost of the mammogram including the radiologist fees will be covered completely by Bosom Buddies Breast Cancer Support Group of Southwestern Colorado. The results will be sent to the woman's primary care provider. If the doctor recommends further diagnostic procedures, the woman can apply to Bosom Buddies and receive financial assistance if she qualifies.

In addition to financial medical assistance, Bosom Buddies helps those dealing with breast cancer who reside in Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel Counties with weekly support meetings, prosthesis supplies

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The only thing you got to do is believe.”

For those wanting a bike, just call Gallegos at 970-417-2340 to set up a time to pick one up.

“They can come down here and we'll get them a bike,” he said. “Everyone gets a bike. Just like salvation, everybody is given the opportunity for salvation.”

His effort may be more surprising, considering the Jesus Bikes worker is homeless and spends his nights sheltered in Olathe through the Montrose Lighthouse ministry. But from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Gallegos travels down to the bike shop.

He credited Renfrow, who started Jesus Bikes about a decade ago.

“If it wasn't for Jim's obedience to Jesus and his call, I probably wouldn't be here,” Gallegos said.

Renfrow said he began the program to help lessen the number of MPD confiscated bicycles as well as give homeless people who need a mode of transportation.

Cycles have also been given out to families and children who may have had their bikes stolen.

Gallegos is the man in charge of fixing up the bikes and has been with Jesus Bikes since the beginning of the year.

Thanks to his vigorous work, the program has been able to work on them more than in previous years, Renfrow said.

“All of a sudden, we got Christopher and he's been able to spend more time on it,” Renfrow said. “... It just took off. It's like asking a duck to get into the water.”

His interest was also due to a young fixation with tinkering around with bikes, said Gallegos, who started working on them when he was 5.

“I just love bicycles.

They're fun. They are not only fun but it's also healthy for you to ride them,” he said.

“The knowledge that I have with what I do today on bicycles is from God. I didn't read a book, watch a video, go to a seminary or anything.”

Gallegos may lack formal training, but he's been able to help children.

“The best part about this is the kids' lives get transformed,” Gallegos said. “That's where I get my happiness from. I just thank Him (Jesus) every day for this program.”

Gallegos said he's also appreciative of a weekly Saturday event where he helps the children learn how to work on their own cycles.

“We have an open shop where people want to come and pick up a bike and build their own bike,”

Gallegos said. “I'll supervise the whole thing and let them use the tools. And whatever they don't know, I'll teach them.”

All the giving back is coming from a man who once didn't think it was possible.

Gallegos said he may have had many negative experiences in his life, but now he's part of a more peaceful way. He just hopes more people could find that path, he added.

“This is what this whole thing is about: salvation, becoming a new creation,” Gallegos said. “Because if the world had more peace in it and there were more positive things told amongst brothers and sisters ... this place would be a lot better.”

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