



## MAD DADS works to collect bikes for Special Olympics athletes

By Andrew Lamberson

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The Special Olympics USA National Games will be coming to Lincoln on July 18, and the Rev. Don Coleman is ready to give the athletes some new wheels.

Coleman, president of the Lincoln chapter of MAD DADS (Men Against Destruction, Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder) is planning on giving every athlete who participates in the Special Olympics a free bike.

"I come from a large family of 14. We only had two bikes," Coleman said.

"I believe that every kid should have a bike."

The plan, Coleman said, is to line all of the bikes up outside of the Pershing Auditorium while the athletes are inside for an informational class for the games.

"You can just imagine the smiles and the glee and everything that's going to be on these kids' faces when they see the bikes," he said.

The MAD DADS bicycle program operates out of a warehouse at 6th and J streets.

Bikes are donated, fixed up and either donated to charity or sold to the public.

All money made is put into purchasing new parts for bikes and volunteers do all work.

"We may have only two people one day and five the next," Coleman said.

Many of the volunteers are seeking community service hours to complete.

Ron Busch, a retired administrator at Chadron State College, has been volunteering at MAD DADS since December.

"Everyone has a little different degree of experience," Busch said. "We feed off each other. We learn a little bit every day."

The Special Olympics giveaway isn't the first time MAD DADS has contributed to the Lincoln community.

The organization hosts many community service events throughout the year, including an annual Christmas bike giveaway that went to 130 fifth-graders from 10 Lincoln schools, a donation of 75 bikes to the Winnebago Reservation, 39 bikes given to Lincoln Public Schools and 176 given to children of parents serving in the military.

MAD DADS was founded in 1989 in Omaha to prevent gang violence.

Since then, it has opened chapters around the country and is currently headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla.

Coleman said MAD DADS has collected about 80 of the 100 bikes needed for the Special Olympics donation.

Of those 80, six are specialty bikes designed for special-needs riders.

One can be pedaled using hands if the person cannot pedal with their legs and two others are double bikes, but built side-by-side, so parents can ride next to their children.

"The hardest part is trying to find more space for them all," Busch said.

Outside the warehouse, a semi-trailer houses even more bikes.

No bikes leave the warehouse unless they've been checked all over and all broken parts have been replaced.

Coleman said putting new tires on the bikes is also very important.

Coleman said he was confident about getting enough bikes for the Special Olympics.

"We'll get the number – it just depends on how soon and how fast."

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