

PEDAL POWER

Team-building exercise works in cycles



Chris Knight slightly turned the screw on the finicky gear shift and took a deep breath. Time to test his work. “This has to be right,” Knight said as he began rotating the pedals on the mountain bike.

The back wheel spun into motion and Knight clicked through the gears. The chain transferred smoothly from first gear to second, second to third, and then on through fourth and fifth and sixth.

Perfect. Knight broke into a satisfied smile. “The kid,” he said, “is going to love this.”

As part of the new Bike for a Tyke program offered through Corporate College at Cuyahoga Community College, Knight and 14 others at Magnus International Group built and donated bicycles to four Lake County children.

Bike for a Tyke unites a company’s employees in a team-building project that grants a wish to a member of the community. The hands-on experience requires co-workers to communicate, solve problems and use leadership skills in order to meet a goodwill goal.

“One of the most powerful reasons

for team building is to get results,” said Meghan Bilardo, director of organizational effectiveness at Corporate College. “The Bike for a Tyke program accomplishes that in two ways: It energizes employees to create a more dynamic workplace and it brings happiness to a child in the community.”

At Magnus, employees spent a June afternoon assembling and customizing the bikes at the company’s Hardy Industrial Technologies plant in Painesville Township. The event was the finale to a leadership training program completed through Corporate College.

The project brought together staff from the company’s Chagrin Falls corporate office and Hardy production facility to work side by side in the plant’s warehouse amidst stacks of dairy cow feed. Magnus companies develop and manufacture natural animal feed ingredients and innovative chemicals derived from plant and animal fats.

Participating employees ranged from bookkeepers and office managers to maintenance crew members and plant workers. Each offered a different

skillset that — when combined with the strengths of the others in the group — made the project a success, said Scott Forster, co-owner of Magnus.

“You see what can be accomplished through a collaborative effort,” Forster said.

And the good it can do.

The bikes were presented to four Painesville-area children between the ages of 8 and 12 soon after the co-workers finished tightening bolts on the two-wheelers. The gifts were arranged through the Lake County Juvenile Diabetes Walk Family.

The smiles on the children sparked even more than the bikes. Forster said watching the kids and their families react after seeing the gifts for the first time represented the most worthwhile moments in the project.

“That will touch you,” he said.

To schedule a Bike for a Tyke session through Corporate College or for more information on the program, call 216-987-0234 or go to www.corporatecollege.com/teambuilding. Corporate College also offers a Culinary Challenge team-building program.