



NORTHAMPTON CITY BRIEFING



STAFF PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

John Bechta, 10, picks out his new bicycle with his father Leonard Betcha on Friday morning as part of the 39 new bikes that were gifted by Red Stone Equity Partners to children living at Way Finders' Lumber Yard affordable housing development in Northampton.

Christmas comes early for youngsters

Children at Lumber Yard housing complex receive free bikes for the holiday; tree drop-offs scheduled

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is pedaling it down the street. Asked whether he prefers getting a new bike or free hot chocolate, Bechta replied "both."



STAFF PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

Benjamin Pierson, 3, picks out his new bicycle.

NORTHAMPTON — Christmas came slightly early for 39 children living at the Lumber Yard affordable housing development on Friday, when they all received a new bike as a gift from Red Stone Equity Partners, in collaboration with Way Finders, which manages the building. Red Stone, a real estate investment firm that has offices in Boston and New York City, is one of the financial partners of Way Finders and has provided tax credits to affordable housing projects across the country. Mike Murphy, the director of investor relations at Red Stone, was present for the giving of the bikes on Friday.

"One thing that we've tried to do over the past few years is align ourselves more with the cause of supporting affordable housing," he said. "Part of that is giving back to the communities in which we've invested in."

Residents attending were also treated to coffee, hot chocolate and donuts. The Lumber Yard is located near one of the city's bike paths, making bicycles an ideal gift to own for children growing up in the area.

John Bechta, a 10-year-old who lives at the Lumber Yard, said it was the second bike he has owned. He said his favorite part of riding a bike

Tree disposal
Residents looking to safely dispose of their Christmas trees following the holiday celebrations can give them to the Northampton Department of Public Works, which is holding two tree collection dates after the New Year.

Trees may be dropped off in the front right parking lot at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, 80 Locust St., on Saturday, Jan. 7, and Saturday, Jan. 14, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

All trees must be clear of ornaments, lights, tinsel, plastic bags, netting and metal wires before being dropped off. Artificial trees will not be accepted.

The tree collection will be open to all residents of Florence, Leeds and Northampton. A transfer station sticker will not be required, but proof of residency, such as a driver's license or vehicle registration may be required.

For more information, contact the DPW at 413-587-1570, or at Dpwinfo@northamptonma.gov. Alexander MacDougall can be reached at amacdougall@gazettenet.com.