



Charlie Guitard, owner of Canadian Tire on Prospect Street in Fredericton, is asking people to donate bikes, helmets, strollers and car seats that will be delivered to Syrian children and their parents next week.

PHOTO: LAVERNE STEWART/THE DAILY GLEANER

Syrian children to receive bikes, car seats and strollers from locals

Canadian Tire store owner is asking individuals and businesses to get involved

LAVERNE STEWART
THE DAILY GLEANER

Syrian children in Fredericton will be gifted with new and gently used bicycles next week, and the project's leader is hoping that people and other businesses will help out.

Charlie Guitard, owner of the Canadian Tire store on Smythe Street, said after reading The Daily Gleaner's coverage of the Syrian refugees and their needs, he decided to do what he could to help out.

He went to the Riverside Resort and Conference Centre in Mactaquac on Thursday and met with many of the families and volunteers. While he was there he saw some of the children were playing in the snow and thought with spring approaching and better weather on the

way, they would benefit from having bicycles to ride.

Guitard said he was told that many of the older children would have had bicycles in Syria before they were forced to flee their country with their parents to seek shelter at refugee camps in Turkey and Jordan.

He said he believes it's important to give children back a little of what they lost because of the civil war.

"These children know what bikes are and those who can't ride will soon learn."

"I am willing to buy 50 per cent of whatever they need. I think we're looking at about 90 bikes, 35 car seats and 35 strollers."

Guitard said he will be delivering the bicycles, helmets, strollers and car seats next week.

He said the Canadian Tire Jump Start program has money to buy some of the items that will be given to Syrian families.

He's also inviting people and businesses in the city to do what they can to help with this effort.

He said if people have new or gently

used bikes, strollers or car seats they can bring them to his store where they will be cleaned up and taken to the Syrian families too.

A donation box will be set up at the front of the store for anyone who wishes to make a financial contribution to the campaign. The money will be used to purchase more bikes, strollers, car seats and helmets.

"I think people will feel good being able to participate. If you have a stroller or a baby seat at home, bring it," he said.

Mike Timani, president of the Multicultural Council of New Brunswick, said this is another example of the generosity being shown by people across the province who want to help with the resettlement of nearly 1,300 Syrians who are now calling this province home.

"They will never forget what the community and the volunteers are doing for them. This kind of support will take the pressure off the newcomers and it will help them to manage their money. What Charlie is doing is a great thing," Timani said.