

## My Experience at the Bicycle Swap Meet

*Editor's Note: [Philly Pumptrack](#) hosted its first bike swap on September 20. There were more than twenty vendors, plus lots of patrons, riders and first-time swappers. Jim Dellavalle is the principal at [Dellavalle Designs](#), and Jim is the "company" that designed and built the Philly Pumptrack. Jim is also a former pro rider who still remains an avid cyclist and advocate.*

*While Jim lives in East Stroudsburg (quite a distance from Philadelphia), he still maintains a close connection to the track as well as to Philadelphia. As you can see from Jim's message below, the pumptrack means a lot more to him than a place to ride.*

I just want to say thank you on behalf of Ruben and me. We really enjoyed the bike swap in so many ways. We're both longtime bike mechanics, and we brought lots of parts to swap. Here are the highlights from my eyes:

- A young boy named Joey and his father Lou have been regularly coming to the park since the minute they caught word of it. Joey's first bike was a hand-me-down, and he loved it. At the swap meet, I noticed his father gathering parts from all of the vendors. When he came to our booth to say hi, he and his son needed some help. I offered our services to take all of the parts, along with his two bikes, and piece it all together to create Joey's new bike, which he would help build with us. It was rad! Lou got really into it, and you could see the nurturing between father and son. Money can't buy this type of experience. We ran into some mechanical difficulties, but because of the bike swap, we were able to find the parts to make Joey's bike a reality. Within two hours, we watched Joey pump the tracks with his red, white and blue ribbon on, earned by completing the skill lesson through the direction of Ken. I was pretty stoked after this took place, and seeing both father and son happy made the day.
- Within minutes of the bike build for Joey, a local walked up to Ruben and me and asked where the local bike shop was. He wanted to get a bike tuned. I gave him and his family some names, but then Ruben and I offered to just help the family out. After all, isn't that what this was all about? Heck yeah! So they patiently waited with their bike, asking a bunch of questions regarding the track and what was taking place. It was a true and honest, innocent local uninformed of this pumptrack project.

I tuned up the mountain bike for the father and got him to understand how to shift it (not knowing had caused the mechanical problem in the first place). After it was all good, he and his son went home. Within an hour's time, I noticed the father back at the swap, looking at some used mountain bikes.

I knew what was going on, and I didn't want to interfere. It's a Soul thing. He came back to find out-- to create a healthy lifestyle choice with his son. He wanted to find a way to share time with his boy. Awesome! He got a bike and rode home to his family. I can only imagine the joy on his son's face when he saw his dad rolling home on two wheels to go ride with him in the park.

(Both Ruben and I took breaks with my two sons and had lunch from the food truck, which had really good food and prices, by the way.)



- After our break, we swapped some more and met another local adult who watched us swap Joey's bike together. He asked me if we needed more bikes. His business is to clean out homes when people move, and a lot of times bikes are left behind. The true bike swap vibe was going down with this guy. It was also great to hear his stories and appreciate what we all were doing with the pumptracks. I noticed he left and came back with his daughter, son and their new puppy. They hung out in Ken's grandfather chair, and he was amazed at all the creativity our group gave to the grounds there. His son rode the pumptrack and was having a blast....

I know this happens every day probably, but for Ruben and me, it was not normal. I was engulfed in joy and pride to be part of such an event and project.

The riding, the DJ, the balloons, the character overall topped it off. The grassroots level of respect for the tracks, and the way everyone just looks after each other is overwhelming sometimes.

I want to say "thank you" for making it happen and giving opportunities to people to turn dreams into reality.

-Jim Dellavalle, Dellavalle Designs



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