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STEVEN OSTER THE DAILY COUGAR

Bike Shop regular Melik Albert, 11, patched his own flat tire with free help from professional bicycle technicians.

Third Ward wheels

■ Community workshop provides after-school programs

By **Stephen Wong**
THE DAILY COUGAR

During a typical Wednesday afternoon at the Third Ward Community Bike Shop, dozens of middle school students take apart and reassemble bikes of all shapes and sizes.

Every bike taken to the shop is repaired by its owner, who is assisted by trained, volunteer mechanics.

Katy Goodman, development coordinator and co-founder of the group that runs the Bike Shop, Workshop Houston, said that bicycles

are a great way for children and adults to interact with one another.

"The medium of bicycles is a great way for children and adults to come together and work on a means of transportation," Goodman said. "It is a great collaborative learning environment."

Goodman, along with Seth Capron, Benjamin Mason and Zach Moser, founded Workshop Houston.

"The most rewarding part is seeing kids that we work with feel really proud of what they accomplished,"

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STEVEN OSTER THE DAILY COUGAR

Chopper Shop provides free tools, expertise, space and materials to help youngsters like Xavier Benzel, 13, custom build their own chopper bicycles.

BIKE SHOP

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Goodman said. "To see a kid with an idea and then watching that idea become real is really awesome and rewarding to see."

Geology sophomore and workshop volunteer Rebecca Neill said that the workshop is an opportunity to learn through teaching.

"I think it is an awesome opportunity to learn a new set of skills, pass them along and get to interact with the community," Neill said. "I love the diversity of ages and backgrounds that come together at the shop and how everyone is willing to help one another."

The Bike Shop opened its doors in October 2003.

According to Workshop Houston's Web site, the Bike Shop runs youth programs and promotes bicycles as affordable means of transportation in the Third Ward. It also offers do-it-yourself repair facilities, after-school and summer activities for

kids and bike-related events.

Workshop Houston also manages the Chopper Shop, the Style Shop, and the Beat Shop, all of which were launched in January 2006.

In 2007, the Scholar Shop was launched as Goodman's response to an observation that many participants were struggling in school. Scholar Shop provides students with academic support and resources.

Creative writing freshman Chris Costello said that Workshop Houston is a great way for kids to show their talents.

"(Workshop Houston is) getting kids excited about doing constructive things and getting them engaged in the community," Costello said. "Considering how arts in public schools still seems to be suffering, I think it is great that Workshop Houston is stepping up."

Goodman said that Workshop Houston welcomes everybody and is looking for volunteers.

For more information visit, www.workshophouston.org

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