



**TomTod Ideas**  
tomorrow's ideas from  
today's middle schoolers

### **Stark County's BikeSmart Receives Award of Excellence**

Canton, OH-February 3rd, 2016 - BikeSmart: Stark County's Bike Share, an idea launched by TomTod Ideas middle school students and operated by a unique partnership between the Stark County District Library, Stark Parks, and Canton Parks and Recreation received an award of excellence from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA).

Awarded first place in the Management Innovation category, the program was also a top three finalist (out of an original field of 14 entries) for the prestigious 2015 OPRA Governor's Award for Parks and Recreation. The bike share program kicked off in June of 2015 and has six locations with six bikes each, located at community hubs including libraries and park trailheads.

Students who attended TomTod Idea's summer camp, **Camp What If**, developed the idea of using a library card to borrow bikes for free so that residents could have free transportation to travel to appointments, run errands or live a healthier lifestyle. The idea was presented at a community forum and the library and both parks systems pursued development and implementation of the idea into action. The program is facilitated by a bike share company, Zagster, that operates bike share systems throughout the country.

In its first season, BikeSmart's 36 bikes were used for over 3,000 rides by more than 900 individual users.

The Management Innovation Award is chosen based on "noteworthy contributions to parks and recreation through inspiration, incentive and leadership opportunities; excellence in management, education and staff development." The Governor's Award finalists are chosen based on:

- Impact of the program or project on community quality of life
- Project or program is unique/innovative, or presents a new way of doing something
- Program or project addresses a need recognized in the community
- Program or project is utilized by the community

"BikeSmart would never have happened without both middle schoolers and adults at the table," said Joel Daniel Harris, Executive Dreamer of TomTod Ideas. "Adults brought resources, experience and access and middle school students provided the imaginative ingenuity to allow an innovative opportunity like this to become a reality. BikeSmart is a one-of-a-kind program that has already received a number of inquiries about the model that's being pioneered here in Stark County."

Empowering middle school students to launch  
absurd ideas that enhance the common good.

### About Stark Parks

Stark Parks' promise to Stark County is to acquire, preserve, and develop natural areas for passive recreation, conservation, education, and nature appreciation. We currently offer our residents 14 parks, over 100 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, 4 lakes for fishing, boating, canoeing, and kayaking, and nature experiences county-wide. Expect to feel a connection when you spend time in your Stark Parks.

### About TomTod Ideas

TomTod Ideas empowers tomorrow's ideas from today's middle school students. The non-profit runs a mentoring program, summer camp and in-school learning cohorts, all asking the question: What If? while engaging middle school students around idea development and implementation for the common good. To learn about ideas launched by middle schools students or how your middle school student can get involved, visit [TomTodIdeas.org](http://TomTodIdeas.org) or [Facebook.com/TomTodIdeas](https://www.facebook.com/TomTodIdeas).

### About the Stark County District Library

One of the 8 largest library systems in Ohio – and the county's oldest library -- Stark County District Library serves the community through 10 locations, six mobile libraries, and a 24/7 digital branch.

A 2009 winner of the prestigious National Medal for library service, the Library serves over 100,000 active cardholders, annually circulating 3.5 million items from its 1.2 million item collection and providing access to an additional 66 million items from lending networks throughout Ohio. Each year the library presents nearly 8,000 programs for 170,000 attendees and provides 280,000 computer sessions on the publicly available computers found in each branch.

Today, as it reimagines itself as The Smart Store, where everything is free®, the Library is emerging as a national thought-leader with innovations such as its “no overdue fines” policy, the recently launched BikeSmart bike sharing network, and the Start Smart School Partnership.

For more information, call 330.452.0665 or visit <http://www.starklibrary.org>.

### About Canton Parks and Recreation

Canton Parks and Recreation

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