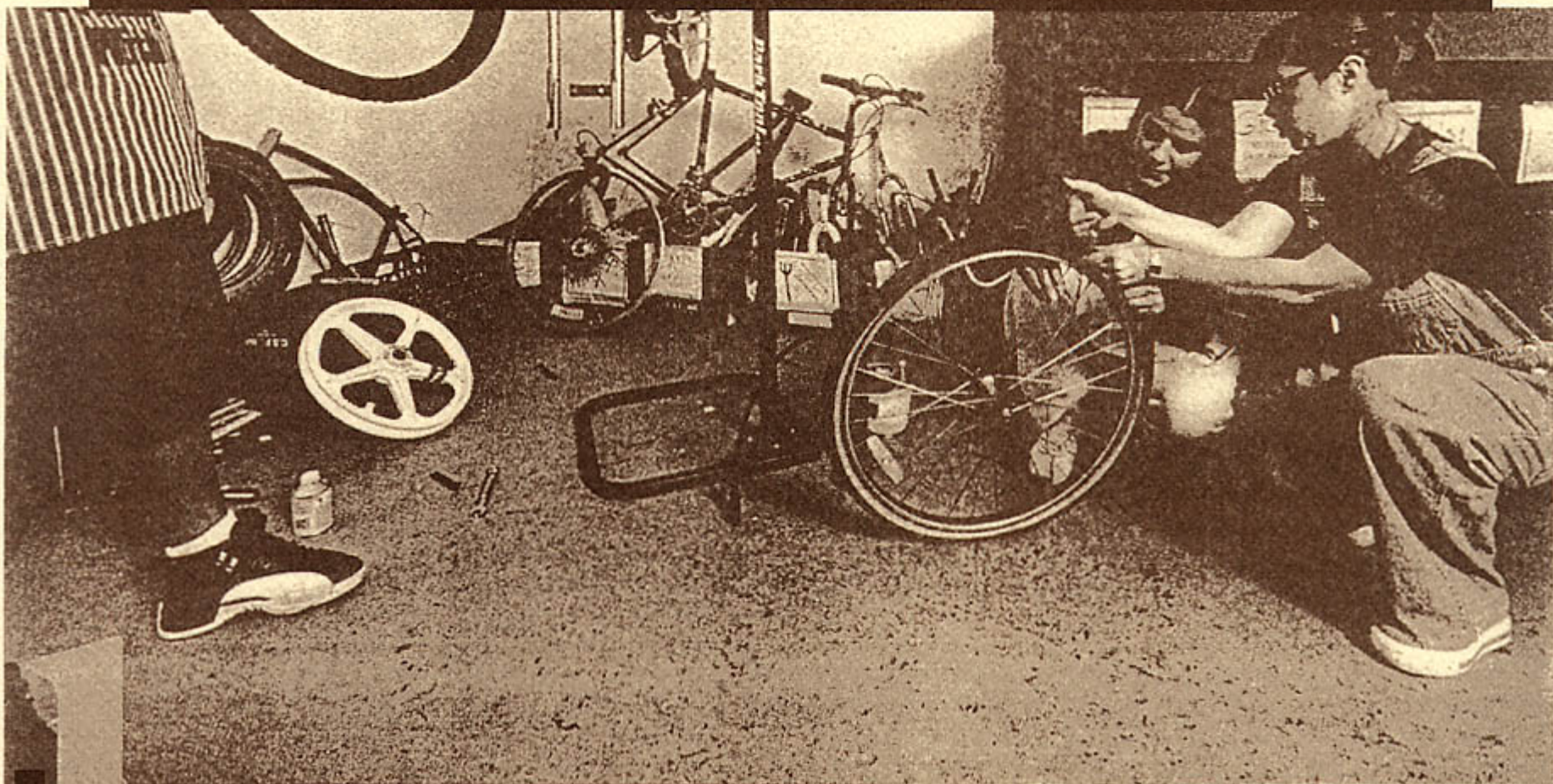


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# Worth

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**b**ANK OF AMERICA AND DELANCEY STREET, A NONPROFIT SERVICE ORGANIZATION in San Francisco, have been doing philanthropic business together since the late 1980s when Delancey needed money for its program to reform ex-convicts. A decade later, Delancey came around again, with plans to start a charter school for at-risk teenagers, and Bank of America (ranked fifth on our list) liked the idea and thought the venture would succeed. "Most schools don't have the expertise that Delancey Street has in the arena of attitude adjustment," says Caroline Boitano, executive director of the Bank of America Foundation. "Straight talk is one of the things that Delancey Street does well." The first time the two entities worked together, in 1988, the bank extended a \$10 million line of credit for the nonprofit to build the retail and residential complex on the Embarcadero where former felons, drug addicts, and prostitutes live and work as part of their rehabilitation. More recently, Delancey asked for an outright grant. The bank responded, giving \$300,000 over three years to help administer the organization's youth programs, one of which is Delancey's charter school, the Life Learning Academy. Every morning at 8 A.M., mentors pick up the students at their homes to make sure they show up for class—which many had failed to do at their previous schools. The 60 students are exposed to a combination of an academic curriculum and vocational experience. They act as teachers' aides, repair bikes, and run a café. Some students even attend police and fire-cadet training. Every evening at 10 P.M., the mentors bring the students back home. When the school opened in 1998, the students built an addition that tripled floor space to 24,000 square feet. Bank of America's contribution to Delancey is just part of the money it has donated to children's causes, much of it to give disadvantaged kids another chance. "A country as strong as the U.S. should be able to produce its own workforce," Boitano says. However, she adds, "there is going to be a time lag before we see results here. Not everybody is able to turn around on a dime."

—Matthew Schuerman

**HANDS-ON LEARNING** gets top billing at Life Learning Academy, a charter high school for at-risk kids in San Francisco. The school, a Delancey Street initiative, includes a bike-repair shop and a café, both run by students.