Scooter ‘treasure hunt’: Nighttime chargers make big money

By Carolyn Said, San Francisco Chronicle

Each night after dinner, David Padover invites his kids to join him in a high-tech scavenger hunt through their San Jose neighborhood. They pile into his Subaru Outback, turn on an app and hunt for electric scooters with drained batteries, pressing a button to make their quarry sound a tone and flash lights.

Their usual haul: a dozen or more scooters, which they plug into power supplies in the living room and kitchen.

“It’s instantaneous success,” said Padover, who rises early to drop off the scooters at designated locations to be ready for commuters. “You’re there, there’s a dollar sign for the scooter. It appeals to my competitive spirit.”

As motorized scooters for rent have flooded cities nationwide, a new gig has sprung up — people scouring the streets as freelance “chargers.” It’s easy to start, signing up with a few clicks and then being mailed charging packs, which look like laptop chargers.

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