



Riding for Focus

THE SPECIALIZED FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER: ISSUE TWO

Dear readers, new subscribers and current supporters, welcome to the second issue of Riding for Focus. This communication is a way to share our progress with you along with our news and updates on our Foundation programs, research and partners. We want to be a valuable resource of information that can enrich and expand your knowledge of how kids can benefit from cycling in academics and health. For past issues, check out our newsletter archive on the [Specialized Foundation website](#).

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Mark Your Calendars!

The Specialized Foundation will launch applications for the 2017-2018 Riding for Focus national grants on February 13th, 2017.

Riding for Focus is designed to provide middle schools with everything they need to get their students riding. Grant recipients receive extensive support, curriculum training, and equipment, with the aim of creating a lasting, sustainable cycling program in each school. This comprehensive package is valued at over \$15,000, and it is part of our commitment to helping schools succeed and help advance the mission of the Specialized Foundation.

In May of 2016, The Specialized Foundation announced the Riding for Focus grant recipients. There were eight middle schools selected for the initial national rollout of the cycling program out of a pool of over 200 middle school applicants nationwide. To date, over 240 bikes have been built up with program champions leading the way for the program's success. Our goal for 2017 is to triple our reach!



School Profile: Montevideo Middle School, Penn Laird, VA



Montevideo Middle School, in Penn Laird, Virginia resides in a small rural community of the Shenandoah Valley and boasts inspiring views of the Blue Ridge Mountains nearby—and has some of the best mountain biking trails in the country, just twenty minutes away from the Appalachian Trail.

School Principal Drew Miller and School Champion Mike Kline shared how their Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Kyle Lawrence, attended the National Bike Summit in D.C. last year and was sparked to take action after joining the breakout session about the Specialized Foundation hosted by the Specialized Advocacy Team of Kim Price and Lucy August-Perna. They applied for the grant thereafter. “We never thought we would be awarded the grant”, shared Drew. But with a mantra to “Keep Kids Moving” as much as possible the school is most deserving with their commitment to the program and its success to date.

Currently, there are 130 students in the Riding for Focus program that spend 90 minute blocks of time as part of their standard Physical Education (PE) program. The module adopted the Central Michigan University (CMU) curriculum to meet the students’

needs and ranges from 1 hour to 30 minutes on the bike at least three times a week. They ride in groups of 25-30 students. The CMU program complements the school philosophy and mission of motivation to “Believe, Achieve and Succeed”.



Students saddle up for a ride on school property that has a paved track and bus loop.

Eight Riding for Focus Schools

Each newsletter will focus on one of the current school programs to give you a snapshot of their progress and highlights to date.

AIM Academy, Conshohocken, PA

Evergreen Community Charter School, Asheville, NC

Montevideo Middle School, Penn Laird, VA

P186X, Walter J. Damrosch, The Bronx, NY

Pinelands Regional Jr. High School, Little Egg Harbor, NJ

Pioneer Valley Regional School, Northfield, MA

Tarkanian Middle School, Las Vegas, NV

Whatcom Middle School, Bellingham, WA



The “big shed” stores all the bikes and gear close by so we don’t lose riding time saddling up.

The community has rural country roads near the school but most of the riding is done on the school property on a paved track and bus loop and the school hopes to add in some riding features in the arboretum area to alter the terrain. The “big shed” stores all the bikes and gear close by so we don’t lose

riding time saddling up. There were at least 5 students that never had ridden a bike before and now are skilled riders. “We are impressed with their ability to learn quickly, understand the concept of balance and adapt”, shared Mike. Even those that had minor spills just got back up and kept going.

Cycling has built up confidence in the students and a sense of camaraderie and school spirit among classmates. “While the focus is safety first, we are also teaching life-long skills like how to be stewards of the community, share the road and be respectful of others in your space”, stated Mike Kline.



After the grant recipients were announced, the grantees were hosted at the Specialized Headquarters in Morgan Hill for more in-depth training and program overview. “It was evident the company lives and breathes bikes—for fitness and fun—a culture we are striving to achieve at Montevideo combined with academic excellence”, said Mike.

Check out this [video clip](#) of Montevideo students Riding for Focus!

Specialized Bike Dealer manager, Chris Michaels of Rocktown Bicycles in Harrisonburg, VA, fully supports the school program with mechanical support and on-site maintenance of bikes and equipment for [Montevideo](#)



Meet our Foundation program partners

Central Michigan University and curriculum developers, Ben Rollenhagen and Dr. Ray Allen, Chair of the Physical Education and Sport Department

[Ben Rollenhagen](#)

[Dr. Ray Allen](#)

The Specialized Foundation program partner, Central Michigan University (CMU) is definitely putting a spin on treating youth with ADHD. Success at pilot schools led the Specialized Foundation to hire cycling and curriculum experts Ben Rollenhagen and Dr. Ray Allen, Chair of the Physical Education and Sport Department in The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow College of Health Professions at CMU. Together, Allen and Rollenhagen developed a standard curriculum based on data from the first schools in the program and RTSG Neuroscience Consultants research on the effects of cycling. Ben's unique experience with riding and riding education, along with Dr. Allen's experience with designing and evaluating effective curriculums is what makes the so program unique.

"The great thing about using cycling is that we can give students a tool they can use for a lifetime. Not only that, but families and communities can be part of the solution, together," said Ray Allen. "That is exciting."

The Specialized Foundation and CMU hope to make the new curriculum and equipment available to 10 to 20 schools in the coming year with an additional goal of reaching 4,000 students in the next three years.

We wanted to share some highlight of our conversation with Ben about the program history, curriculum and plans for expansion.

CMU is a leader in the field of academics and physical fitness. Can you share your partners on your health and fitness initiatives?

CMU is a member of SHAPE America (Society of Health and Physical Educators) and the state chapter SHAPE Michigan. SHAPE America Sets the Standard for Health and Physical Education. Their National Standards for K-12 Physical Education serve as the template for well-designed physical education programs across the country. In October of 2016, CMU presented an overview of their program and best practices at the SHAPE Michigan conference, "Mission: Possible". One of our future goals is to submit our final curriculum for their endorsement.

How does the CMU program differ from other current bike safety programs?

A combination of finely tuned curriculum, donated equipment and connections to experts who can help maintain bicycles are what set this initiative apart from other attempts to introduce cycling programs to schools in the past.

Utilizing the online educational platform "Blackboard" enables discussion, collaboration and sharing among the educators and participating schools so feedback can be utilized to make changes as needed.

Specifically, there are seven target program goals that were identified in tandem with the Specialized Foundation team. The comprehensive curriculum consists of modules and includes a range of categories addressing safety, riding skills, etiquette, decision making, fitness, and lifestyle changes. Program Champions lead the program for each school, participate in program training and serve as the liaison to the Specialized Foundation reporting back on program results and feedback. Moving forward, these suggestions will be integrated into the curriculum as the program is refined and maintained to national standards.



What is in the structure of the curriculum that makes it ideal for middle school instruction?

The entire document was designed to challenge the minds of that age group. It will have materials written and assessments made to match their cognitive abilities. It involves a lot of movement to keep students interested and the benchmarks are set to where they can be successful but also prove they are safe, competent riders. Ben shared that by completion of this program, students will be able to identify and demonstrate the set of essential skills necessary for handling and riding a bicycle safely, develop a personalized training program and describe how cycling improves personal motivation, attention, stress and focus. Fitness metrics include being able to ride a bicycle at a fitness level equal to 65-85% of their heart rate maximum for a minimum of 20 minutes and to demonstrate actions that represent self-determination and autonomy with bicycling through describing and developing safe riding routes and training plans and selecting fitness goals.



What are some of the visions this program could develop in the future 3 -5 years?

We feel there is an opportunity to offer this program online and be available to programs and districts on a state and national level. We see the development of regional training centers and fundraising events to support the programs beyond what the Foundation can do. We hope to turn early adopters

into trainers and connect new schools with experienced schools. The Specialized Foundation is grateful for the CMU partnership. Both agree that this cycling program is beyond just riding a bike but is a win-win regarding character education too. Students learn to prepare for and engage in cycling activities in a safe, responsible way, and treat cycling equipment respectfully. They practice perseverance and learn to manage their own programs. While this contributes to the student's safe effective participation in cycling, it also helps develop those positive character traits that can transfer to daily life and last a lifetime.

CMU in the [News](#)

CMU
CENTRAL MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY

Seven Goals of the Foundation Curriculum

- 1. Teach Safety:** The program will teach students the skills related to handling and riding a bicycle safely.
- 2. Teach Skills:** The program will teach students the skills required to ride a bicycle competently, efficiently and effectively.
- 3. Teach Fitness:** The program will provide students with experiences that enable them to perform exercise at levels identified as 65-85% of their heart rate maximum for a minimum of 20 minutes. The program will teach students how to form an exercise habit, and explain how use exercise to improve other aspects of life.
- 4. Be Enjoyable:** The program will be enjoyable to students as displayed through their emotions and actions that reflect. The program will also provide experiences so students appreciate and select bicycling as means for enjoyment.
- 5. Establish Appreciation for Bicycling:** The program will provide experience so students demonstrate actions that represent self-determination and autonomy with bicycling through describing and developing safe riding routes and training plans and selecting fitness goals.
- 6. Be Sustainable:** The bicycling program will equip educational with the tools and resources necessary to continue the cycling program beyond the initial implementation. The program will enable educational program to become self-sufficient and be institutionalized.
- 7. Accommodate Future Research:** The program will be designed in a way that accommodates future research in other areas including academic, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and clinical domains.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Let's Get Moving!

MARCH 25

Join the 2017 Lam Research [Heart & Soles](#) Run, Santa Clara, CA. This family-oriented fun run/walk is dedicated to helping local children engage in healthy exercise and to make better food choices on a daily basis. The Specialized Foundation is one of the benefitting non-profits of the run thanks to the generous support of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. Heart & Soles funding will assist in the creation of on-campus bike trails and riding areas, as well as the acquisition of secure bike storage facilities and trailers for transporting bikes between schools.



APRIL 20-23

[Sea Otter Classic](#), Monterey, CA
Premiere cycling festival—races, rides, special kids programs. Not your average playground, the Specialized Kids Zone allows kids twelve and under to try out their budding bike skills on obstacles appropriate for their age and riding level, plus a separate area for pushbikes.



Read All About It:

Every issue, we'll share a few of our favorite reads that dig deep into the science of ADHD and how exercise can be most beneficial to children.

The benefits of physical activity for children are in the spotlight after two studies were published in the journal [Pediatrics](#). The studies are in-line with other research showing the powerful effects of exercise on the brain, behavior, and mental health. "When we move our body, we move our mind".

[Exercise Benefits Children Physically and Mentally](#)

Healthline-Jan 10, 2017

[Exercise: An Antidote for Behavioral Issues in Students?](#)

HealthDay-Jan 9, 2017

Mission

The Specialized Foundation uses cycling as a tool for children to achieve academic, health and social success. Through investments in primary scientific medical research and school-based cycling programs, our mission is to increase accessibility to cycling to aid youth in personal development and education.

Join the Movement

[Learn more](#) about our ongoing research and outreach.

Contact Information

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The Specialized Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that promotes cycling as a tool for children to achieve academic, health, and social success.



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