



# Riding for Focus

THE SPECIALIZED FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER: ISSUE SIX

**Welcome to Issue Six of Riding for Focus. 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. Check out our newsletter archive on our [website](#) and be inspired by the students and teacher—the smiles say it all, they all love to ride!**

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## RIDING FOR FOCUS

The Specialized Foundation announced the 20 middle schools selected for the 2017-2018 Riding for Focus school program. The program integrates cycling into the physical education curriculum as a means to help students improve academic, health, and social success. Schools selected for the Riding for Focus grant program receive curriculum training at the Specialized Headquarters, as well as an invitation to the Riding for Focus Health and Education Summit to be hosted by Stanford University. In addition to the curriculum, which is designed for schools of all types and sizes, the school will receive a fleet of bikes, helmets, maintenance equipment, and local retailer support and maintenance. The goal is to establish a sustainable school cycling physical education program that lasts in the community for multiple years.

Please join us in congratulating the 20 grant recipients: [Read Full Press Release](#)

Badger Rock Middle School, Madison, WI  
Bath Middle School, Bath, ME  
Canyon Middle School, New Braunfels, TX  
Central Park School for Children, Durham, NC  
Deerfield Middle School, Deerfield, WI  
Double Peak School, San Marcos, CA  
East Middle School, Grand Junction, CO  
Everitt Middle School, Wheat Ridge, CO  
LAUSD Local District Northwest, Los Angeles, CA  
Pocatello Community Charter School, Pocatello, ID  
Pocono Mountain Academy, Pocono Summit, PA  
Port Jervis Middle School, Port Jervis, NY  
Portage Central Middle School, Portage, MI  
Portland Middle School, Portland, MI

ReNEW Schaumburg Elementary,  
New Orleans, LA  
Southbridge Middle School,  
Southbridge, MA  
Spanaway Middle School, Tacoma, WA  
Vista School, Ivins, UT  
Waukesha STEM Academy-  
Saratoga, Waukesha, WI  
West Salem Middle School,  
West Salem, WI

Specialized Foundation [Video](#) + Riding for Focus [Video](#)

## School Profile: Tarkanian Middle School, Las Vegas, Nevada



### School Mission

Building a respectful, educational environment of confident learners through consistent communication in which all members have a voice. Lois & Jerry Tarkanian Middle School empowers all students to achieve success.

### School Location

Tarkanian Middle School is located in Las Vegas, Nevada and is part of the Clark County School District, the fifth largest school district in the country. Tarkanian school enrollment is currently at its highest level, with 1861 students, which is up from 1770 in 2015-2016.

### Program Overview

"We followed the Riding for Focus curriculum provided by the program, exactly," shared School Champion Anthony Muraco, "as it provides all the class lessons in detail that instill confidence and independence in our riders along with all the required bike skills."

There are 15 students that have been active in the program, comprised of grades six and seven. Of the 15 riders, only four of the students had prior riding experience and are now fully engaged in riding with the class. Students ride three days a week for 1 to 1 hour and 45 minutes.

To date, the school has made great progress instilling bike safety as a priority and addressing the challenges of new riders. The required student-to-teacher ratio has limited the number of students participating in phase 1 of the program, but creative solutions are underway. The high ratio of boys riding (12) versus girls (3) sparked a female-only advanced group to develop over the last semester in order to dedicate more attention to this group and expand the number of students participating.

### School Program Champion

Tarkanian Middle School Principal Eric Johnson has been an educator for over 20 years and fully supports the Riding for Focus program. After years leading academic excellence, serving as principal at the school, he will retire this school year and leave a legacy for the program in the hands of the school champions.

## 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



School Program Champion and Science Teacher Anthony Muraco attributes the success of the Riding for Focus program to the efforts of the active and outstanding team of advisors: Melissa Wikler, Science Teacher, Outreach Specialist; Heath Clayton, Science Teacher, Gear and Media Specialist and Michael Wikler, Special Education Teacher, Student Recruitment Specialist.



### Best success about the program

Melissa Wikler, Outreach Specialist, shared “I was amazed to see the progress from the first semester to the second semester, as students were catching on quickly and adapting to the program and schedule; it was inspiring to see them learn new skills. The outdoors is a great classroom, they smile a lot.”

The school administered a fall survey and one aspect of the program that was consistent was that students felt they were a part of and belonged to a group. Even eighth graders served as mentors for younger classmates that resulted in a struggling student with attention challenges to make tremendous progress, becoming more focused both in the classes and on the bike rides.



### Specialized Dealer Support

Las Vegas Cyclery, the Specialized Dealer supports the program with bike maintenance, deliveries, clinics and trainings. Special thanks to store owners, Jared and Heather Fisher and Store Manager Shawn Tyrone for the service and support of the students. School Program Champion Anthony Muraco shared the partnership is a win-win for the school knowing the bikes are ready to ride and tuned-up.





## Riding for Focus Haiku Challenge

**How do you stay focused? Share your creative talent and your haiku on how you stay focused when riding, or just to get through the day, via Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram and join the conversation #RidingForFocus.**

Remember, a haiku is a traditional three-line poem with seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count. Haiku emphasizes simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression.

Each month throughout the summer, we'll select our favorite haiku and feature your submission in the newsletter. The lucky winner earns all the bragging rights and a cycling swag bag prize. Sharpen those pencils. Below are a few haiku poems to spark your creativity!

*This is a haiku  
You could write a better one –  
Go ahead and try.*

*Stop look and focus.  
What path are you on right now?  
Keep those wheels spinning.*

  
**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
FOCUS ON  
HAIKU**

## USA Team Members and Riding for Focus students hit the trails in New York City

This past spring, Vito Faccilonga, the School Program Champion and Assistant Principal for P186X Walter J. Damrosch School in The Bronx, NY, and Tread Bike Shop owner Ozzie Perez hosted a group of USA Specialized team members for some Riding for Focus fun on nearby mountain bike trails in Cunningham Park—right in the middle of New York City. The smiles say it all—these kids love riding!



*Photo credit: Amd Marco Quezada Photography*

## Saluting our Foundation Partners

We would like to recognize our key partners and their unique roles within The Specialized Foundation. Thank you to The Department of Physical Education and Sport at Central Michigan University, United Health Group-Optum, and Stanford Medical School and the Center for Interdisciplinary Brain Sciences Research.

### Primary Research Partner

**Stanford Medical School and the Center for Interdisciplinary Brain Sciences Research**

The Center for Interdisciplinary Brain Sciences Research (CIBSR) at the Stanford University School of Medicine is dedicated to research that will improve the lives and well-being of individuals with disorders of the brain and improve knowledge of healthy brain and behavioral development. CIBSR research staff are dedicated to identifying biological and environmental risk factors, understanding disease pathophysiology and developmental outcomes, and developing new treatments for neurodevelopmental, neurogenetic, and neuropsychiatric disorders of childhood onset.

### Cycling Program Partner

**The Department of Physical Education and Sport at Central Michigan University**

Central Michigan's Department of Physical Education and Sport (CMU) provides students with a variety of professional and personal growth options relative to physical activity and sport. Through partnership with CMU, The Specialized Foundation developed the Riding for Focus School Program curriculum to meet national standards for physical education classes.

### Performance Improvement Partner

**United Health Group - Optum**

Optum is the Health Services platform of United Health Group. Optum will be leading the technology tracking component of the Riding for Focus Program nationwide. The data collected will be key in establishing baseline activity and monitoring progress in fitness and performance levels, as well as augmenting the Stanford research led by Dr. Allan Reiss.



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### Let's Get Moving!

Special thanks to the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and its successful Lam Research Heart & Soles Run, hosted this past March in Santa Clara, CA. The Specialized Foundation was one of the benefitting non-profits of the run and we're grateful for their support. Heart & Soles funding will assist in the creation of on-campus bike trails, as well as the acquisition of secure bike storage facilities and trailers for transporting bikes between schools for The Riding for Focus program.

#### August 2, 2017

Save the Date—Stanford School of Medicine and The Specialized Foundation Research Summit on ADHD at Stanford University. For more information e-mail: [foundation@specializedfoundation.org](mailto:foundation@specializedfoundation.org)

#### October 2017

[ADHD Awareness Month](#)

#### November 9-12, 2017

[CHADD 29th Annual International Conference](#),  
Atlanta, Georgia

## Read All About It

**We want to share a few of our favorite reads that dig deep into the science of ADHD and how exercise can be most beneficial to children.**

*Do Fidget Cubes and Spinners Help With ADHD*  
[Digital Journal, Health; June 11, 2017, by Tim Sandle](#)

*Whirring, Purring Fidget Spinners Provide Entertainment, Not ADHD Help*  
[NPR, Around the Nation, May 14 2017 by Wynee Davis](#) Read all about comments from the experts including Dr.Scott Kollins, a clinical psychologist and professor at Duke University.

*Can Exercise Be Used to Help an Adult With ADHD Control Systems?* [U.S. News Healthcare, June 9, 2017, by Jennifer Leah Reynolds](#) Dr. John Ratey, an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, the author of "Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain" provides expert comments.

#### 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 and Donate

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



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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.

