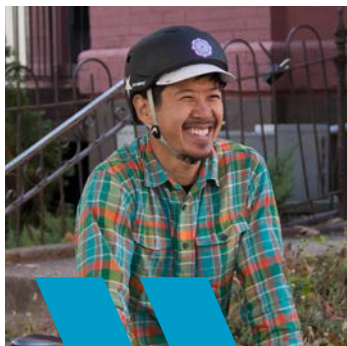
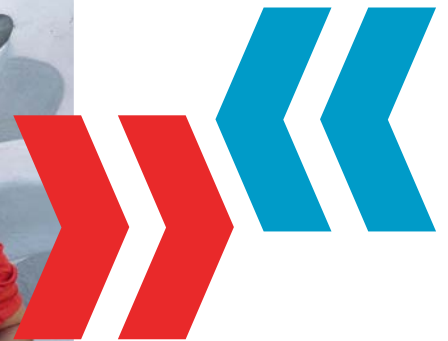
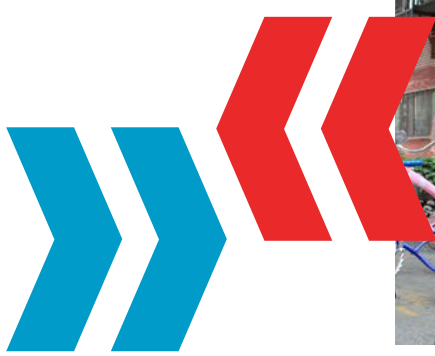


# THE NEW MOVEMENT

BIKE EQUITY TODAY





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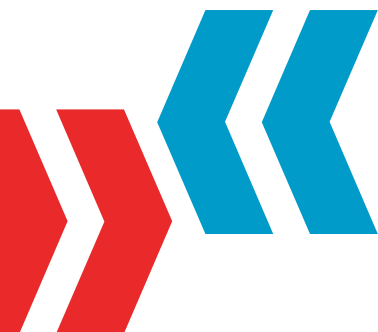
## REPORT AUTHORS

**ADONIA LUGO** has worked since 2008 to bring cross-cultural understanding into bicycle advocacy, planning, and research — and became the Equity Initiative Manager at the League in November 2013. She earned her doctorate in cultural anthropology from the University of California, Irvine, where her dissertation research focused on the social networks and cultural norms that shape how we use streets.

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**CAROLYN SZCZEPANSKI** is the League's Director of Communications. Carolyn joined the League staff in March 2012, after nearly 10 years as a print reporter and two years at the Alliance for Biking & Walking. She has a degree in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

**COVER PHOTO CREDITS:** (Top row, from left) Biking Public Project, Cycles for Change; (Middle row, from left) Danny Gamboa, Maria Sipin; (Bottom row, from left) Biking Public Project, Maggie Smith, Dmitry Gudkov



# BACKGROUND

*The New Movement: Bike Equity Today* is the culmination of several years of efforts within the League to elevate community voices to the national advocacy stage and show the existing diversity in the bike movement. For this publication, we have interviewed dozens of individuals and organizations, as well as tapped previous blog posts, magazine articles, reports and more.

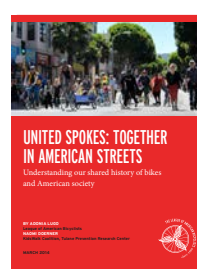
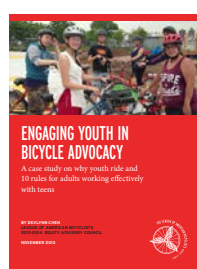
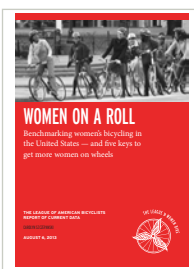
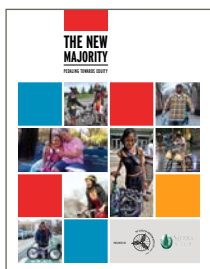
We'd like to thank everyone who contributed their time to this project, including the volunteers, staff, and community members who co-created the programs and rides featured here. The stories contained in this report were reported or compiled by League Communications Director Carolyn Szczepanski and Communications Manager Elizabeth Murphy. Adonia Lugo, the League's Equity Initiative Manager, created the supporting material to draw out the themes living in the stories shared here.

We would also like to thank those who have worked on projects that influenced or grew from those named here, and those who continue to innovate beyond the range of our vision. If you're familiar with the community bike movement, you know that what we included here is just the tip of the iceberg.

**PLEASE SHARE YOUR EFFORTS WITH US BY FILLING OUT THIS BRIEF SURVEY.**

The League's Equity Initiative is made possible by a generous grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Find more, including the reports below, at [bikeleague.org/equity](https://bikeleague.org/equity).

## EQUITY INITIATIVE REPORTS





# INTRODUCTION



## IN THIS REPORT WE SHOWCASE THE GROWING DIVERSITY IN WHO IS ADVOCATING FOR BIKES

The terms “invisible rider” and “invisible cyclist” have been in circulation for nearly 10 years. In the bike world, we use them to refer politely to the individuals out there riding who have not made their way into policy-oriented bike advocacy. These terms have given us a way to talk about low-income cyclists, immigrant populations, or other groups that bike advocates have found hard to reach.

### HAVE THE TERMS DISTRACTED US FROM THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF MAKING EVERY PERSON WHO RIDES A BIKE VISIBLE?

Bike advocates who are people of color, women, and youth often hear people who look like us called invisible or scarce even when we are in the room. We are not indicator species to be monitored; we are enthusiastic supporters of bicycling who have a lot of ideas about what bikes can do for our communities. If we stay hidden, so will the new paths we are creating.

As the League found in its 2013 report *The New Majority: Pedaling Toward Equity*, diversity in cycling already exists, and the number of people of color biking continues to grow. What we showcase in this companion report is the growing diversity in who is advocating for bikes.

**“DIVERSITY” REFERS TO A MIX: A MIX OF PEOPLE, A MIX OF EXPERIENCES. BUT DIVERSITY, ON ITS OWN, DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT A MIX OF PERSPECTIVES WILL BE INCLUDED IN A FINAL PRODUCT. COLLABORATION IS AN INTENTIONAL PROJECT.**

For many bike advocates, the product we have in mind is streets. The spaces where we ride bicycles get produced through design, planning, and engineering; they are also shaped by the people who use them every day.

Through our Women Bike program and the Equity Initiative, we’ve been focusing on the role that bike shops, clubs, and community rides play as the social infrastructure for biking. In this report we share many examples to illustrate that “invisible riders” are only invisible to us if we choose to draw our bike movement boundaries in a way that makes those riders and their experiences irrelevant to creating bicycle-friendly streets.

**THE GREAT NEWS IS THAT WE HAVE THE POWER TO REDRAW THOSE BOUNDARIES. THE PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THIS REPORT HAVE STARTED TO ERASE THOSE ARBITRARY LINES AND ARE TAKING ACTION.**

PHOTO CREDITS: (from left) Allison Mannos, Stephen Zavastoski



## HOW DO WE BRIDGE FROM DIVERSITY IN BIKE USERS TO EQUITABLE BIKE ADVOCACY?

There is a diverse bike movement in America. When diversity becomes a valued part of decisionmaking in bike planning and design, we will have moved closer to bike equity. If you want to build bike equity, consider the following questions as a starting point:

- » Who designed the bike projects you want people to support?
- » Whose visions do you include in your advocacy work?
- » Does the mix of people planning and advocating for bicycling represent the diversity of your town?
- » Are there people biking in your town today who you see out on the sidewalks or streets — but never at a bike planning meeting?
- » Are diverse perspectives considered indispensable to the bike lobbying where we advocate for spending public dollars on particular bike projects?

The questions this shift raises are difficult and often uncomfortable. That's okay. If we want to get beyond this elephant in the room, we need to push beyond our comfort zones, and that might seem new and unfamiliar.

**IF WE WANT BICYCLING TO BECOME A NORMAL PART OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE UNITED STATES, WE NEED TO INCLUDE THIS COUNTRY'S DIVERSITY IN OUR ADVOCACY STRATEGIES.**

This report is not a policy manual or a design guide; instead of advocating for particular technical interventions, it illustrates what it takes to start building the human infrastructure that will lead to policies and designs supporting bike users of all kinds.

As the advocacy leaders who were interviewed for this report shared, no one has all the answers. Our change processes are ongoing and messy. The beauty of the project to end invisibility is that we no longer have to avoid anybody's truth. We can shed the light of multicultural sight on our shared future.

### HOW DO WE BRIDGE FROM DIVERSITY IN BIKE USERS TO EQUITABLE BIKE ADVOCACY?

You might be one of the many people around the country who is already experimenting to see what works. Keep reading to learn more about the emerging equitable bike movement and join us in making every cyclist visible.

# GROWING AN EQUITABLE BIKE MOVEMENT



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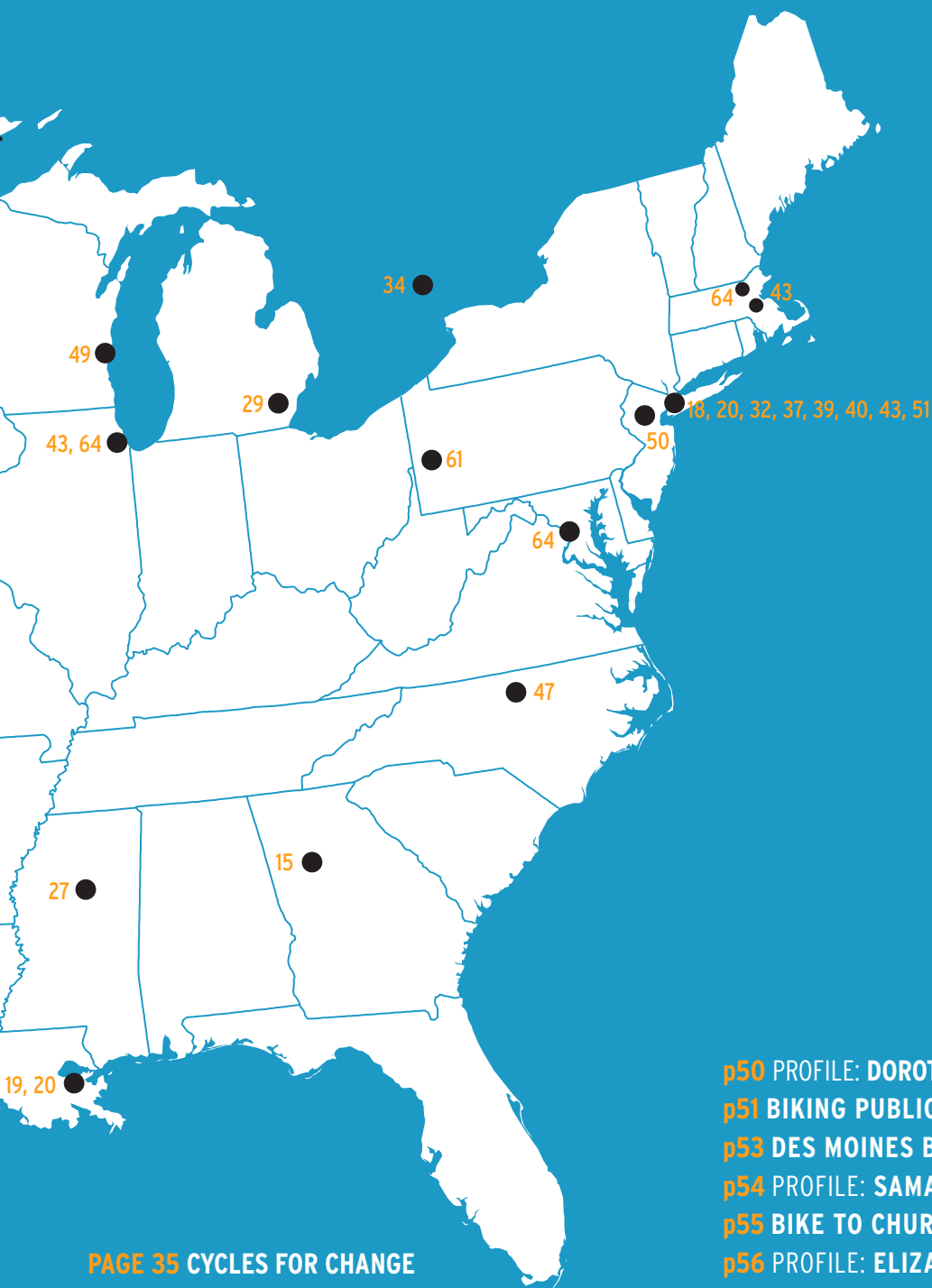
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This map does NOT represent all bike equity efforts nation-wide. Let us know about your work in this short survey!



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## THEME TAGS

*Many of the included projects integrate multiple themes, so we have tagged them in the following profiles*

ACCESS

ALLYSHIP

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY HEALTH

FAMILY

GENDER INCLUSION

IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

JOB SKILLS

LANGUAGE

LICS (LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES)

LISTENING

MEDIA

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

PARTNERSHIP

RECYCLING

SUSTAINED COMMITMENT

YOUTH





#### THEMES:

ALLYSHIP | JOB SKILLS | LICs  
LISTENING | PARTNERSHIP  
SUSTAINED COMMITMENT  
IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

# COMMUNITY CYCLING CENTER

## UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO BICYCLING

### LOCATION:

Low-income housing developments in North Portland, Ore.

### POPULATION SERVED:

Latino and African immigrants, African Americans

---

### HOW IT STARTED:

“Who benefits from bicycling in our community?” In 2008, the Community Cycling Center posed that important question to identify and effectively respond to the bicycling disparities in Portland. With its Understanding the Barriers to Bicycling initiative, advocates cultivated relationships with new partners and developed new programs with the insight and leadership of low-income, largely immigrant communities in North Portland. The biggest take-away from the multi-year initiative: True collaborative advocacy is “a big shift” from the status quo.

PHOTO CREDIT: Community Cycling Center | Lale Santelices



## KEY ELEMENTS:

- 1. TRUE PARTNERSHIP:** After 70 meetings, the CCC found dedicated partners in New Columbia and Hacienda, two housing developments predominantly populated by Latino, African and African American residents.
- 2. LISTENING BEFORE LEADING:** The CCC worked with residents to gather data through surveys and focus groups that assessed the perceptions and barriers to bicycling for members of their communities. Those findings laid the foundation of all future efforts.
- 3. RESIDENT-LED PROJECTS:** A bike committee comprised of residents completed a photo documentation project that illustrated the barriers to bicycling, including a lack of storage. Next, they organized a bike census to document the number of bicycles—and demonstrate the need for bike storage in their neighborhood.
- 4. EMBEDDED PROGRAMMING:** Instead of simply providing free bicycles, for instance, the CCC began “clustering” programs and embedding resources—including Create a Commuter Workshops and youth Bike Clubs—at both locations. Because there was no reliable access to resources like bike repair in their neighborhoods, the CCC focused on building the skills and knowledge of community members to create lasting solutions.
- 5. COLLECTIVE EMPOWERMENT:** In order to cultivate and sustain community-led bike culture, 12 members of the bike committee were trained as Community Bike Educators, participating in six trainings taught in

Spanish, including bike fitting, flat tire repair, all weather riding, and route planning. After completing the course, the educators received stipends to teach up to three workshops. This allowed the CCC to redefine its role “from direct service to community catalyst.”


## ORGANIZATIONAL WORK

Equally important, CCC recognized that their work needed to be internal as well as external. “We knew we needed help to become a more diverse, inclusive, and effective organization, and in 2010, we started the process by forming an equity committee and participating in the Center for Diversity and the Environment’s (CDE) Environment, Health and Equity program. The CDE program provided specific feedback, trainings, and support and started by performing a comprehensive equity audit of our organization. The equity audit provided a comprehensive set of recommendations, ranging from hiring practices, culture building, physical space design, and board development. The findings advanced the work of the equity committee, which then developed a three-year plan to provide trainings to increase organizational cultural competence, revised our bike shop’s layout and signage to create a more welcoming environment, and continues to evaluate our policies and procedures to ensure our organization is equitable and inclusive.”

## LEARN MORE:

<http://www.communitycyclingcenter.org/>

[www.communitycyclingcenter.org/index.php/community/understanding-barriers-to-bicycling](http://www.communitycyclingcenter.org/index.php/community/understanding-barriers-to-bicycling)



*These community-based projects represent first steps in building out a bicycle network that meets the needs of the whole community. These projects also represent the promise that the best solution to barriers to bicycling are created by those experiencing the barriers, particularly when there are cultural, income, or age differences. By cultivating grassroots capacity and leadership, we are growing and broadening the movement. And, as we move forward together, we'll have new perspectives on how to build the bicycle network to the benefit of all Portlanders.*

— Alison Hill Graves, Executive Director, 2010-2012



# MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES FOR MOBILITY

## THEMES:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT | IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY  
IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION | LANGUAGE | YOUTH  
MEDIA | NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE | PARTNERSHIP

**LOCATION:** Los Angeles, Calif.

**POPULATION SERVED:** Latino day laborers, Spanish-speaking LA residents

## HOW IT STARTED:

In 2008, then staff intern Allison Mannos and other volunteers founded the City of Lights program at the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, starting with 100 bike lights from Planet Bike and going on to develop one of the nation's first bilingual, culturally relevant bicycle safety curriculum, and teaching hundreds of cyclists at various centers that serve low-income populations. In 2012, the effort became its own organization, Multicultural Communities for Mobility, with a mission to "improve the quality of life for underserved low-income communities of color by empowering and engaging community leaders at the local level to advocate and educate for safer bikeways, walkable communities and access to mass transit for all."

PHOTO CREDIT: Multicultural Communities for Mobility

## KEY ELEMENTS:

- 1. RELEVANT EDUCATION:** MCM tailors its bike education classes to the audience—not only teaching the rules of the road but highlighting the local laws and legal rights of cyclists, which is critical for undocumented riders who may be more likely to be stopped by police. As of mid-2014, more than 700 low-income cyclists had been served by these workshops and the distribution of free bicycle lights, helmets, and safety gear.
- 2. EMBEDDED IN PARTNERSHIP:** The success of MCM's work is based on its deep and intentional efforts to build and strengthen partnerships with groups that are already serving LA's diverse communities, including Central City Neighborhood Partners and TRUST South LA. MCM's advocacy and education model gives recognition to those who are already riding and provides education and advocacy training through existing networks.
- 3. MULTI-FACETED EDUCATION:** With a more holistic approach to bike education and focus on partnership, MCM has evolved its workshops beyond cycling skills, including a collaboration with Los Angeles Communities Advocating for Unity and Social Action (LA CAUSA). Led by Miguel Ramos, the program focused on bicycle mechanics, bicycle safety, community organizing, media and urban planning. "In essence, these workshops encouraged participants to promote bicycle advocacy as a tool to address environmental and social justice issues in their communities," Ramos says. MCM has also worked to integrate bicycling into youth leadership development programs, like LA Rooted, a summer camp that features hands-on interactive workshops and mobile field trips. While bicycling isn't the central focus of the programming, MCM's involvement allows participants to learn about safe cycling and travel by bike to various workshops.
- 4. COMMUNITY-LED BIKE COLLECTIVE:** MCM helped to create the Bici Libre bike repair space in 2010 as a jornalero (day laborer) led bike repair co-op. Since then the effort has grown to include the sale and distribution of abandoned and donated bicycles, in addition to the free use of tools and classes on bike mechanics to empower day laborers and other riders to make their own repairs. In 2011, Bici Libre was part of a five-organization effort—the County Cycling Collaborative—that applied for and secured federal stimulus funding administered locally by the County Department of Public Health to address obesity and chronic disease by encouraging bicycling.
- 5. INFLUENCING CITY POLICY AND OUTREACH:** MCM has worked with the local transit authority to provide Spanish-language bike safety classes across the region. But that's just the first step: the organization has also worked to have equity and income criteria included and prioritized in the Los Angeles Bicycle Master Plan, holding community workshops to meaningfully engage low-income residents in the planning process. That engagement has extended to infrastructure projects as well, including the provision of bike lanes on 7th Street.

**LEARN MORE:** [www.multicultimobility.org](http://www.multicultimobility.org)



*"I see the cultural diversity that exists within the bicycle movement and comprehend that all groups have different needs when it comes to education and empowerment. We must work together to see that we keep all diverse groups into consideration, so we can all continue moving forward in taking ownership of these safe, healthy, and bicycle-oriented links."*  
— Miguel Ramos



## MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES FOR MOBILITY CONT.

### Spanish-language Bike Safety PSA Campaign: “PRECAUCIÓN: Tu Familia También Usa La Bicicleta”

In Los Angeles, many Latino cyclists, especially day laborer cyclists, use a bicycle as their sole means of transportation. But while there is a large share of Spanish-speaking cyclists who use their bicycles as a necessity, there has been a lack of Spanish-language public education around bicycling. The City of Lights program (now Multicultural Communities for Mobility) and its day laborer volunteers were motivated to create a Spanish-language public service announcement campaign to remedy that. “We were developing the next leaders in community-based Spanish bicycle education efforts since none of the participants had previous experience doing this type of work,” said organizer, Andy Rodriguez.

## KEY ELEMENTS:

### 1. MEETING PARTICIPANTS WHERE THEY

**WERE:** Organizers identified several jornalero cyclists from IDEPSCA (Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California) and CARECEN (Central American Resource Center), worker centers with whom they already had a relationship. Engaging workers on an interactive project was less challenging because City of Lights had worked with them, on site, for several years on bike repair, safety, and rides.

### 2. BEING CLEAR ABOUT WHO WAS AT THE

**HELM:** “It was important for us to have day laborers themselves develop the messages since they are usually the most marginalized cyclists who lack adequate bilingual safety resources and bicycle infrastructure,” said organizer Andy Rodriguez. “Having them take the lead on the process spoke tremendously of their creativity, determination, and leadership.”

### 3. GIVING TIME AND SPACE FOR COMMUNITY

**CREATION:** The collaborative process started with a focus group but then stretched over eight months, with seven meetings during which participants crafted the message and refined the final design. “We were intentional about not inhibiting anyone’s ideas, and creating

an atmosphere in which everyone felt comfortable speaking freely,” Rodriguez said.

### 4. ENGAGING PARTNERS WITH FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY REACH:

The success of the PSA was built on the support of critical partners, like Melograna Productions, which provided its design services pro bono, and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, which covered the cost to print and display 1,000 PSA posters at bus stop kiosks. “Working together created strong, new relationships between the groups and agencies, setting the stage for future grassroots Spanish-language projects,” Rodriguez said.

### 5. BEING MEDIA-READY:

Knowing the bus ad would generate publicity, the team also developed a video PSA that targeted the Spanish-speaking population, but was also flexible enough to be shown in English language media. “We felt it was important to have a video version, as the Latino community tends to get their news through TV and radio rather than web media,” Rodriguez said.

**LEARN MORE:** <http://vimeo.com/37971012>

*“The process was fun, creative, and engaging. This was our first time making slogans for a bus ad and we felt really honored to have been part of the campaign.” — Participant Guillermo Areola*







## PROFILE: ALLISON MANNOS

### FOUNDING LEADER OF CITY OF LIGHTS / MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES FOR MOBILITY

Starting as an intern with the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition in 2008, Allison Mannos was a key catalyst for a ground-breaking effort in the bike movement aimed at giving “invisible” immigrant riders lights for their bikes, and working collaboratively to bring their issues into the foreground of transportation planning. But even as the City of Lights effort garnered national recognition and transitioned to its own entity, Multicultural Communities for Mobility, organizers faced significant challenges.

#### PERCEPTIONS

“Although people of color are the majority here in Los Angeles County, we have a lot of poverty and not a lot of resources to deal with transportation issues,” Allison shared in a 2013 Google Hangout hosted by the League. “We’re one of the first programs or organizations to explicitly address equity in bicycle programming, so it’s been a challenge trying to create more dialogue at the national and local level—not just with environmental groups but also social justice groups who might feel their populations could be negatively affected by bicycle facilities.”

#### RESOURCES

“There’s not a lot of resources put into [these types of efforts], so, while support from the other groups is great, without economic resources—grants or funding—it’s challenging to do robust programming that’s really meaningful and grooming people of color to become leaders, whether immigrant cyclists, youth or staff members we want to grow. We need to be able to start targeting more resources to this work to make it long-term and change the face of who’s in this [bicycling] community.”

#### VIGILANCE

“It’s been an amazing trajectory to see our city politicians and mayor get behind transit and bike expansion in the city, but now we have to be very vigilant that these bicycle and transit expansion opportunities are equitable and don’t just displace people. We’re working with coalition partners to make sure, for instance, that transit-oriented development has affordable housing opportunities, because the last thing that our group wants to do is advocate for bike lanes in these areas and then not have a way for people to thrive and stay in their communities and not benefit from the facilities we worked so hard to win.”



# RED, BIKE AND GREEN

## LOCATION:

Founded in Oakland, Calif. with chapters in Atlanta, Chicago, and New York City

## POPULATION SERVED:

African American



## THEMES:

COMMUNITY HEALTH

IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

## HOW IT STARTED:

When Jenna Burton moved to the Bay Area from the East Coast, she fell in love with bicycling. With a history of diabetes in her family, she discovered the tremendous health benefits of traveling by bike—but she also noted a lack of diversity in the local bike scene. So, in 2007, the Oakland resident started Red, Bike and Green to empower and engage more black bicyclists in her community. In just a few short years, new chapters have sprung up in other major cities, like Chicago, IL, and Atlanta, GA.

PHOTO CREDIT: Red, Bike and Green




## KEY ELEMENTS:

- 1. MORE THAN A BIKE CLUB:** With a motto of “It’s bigger than bikes,” RBG has a three-fold mission. “We’re talking about health, we’re talking about sustainability, and we’re talking about economic and environmental conditions,” Burton said. “We’re using bikes as a tool for community development.”
- 2. RAISING VISIBILITY:** “We’re establishing a presence, not only in the Oakland community, but among the African American population within the Oakland community,” Burton said. “We’re creating visibility, representing an image of what bike riding can look like within the black community. The more people see it, the more it becomes commonplace and less intimidating.”
- 3. DRAWING ON HISTORY AND IDENTITY:** “We carry with us this element of black history,” Burton said. “Our mission expanded into a three-point plan that parallels the 10-point plan of the Black Panthers... You can also see that element of history in our aesthetic and logo and colors we wear: red, black and green [the colors of the Pan-African flag]. That’s really how we found the inspiration for the title of the organization.”
- 4. STAKING CLAIM TO PUBLIC SPACE:** “Oakland is economically changing—changing what it looks like in

terms of the people who live there and don’t live there,” Burton said. “Our bike rides are a social response to the way those communities are changing. Just that visibility is a reminder that this is also a space where African Americans have been living for generations. A lot of people say that bike lanes are the first sign of gentrification, but by using those bike lanes and taking up that space, it’s a reminder that these bike lanes are for us, as well. It’s a great way to engage in community and to have these conversations that are about more than just bike riding.”

- 5. SHIFTING BIKE CULTURE:** “I know it sounds cliché, but RBG is by the people, for the people,” Burton said. “It’s entirely grassroots. It came from members of the community, using community resources. It’s free and easily accessible with no strings attached. It’s literally like going for a bike ride with your next-door neighbor. The most important key is community... We’re wearing the colors and the history and the style that is unique and well-received with the black community. We use the black power fists in some of our images. As it becomes part of the culture, we’ll start to see more black people getting excited about bikes—for reasons we don’t think about right away.”

**LEARN MORE:** [www.redbikeandgreen.com](http://www.redbikeandgreen.com)



*“The initial inspiration for RBG came from a lot of anger I was feeling about the condition of the black community. Something really positive came out of that anger. Many times I’m reluctant to express my anger out of fear of what label or stereotype I may be stuck with. But, with the success of RBG, I realized that I have every right to be angry and by simply facing that anger I might channel it into something peaceful.” — Jenna Burton, RBG Founder (below, center)*





## Community Rides

# » EAST SIDE RIDERS

### LOCATION:

Los Angeles, Calif.

### POPULATION SERVED:

Youth of color

### THEMES:

COMMUNITY HEALTH | IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY | FAMILY | LICs | PARTNERSHIP | YOUTH

It started with John Jones III and a couple of his friends riding around Watts and Compton, giving out sandwiches and water to area homeless until their bags were empty. That spirit of addressing community needs and uniting disparate groups through bicycling grew into the East Side Riders Bike Club (ESR) in 2008. Focused on giving youth a safe and healthy outlet for recreation and connection, ESR hosts regular rides, clinics and field trips free of charge. “Some kids who’ve grown up in Watts have never been down the street to Magic Johnson Park,” Jones said. “When they’re riding with us, there’s a family sense, a togetherness that’s better than riding by yourself.” And ESR is working to build bridges between local cultures that are fragmented by gang activity, riding monthly with Los Ryderz, a predominantly Latino group, to memorialize Benjamin Torres, a cyclist killed in Gardena. Together, the two groups have formed “United Riders of South LA” to break down barriers between neighborhoods and work together to use rides and events to build solidarity and shine a spotlight on area injustice. “Through my work with ESR I’ve been able to grow and learn how to channel my passion and desire for cycling into seeing the community be a safer, healthier, and all around better place,” Jones said.

[www.eastsideriders.org](http://www.eastsideriders.org)

PHOTO CREDIT: Sahra Sulaiman





## PROFILE: KAREN OVERTON

### FOUNDER, RECYCLE-A-BICYCLE, NEW YORK CITY

Karen Overton used to say that bicycling was a social justice issue. But, as her experience deepened over decades in the bike movement, she's changed her mind: "It's a human rights issue; mobility should be included as a human right." Her passion for bicycles started in Mozambique, where, for years, she distributed single-speed bicycles to women who worked on small farms, enabling them to bring their produce to market. When she returned to New York City in 1994 she found herself at a confluence of opportunity: The City had a stockpile of discarded bikes, and the advocacy group Transportation Alternatives was interested in piloting a youth training program. So Overton created Recycle-A-Bicycle, a community space that provided the opportunity for low-income youth to "earn a bike" by learning how to build and maintain one—an effort that was an inspiration and model for scores of similar programs across the country. But it hasn't been easy.

#### OVERCOMING IRRELEVANCE

"We're developing bike culture in nontraditional communities and many of our young people go on to work in shops and have gone on cross-country tours. They embrace cycling, but if they hadn't been introduced to it, it would never become part of their life. When we started, the bike industry looked at us as 'Oh, they're fixing bikes, so we can't sell new bikes.' But many of the kids that stick with us more than their 10-week class say, 'Now that I have a bike, I want a better one; one that can go 40 miles instead of 10 miles.' They understand that it's not about the shiny paint job; it's about quality. So, while we bring value to the industry, they've been slow to recognize that. And advocates look at us as, 'Well, kids don't vote. We have a battle to win and they can't vote.'"

#### RIDING A BIKE IS NOT THE CONVERSATION

"It's finding out what issue a community is facing and determining together whether bicycling is a solution, and, if so, working together to make everyone feel like the project design is safe and mutually beneficial to everyone involved. So often advocates come in wanting to convert people and that puts people off. They feel like 'They're not listening to me; this is not my priority,' when, in fact, biking could be a mutual tool to meet mutually beneficial project goals or life goals."

#### THE ROLE OF ADVOCATES

"You have to identify champions in the communities you're working with. For us, it might be a parent or a teacher championing a school project, but it has to come from within. I often feel like the role advocates should play is as a catalyst for change,

rather than as a driver of change. Because of political battles that you have to wage in order to make change, a lot of advocates very much come at this from a somewhat aggressive stance—not everyone, but that perspective or approach can alienate people instead of unite them."

#### CONNECTING COMMUNITY TO POLICY

"It takes a little extra work. We did a campaign to get Michelle Obama to be a speaker at the Youth Bike Summit and printed postcards to make it easy. We went to schools and did a presentation on why we wanted to invite her, and asked them to write a postcard. After the first session we got one that just said, 'Yo Ms. President Obama' and realized we needed to educate them on the proper way to write a letter and what was appropriate. They didn't mean to be disrespectful; they were writing from their hearts... We've also taken young people to events like the Climate March, but it means permission slips—sometimes in other languages—and parents often say they don't want their child to be there, because, based on their heritage, they know someone who got seriously hurt while protesting."

#### THERE'S NO SHORT CUT TO BIKE EQUITY

"Listen first. You can't just go and say, 'We need you to show up at a meeting.' That's not the way to do it. People may reach out to African American churches and, say, they don't call us back. But what if you actually go to church and then start talking. You can never assume people are willing to hear your message. To get them to be open to hearing your message, you first have to listen."

[www.recycleabicycle.org](http://www.recycleabicycle.org)



## PROFILE: NAOMI DOERNER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BIKE EASY,  
NEW ORLEANS' BIKE ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION

When Naomi Doerner started her new job as Executive Director for Bike Easy, New Orleans' bicycle advocacy organization, the group was in the midst of asking itself a transformative question: "What does bike equity mean in our work?" While the organization has been very successful in reaching the low-hanging fruit – the people already tuned into bike advocacy and bicycling – they've recognized they need to develop methods to reach a broader audience. "Our mission is to make bicycling easy, safe and fun," Doerner said, "So now we're looking at making sure we're really doing that for everyone."

### GO BEYOND BIKING IN COALITION BUILDING

"We're really starting to understand that, while bike advocacy is our core, there's a much broader coalition to build to make our streets truly easy, safe and fun. That includes people who walk, who take transit and those who bike by choice or because of need. So I look to see where the values of our organization overlap and intersect with the values and missions of organizations we haven't partnered with previously. I just recently met with an arts-based organization that does community engagement, particularly with young people, and offers studio residencies. One thing we realized was people who come for residencies love New Orleans, but it's difficult to get around. So there is a lot of synergy there — our missions are to engage a broad audience to have public discourse about our primary goals. Whose streets? Whose arts? How do communities shape that art and public space?"

### CREATING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

"The lesson I'm learning is that it's important to have people see us as more than bike advocates, but advocates for quality of life and safer streets. Without a broader base of support, it's going to be very difficult for us—as tirelessly as we work as advocates—to truly create that institutional change we want so badly to see in government and public policy. What we're learning is that the implementation process is slow—what will help make it go faster is to grow our support base."

### BRIDGING THE GAPS

"NOLA Women on Bikes has been underway for over a year now, but I've still been asked, 'Why do we need a separate space for this group?' There are misgivings about why that is needed. My response is it isn't a separate space; it's a space within this larger

space. It's popular for a reason: there is a gap and a need. Traditionally in this bike community, it's been a white male contingent, but we want more people. It's OK to have a space within a space. It's not to the detriment, it's to the enrichment, of the community. The cultivation of leadership and entrepreneurship in young women who grew up in New Orleans and live here and want to ride a bike and learn about how to fix bikes has been great."

### ADVOCACY TO AMPLIFY UNHEARD VOICES

"What really really matters is not only for advocates to call upon leaders to implement progressive policies that promote walkability and bikeability and better quality of life, but to build a platform for communities to speak from and tools for them to use so their engagement is heard and part of a process. That's the thing: so many communities want change but don't know where to plug into the process. As advocates, that's what we do. We can serve as the liaison or bridge between citizens and government—that's our purpose and mission and work."

### IT'S GOING TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE AND THAT'S OK

"Our organization is at the beginning of this process [of integrating equity] and as the new ED, I'm navigating it and taking it very slow. People will be at different comfort levels. I think criticism or concern should be expected and accepted. And it needs to be worked through — not only accepted but worked through. Don't try to rush, because that's actually the growth. There are going to be some uncomfortable times, but if the mission is about better quality of life for our neighbors, our family and our friends, then that little bit of discomfort will be worth it."

[www.bikeeasy.org](http://www.bikeeasy.org)



*Community Rides*

## » NOLA WOMEN ON BIKES

**LOCATION:**

New Orleans, La.

**POPULATION SERVED:**

Women and woman-identified riders

**THEMES:**

**GENDER INCLUSION** **JOB SKILLS** **YOUTH**

“In spring 2013, a few women already active in the bicycle community decided to organize our efforts and host workshops and rides for new and experienced women riders, along with supporting youth employment and bicycle safety,” said co-founder Marin Tockman. Since their first group ride for CycloFemme 2013, the group—more than 400 strong on Facebook—has not only hosted consistent community rides, but also convened bike maintenance classes at the youth community bike shop and launched a Youth Mentorship Program that raised \$2,000 to support a paid internship at Crescent City Bike Tours for a young woman to gain job skills and advocacy training. “By our forming this group,” Tockman said, “we’ve put greater focus on women and family riding in New Orleans and people are paying attention to our efforts to inspire more women and young people to get out and ride every day.”

[nolawomenonbikes.wix.com/website](http://nolawomenonbikes.wix.com/website)





## Community Rides

# » NATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF CYCLISTS

### LOCATION:

National network of local affiliates

### POPULATION SERVED:

African American cyclists

### THEMES:

**COMMUNITY HEALTH** **IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY**

Founded in 2008, the National Brotherhood of Cyclists is a network of grassroots bike clubs made up of African American riders, many of which are named after Marshall “Major” Taylor, to honor the athlete who won the world one-mile track cycling championship in 1899 after setting numerous world records while enduring racial discrimination. In the late 1990s, Major Taylor became a symbol of diversity in cycling and inspired the formation of bike clubs in African American communities around the country. Like many Major Taylor clubs, from San Diego to Minneapolis to Pittsburgh, the national network works to “promote a love of cycling, increase the sport’s diversity and decrease the health disparities that affect communities around the country by bringing attention to the health benefits of cycling.” But, as Anthony Taylor, a founder of the Major Taylor Cycling Club of Minnesota points out, these groups are united by more than skin color. “With black cyclists, there is a broad spectrum of who they are and why they cycle and the common ground is around social engagement, collective experience, and pulling people along,” he says. “To me, that perspective is what makes the clubs unique.”

<http://nabcyclists.ning.com/>

PHOTO CREDIT: National Brotherhood of Cyclists





## PROFILE: ANTHONY TAYLOR

### MAYOR TAYLOR CYCLING CLUB OF MINNESOTA

For Anthony Taylor, bicycling has been a steady companion through all stages of life, from cruising around as a kid to dreaming of riding Race Across America to serving as a key leader in the growing network of African American cycling clubs in the United States. In the 1990s, Taylor was approached by three black women interested in participating in a 100-mile AIDS charity ride—but needing direction on how to train and feel comfortable on the roads. Not long after, Taylor was a founding member of the Major Taylor Cycling Club of Minnesota, which was formed in 1999—100 years after its namesake, legendary cyclist Major Taylor, became the first African-American world cycling champion in 1899.

#### WHAT EQUITY REALLY MEANS

“Equity is not diversity and it’s not equality. That’s important. Equality is making sure everyone has shoes, whereas equity is making sure everyone has shoes that fit. So as we develop partnerships and strategies and continue organizing, we need to be working through initiatives that are genuinely created by, owned by and reflect the culture and philosophy and mindset and vision of the communities we’re working in.”

#### OVERCOMING HISTORIC MARGINALIZATION

“As far as transportation is concerned, from a historical perspective, transportation infrastructure development has not worked out for black and brown people in terms of the state of the community when it was done... The last time we had a major fundamental shift it was the expansion of highway system—and the African American community was significantly impacted by it. There’s case after case after case where that shift literally destroyed historically African-American neighborhoods, not just displacing people from their homes, but businesses and cultural centers, too.”

#### CONNECTING PASSION TO ADVOCACY

“In the National Brotherhood of Cyclists (NBC), we have a relationship with more than 40 significant clubs in major markets in this country—and these are not people who need you to give them a bike. In terms of their development, though, our work right now is helping them learn to become advocates. Our club in Minnesota has really tried to be a model. We assign club members to be part of different efforts going on, like the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota or the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition.

With the NBC, we also have our own national summit and we’re trying to get our members to become advocates and participants in the change happening in their communities.”

#### BIKE LANES AREN’T THE SOLUTION

“I think that one of the things that has to happen is the understanding that it’s not infrastructure first... There’s a perspective change that has to happen for some communities we’re working with, and transportation is not it. It may be health improvement. It may be safety on the streets. I don’t have any data on this but health improvement may be the number one driver in the African American community, the number one thing they’re excited about biking and walking. Then, once they’re reintegrating biking and walking into their lifestyles, they want to changing their communities so they can do it more safely, more often, more easily... But it’s not infrastructure first. It’s relationships first, understanding the culture and motivations first, and then infrastructure can be a solution.”

#### THE IMPERATIVE TO ENGAGE PEOPLE OF COLOR

“To create a true movement in this country, we will have to turn around the top 25 major metropolitan communities. And, from that perspective, you know who has to be involved? People of color. They will have to be engaged... When we get organized and build capacity we should be able to make a phone call to our network and touch someone in a legislative or city council seat and let them know people are watching. From a statistical standpoint, if we have strong relationships in the top 25 TV markets, which our network does, we can get to over 50% of African American people in the country. When we wield that kind of influence, it matters.”



## Community Rides

# OVARIAN PSYCOS

### LOCATION:

Los Angeles, Calif.

### POPULATION SERVED:

Latina womyn

### THEMES:

**GENDER** **INCLUSION** **IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY** **LICs**

Known for their motto “Ovaries so big we don’t need no balls,” the Ovarian Psychos Cycle Brigade (OPC) is a Latina crew based in East LA with an unflinching feminist perspective, a deep connection to cultural roots and an active mission to fight violence against women and the planet: “The legacy of oppression dating back 500 years has created conditions in which many of us come from broken homes and are survivors of abuse. We choose the bicycle not only because it allows us to exercise our bodies, while trying to reverse the cultural shift from a profoundly respectful relationship with Tonantzin, Mother Earth, into a concrete barren urban jungle, but also because we are broke inner-city oppressed peoples and cycling is our only means of transportation. For these and many other reasons, we recognize how vulnerable we are on bicycles and work to empower womyn to take back the streets with an understanding that sisters have our back.” With provocative events like the annual Clitoral Mass ride, OPC has gained a following nationwide. “We like to say, we’re not just a bike club,” said member and organizer Maga Miranda, “we’re a mother-loving movement.”

[ovarianpsychos.com](http://ovarianpsychos.com)



## PROFILE: CHEMA HERNÁNDEZ GIL

COMMUNITY ORGANIZER, SAN FRANCISCO BICYCLE COALITION

Chema Hernández Gil is a Community Organizer at the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and leads the advocacy campaigns for improved infrastructure in the Tenderloin, SoMa and the eastern half of San Francisco. He also manages the SF Bicycle Coalition-side of the Community Bike Build Program, an innovative collaboration between a dozen community groups that is making biking an alternative for everyday transportation for all San Franciscans. His background is in engineering with a heavy dose of community and media activism.

### WHAT DREW YOU TO BICYCLE ADVOCACY?

I grew up moving: from central Mexico to the Canadian Rust Belt and finally to the southern United States. Despite our mobility, my family had limited resources, and throughout my youth, we were nearly always dependent on walking and transit to get around. Having affordable, safe and accessible transportation was always important to us, but not always available. Biking was a different story. Even though I loved biking and saw it as part of my heritage coming from rural Mexico, a fatal collision that killed my uncle while he was biking to work made me fear it. San Francisco made me realize that advocating to make biking a true alternative for everyday transportation was possible.

### WHAT DOES BIKE EQUITY MEAN IN YOUR WORK?

Ensuring that I advocate for infrastructure and programs that benefit all San Franciscans and that I share my knowledge and experience to help them not only make our city a better place to bike, but a better place to live.

### HOW HAVE YOU NEGOTIATED COLLABORATION AND COALITION BUILDING WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS?

Since I began working at the SF Bicycle Coalition, I've reached out to communities that have felt neglected by our work and collaborated with them to build new projects. It's challenging work and sometimes it feels like I'm taking two steps forward and one step back, but it is critical to do this in a city as diverse as San Francisco and where the community outreach process is so important to achieving our mission.

### WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU MET, AS RELATES TO EQUITY?

The perceptions that biking and bike advocacy are tools of gentrification. Fear of biking, particularly among women and families. Lack of access to bikes, bike shops and bike infrastructure. Distance from work, schools and other such centers of activity. Feeling powerless to impact the city process.

### ANY LESSONS LEARNED IN ADDRESSING THOSE CHALLENGES?

Be persistent, humble, transparent and honest. Understand that I am still a member of the community and act accordingly: be involved beyond my work as a biking advocate.

### HOW DO YOU EFFECTIVELY CONNECT COMMUNITY INTERESTS TO POLICY MAKING?

Acknowledge that as an advocate you can serve as a bridge between the two. You need to listen carefully and get a clear mandate while at the same time sharing your perspective as an process insider with the community. Make sure you're speaking to the community, not just to community leaders, even if it takes longer. When speaking to policy makers, speak on behalf of your base and supporters.

### ADVICE FOR OTHER BIKE ADVOCATES AS RELATES TO ADVANCING EQUITY IN THEIR WORK?

Equity and inclusivity are critical for our work to succeed, but it will also be challenging. Take care of yourself. Don't be afraid to seek leadership positions to advance this goal.





## Community Rides

# KIDICAL MASS

### LOCATION:

National network of local affiliates

### POPULATION SERVED:

Families

### THEMES:

**FAMILY** **GENDER INCLUSION** **YOUTH**

When she got pregnant and had her first child, Megan Odett (pictured above) knew her life would never be the same: “I thought I lost everything I liked about the person I used to be.” Soon Odett noticed more parents and families riding on the streets of Washington D.C., but there weren’t any organized rides to bring them together. So Odett became one of a growing number of leaders bringing the Kidical Mass concept to the nation’s capital. Created in 2008 in Eugene, Oregon, Kidical Mass is a “legal, safe and fun bike ride for kids, kids at heart, and their families.” The family-friendly rides generally meet at a park and end, not too far away, at another fun spot, from ice cream parlors to public pools. Now having expanded to more than 20 cities nationwide, from D.C. to Denver to San Diego, Kidical Mass is uniting and empowering families—and spreading the message that “Kids are Traffic Too!”

[www.kidicalmass.org](http://www.kidicalmass.org)

PHOTO CREDIT: Maggie Smith





## PROFILE: ED EWING

DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  
AT CASCADE BICYCLE CLUB

As a kid, Ed Ewing was an outlier. Because he rode a bike in a predominantly black neighborhood in Minneapolis, MN, Ewing caught flak from his friends. “They didn’t understand it,” he said. “They’re like, ‘Are you turning white? Black people don’t bike.’” And the outsider status cut both ways—out on the local race circuit, he was often the only black cyclist at competitions. “At bike races people were like, ‘Who is this kid?’” he remembered. “There’s this fishbowl effect of everyone staring at you—and you just want to ride your bike.” Now, as an adult, Ewing is a leading advocate for inclusion. After starting a model Major Taylor program that works with youth in underserved communities in Seattle, he’s risen to the Director of Diversity and Inclusion for the Cascade Bicycle Club, not just inspiring students but envisioning what bike equity can mean for the whole organization—and all of Seattle’s diverse communities.

### DROPPING THE SAVIOR MENTALITY

“I think, traditionally, with well-intended nonprofits there’s a tendency to go in [to new communities] with ‘How can we help you?’ One thing that I’ve noticed in doing the work, even more so now in the diversity and inclusion role, is to change that language and look at it as: What are the opportunities the community sees for itself—and how do we support that with our passion, the bicycle? In that mindset, there’s a shift, forcing us, who are very passionate about bikes, to slow down and listen and learn. What the bike means to us will mean something different to the community and we need to be very, very mindful of that.”

### STARTING EQUITY CONVERSATIONS WITH FACTS RATHER THAN FINGER-POINTING

“You have to have an authentic conversation, a fact-based conversation, because this is real work. We’ve been using organizations like the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify the high schools and areas in the community that have the highest incidence of free and reduced lunch—and sharing that out with the greater community. We’re having the conversation about what we really do isn’t just about getting people on bikes—but taking on the health and wellness of the students, and the education of students. But that conversation starts from a very authentic place—not you should be doing this or shame on you, Seattle. That never works. To have a real conversation we start with: There are areas in Seattle that don’t have access [to the resources for health and wellness] and here’s how we’re showing up. It’s a very a-ha moment for a lot of people. For me, being African American and sharing this message, I can say, ‘Hey, I didn’t know. I had an idea, I knew it existed, but I didn’t know to what extent.’ But once you do know there’s a greater responsibility, a social responsibility to share that with the greater community and say this is what we’re doing about it. Our passion is the bicy-

cle and how the bike can transform these areas, but it has to be very authentic and leading by example—not pointing fingers.”

### GOING DEEP WITHOUT STRETCHING THIN

“When you’re going into a community that hasn’t traditionally biked or you’re presenting an opportunity that hasn’t been on their radar, you have to, in some ways, manufacture the demand for it. So the big question [for us, in starting the Major Taylor Project] was, will the students like doing it and how can we keep it fresh? Now we know, yes, it will work. These students want to bike. Six years later, our biggest challenge is capacity—and funding to increase our capacity. Right now, we’re in a conversation about, ‘Should we go deeper into the schools and community we work in now or expand to different sites—or do both? And how deep do we go with students? Do we partner with organizations to help them have access to college and jobs and, if we do, how do we not get spread too thin or get too far away from our mission?’”

### COMBINING ORGANIZATION ASSETS FOR EQUITY OUTCOMES

“We’re right in the middle of our implementation stage of a new strategic plan and part of that conversation is, ‘How do our various departments work together to really affect change, to move the needle?’ For me, it’s somewhat easy to identify where to focus because Seattle’s diversity really exists in pockets. But how do we coordinate advocacy, events, education and volunteers in a targeted community to really affect change? Is it targeting a community and one person in the organization is leading that effort in that community? Is that my role as Director of Diversity and Inclusion to pick and choose communities, and, if it is, to assemble the team to go into the community to partner and understand the community needs and opportunities? We’re trying to figure that out as an organization right now.”



## PROFILE: MELODY MOODY

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BIKE WALK MISSISSIPPI

Originally from North-East Tennessee, Melody Moody moved to Jackson, Mississippi 15 years ago and immediately got to work. She got involved in community development and service-oriented work focused on low-income communities in the inner city of Mississippi's capital. Moody now serves as the executive director of Bike Walk Mississippi, the state's bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organization.

#### THE BICYCLE AS A TOOL

"The primary reason I'm constantly and consistently motivated and inspired through bicycle advocacy in Mississippi is because never before in my attempt to work with communities toward social justice have I found a 'tool' that so affordable and accessible, no matter the age, race, gender or socio-economics of the user; a simple, fun and easy tool that can not only be used to embrace diversity but can be used as a tool to increase health, access, economic development and quality of life in communities. Over the past 14 years working with low-income communities, I have learned the importance of humility, adaptability, opportunity and access. I have learned the difference between empowerment as an end result within a participating community and empowerment as a show of power from those with the financial means or false sense of the self who see it as a way to 'rescue' the community from itself. But, instead by collaboratively working with diverse communities and individuals, we more easily identify barriers and to help create conditions that more easily allow access, opportunity and advancement for all groups."

#### EMBED EQUITY IN YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

"I worried that taking a full-time position doing bike advocacy on the statewide level would take away from my ability to fully advocate for low-income communities. I was hesitant that bicycle advocacy would point me in another direction away from my desire to use community development principles as a way to protect human rights and to advocate for those in need. However, I took a leap of faith and within three months of beginning my work as executive director of Bike Walk Mississippi, I was able to (with unanimous support from my board of directors) immediately integrate a strategic plan that we would make a commitment toward increasing the inclusion of underserved communities

#### MAKING THE CASE TO DONORS

I have found that through it all, my biggest challenge working in the inner city was in communicating the collaborative message to donors; specifically those who were outside the walls of context and culture. To learn 'inclusion' is to learn to come alongside our partners as we spread the message of a better community, not to objectify the needs of a community as 'less than' or unable to 'rise above' their circumstances without the outside elevation based on donations or power. Instead, our challenge it is to be active, to be intentional and to embrace diversity and to educate those who may find themselves 'outside looking in' and learn to promote and embrace communities who may also find themselves on the 'inside looking out.'"

#### BUILDING BLOCKS

"In 2012, we launched our 'Low-income Empowerment Initiative' as a pilot program. An effort that's still in progress, we're working collaboratively in the Midtown community of Jackson to develop an after-school curriculum and bike club to increase access and safety for children biking in low-income neighborhoods. We're also working to launch a bike safety and walking campaign targeted to minority children in Midtown and actively conducting needs assessments, asset mapping, walkability audits and surveys in the neighborhood, as well as collaborating with local nonprofits, community development organizations, schools, after-school programs and local residents to help create a plan for increased biking and walking. By partnering with the state Safe Routes to Schools program, we were also able to launch the first community bike shop in Mississippi, headquartered in Midtown. It's our desire in 2014 to create a replicable program based on our successes that we can easily implement in low-income communities across the state."

[www.bikewalkmississippi.org](http://www.bikewalkmississippi.org)

# MORE BIKE CULTURES



## SCRAPER BIKES:

An idea created by Tyrone Stevenson Jr. of Oakland in 2005, Scraper Bikes got their name from scraper cars, known for bright paint jobs, shiny rims and booming stereos. Using everyday objects like cardboard, aluminum foil and spray paint, largely African American youth have adapted the eye-catching aesthetic for bikes. “Scraper Bikes are definitely a process, a process for the kids so they can get their minds off of what’s really going on in these streets and give them at least that hour to fix on their bikes, an hour for that life change, because scraper bikes are saving a lot of these kids lives,” Stevenson, also known as Baybe Champ the Scraper Bike King, said. And it’s spread beyond Oakland, popularized by several rap songs that have gone viral on YouTube, including lyrics like “Going green in the ‘hood, tell me what’s good, supporting positive just like a boy should.” Learn more at [scraperbiketeam.com](http://scraperbiketeam.com).

**THEMES:** MEDIA YOUTH RECYCLING



## LOWRIDER BIKES:

In 1997, a French filmmaker shared the story of the Camarades Lowrider Bike Club in Tucson, Ariz., a group of Chicano and Mexicano youth and adults, in a film titled “Low y Cool.” In cities across the country, lowrider bikes are inspired by lowrider cars, often featuring chrome or over-spoked wheels, banana seats with a sissy bar and tall ape hanger handlebars. Like Tucson, lowrider groups are often popular within Latino and Chicano communities across the country, with leisurely, family-oriented rides that showcase the custom creativity of accented bicycles and tricycles.

**THEMES:** IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY



## TALL BIKES:

Started in 1992 by Jacob Houle and Per Hanson as the “Hard Times Bike Club” in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the Black Label Bike Club is an international mutant bicycle organization specializing in tall bikes and choppers. Since then the club has grown to include chapters in New York City; Reno, Nevada; Austin, Texas; Oakland, California; and New Orleans, Louisiana. The Black Label Bike Club is credited with being the first “outlaw bicycle club,” the originators of tall bike jousting, and one of the main contributors to the rise of the tall bike culture, which is inspired by anarchist, artist and anti-consumer elements.

**THEMES:** RECYCLING



**THEMES:****ACCESS****ALLYSHIP****SUSTAINED COMMITMENT****YOUTH**

# PROGRAM TO EDUCATE ALL CYCLISTS

**LOCATION:**

Ypsilanti, Mich.

**POPULATION SERVED:**

People with disabilities

**HOW IT STARTED:**


In 1988, John Waterman was a public school teacher in Battle Creek, Michigan, when a special education student was hit by a car and severely injured while riding his bicycle at night. Waterman was moved to create a pioneering initiative, the Program to Educate All Cyclists. PEAC's mission is to empower individuals with disabilities through cycling, providing programs that instill not just cycling skills training, but personalized assistance to meet the needs and abilities of all cyclists, as well.

PHOTO CREDIT: Joseph Altizer

## KEY ELEMENTS:

- 1. FOCUSING ON INDEPENDENCE:** Rather than approaching bike education only as a set of skills, PEAC staff focus on developing a student's level of independence. For many with disabilities, mobility is a constant hurdle that can impede the ability to meet daily needs and connect with others in the community. Whether fashioning a bicycle that meets an individual's physical needs or providing a companion cyclist for those with vision or cognitive impairment, PEAC sees bicycling as an active transportation option for all.
- 2. INDIVIDUALIZED GOALS:** "Riding in traffic can be overwhelming for our students," Waterman said. "So, student goals can extend over years." For instance, a participant with cognitive and visual impairment has been part of the program for 20 years—slowly progressing to living independently and biking to work at two jobs.
- 3. CAREFUL, MEASURED PROGRESS:** Students are required to demonstrate the necessary skills as they progress towards their goals. Practice venues range from parking lots to trails to urban streets, with participants often transitioning on a tandem bike to slowly introduce the new skill set or riding environment.
- 4. INTEGRATION WITH THE BICYCLING COMMUNITY – AND HAVING FUN:** PEAC doesn't just educate participants; it also integrates cyclists with disabilities into the mainstream bike community by helping them become engaged in tours, races, and bicycle club rides. "Michigan is the most inclusive [cycling] community you'll meet," Waterman said. "Everyone is part of PEAC. Local rides are reaching out to us, wanting our input on how to make their ride available to everyone."
- 5. EMPOWERING ADVOCATES:** "Our students are our best advocates," Waterman said. For instance, PEAC students met with Michigan state senators to discuss complete streets and the value of accessibility and bicycling in their lives. "What our students face is really what complete streets is meant to address," Waterman said. The complete streets legislation passed the Senate unanimously and has since become law.

**LEARN MORE:** [www.bikeprogram.org](http://www.bikeprogram.org)



*"We believe everyone can ride. That's our motto and we take this stuff personally." — John Waterman, PEAC founder*



PHOTO CREDIT: Joseph Altizer



#### THEMES:

ACCESS ALLYSHIP  
GENDER INCLUSION  
IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION  
JOB SKILLS LANGUAGE  
PARTNERSHIP  
RECYCLING

# WE BIKE NYC

## MUJERES EN MOVIMIENTO

#### LOCATION:

New York City, NY

#### POPULATION SERVED:

Latina women

#### HOW IT STARTED:

“From the start, our goal has been to create an inclusive environment that feels comfortable for all types of women,” said WE (Women’s Empowerment) Bike NYC founder, Liz Jose. “WE have gone so far as to stay away from the term ‘cyclist’ in our mission and vision statements because our goal is to engage ALL women, not just those who consider themselves cyclists... The Mujeres en Movimiento program came from our core value of inclusiveness. WE realized that many Latina women weren’t being engaged in cycling because the literature wasn’t in Spanish. Furthermore, the majority of literature and photos out there were of white women in spandex, so how do Latina women picture themselves as cyclists if the photos are telling them they are not?”

PHOTO CREDIT: Liz Jose, WE Bike NYC



## KEY ELEMENTS:

**1. PROGRAM ALIGNMENT:** Jose knew effective outreach to Latina women would start with relationships in the Spanish-speaking community. “The Queens Museum of Art does an incredible amount of work engaging the community in art—really blurring the lines between art, participation and community building,” Jose said. “And the Immigrant Movement International space is a community center art project that offers classes.” By fitting within the goals of their partners’ programming and audience, WE Bike was able to meet participants where they were with a 10-week earn-a-bike program conducted in Spanish.

**2. APPROPRIATE RESOURCES:** The earn-a-bike program included adequate tools and instruction for the women to learn bike maintenance in a participatory way. And, at the end, “Brooklyn Cruiser donated 14 bicycles to the project so that women would be awarded bicycles that were reasonable and practical for city use, as opposed to light road bikes that aren’t helpful for day-to-day errands, like hauling groceries.”

**3. EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO BECOME TEACHERS:** “WE were interested in creating something that was sustainable after the initial classes, so the eight women who have completed the earn-a-bike also teach community classes and lead group rides in the same space during the summer,” Jose said. “WE hope that the program can be a pilot for engaging other

communities by providing the physical resources (a bike), as well as the leadership resources (mechanics skills and ride leadership skills) to support the beginning of a community bike movement.”

**4. CREATING STAND-ALONE TOOLS:** “As we met more and more with the women in Corona, it became clear that there was a lack of Spanish-language outreach materials and resources,” Jose said. “So we worked to translate our website and events into Spanish, to make rides and meet-ups accessible, as well as print materials like a Spanish language “Fix a flat” spoke card and a ride leader manual.”

**5. CULTIVATING DIVERSE COMMUNITY:** After the first round of mechanic classes, a 55-year-old participant in the Mujeres program wanted to join WE Bike NYC’s Mothers Day event—but she didn’t yet have the ability or confidence to ride the full 10 miles. So Jose rented a tandem bike and pedaled with her, and a handful of other Mujeres participants, from Corona, Queens to Roosevelt Island. “For five or six of the women it was their first bike ride of all time in the city,” Jose said. “It took us two hours to go 10 miles, but we got there. We had pizza and hung out together and there was this amazing camaraderie among all these different women. Everyone made it; it didn’t matter how long it took us, or how far we went, we just shared time together.”

**LEARN MORE:** [www.webikenyc.org](http://www.webikenyc.org)



*“Mujeres en Movimiento started because we needed to reach out to other communities and meet them where they’re at. That’s why I think we’ve been so successful. What we do creates bridges and personal friendships and opportunities to interact. And you don’t have to talk all day on a bike. You can ride together and have an experience even if you don’t speak same language.”*  
— Liz Jose, WE Bike NYC founder



#### **THEMES:**

**ACCESS**

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION**

**LANGUAGE**

**MEDIA**

**SUSTAINED COMMITMENT**

# **CYCLE TORONTO AND CULTURELINK SETTLEMENT SERVICES**

## **PARTNERSHIP FOR INTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION**

### **LOCATION:**

Toronto, ON

### **POPULATION SERVED:**

Immigrants

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### **HOW IT STARTED:**

More than half of all adults living in Toronto were born outside of Canada. In 2008, the then Toronto Cyclist Union and CultureLink formed an innovative partnership guided by joint values of “sustainability, empowerment, equity, inclusion, health, social justice, and cultural competence.” With targeted programming on bike safety and community, the Partnership for Integration and Sustainable Transportation has worked to “promote the integration of newcomers in the Greater Toronto Area, by fostering cycling transportation as an affordable, healthy and convenient option.”

PHOTO CREDIT: CultureLink

## KEY ELEMENTS:

### 1. **ALIGNED AND ACCESSIBLE MARKETING:**

To serve the diverse communities of Toronto, the Partnership created materials in the top languages among recent immigrants to the city. Aligned around the slogan “From Back Home to Our New Home: Cycling is Affordable, Healthy and Convenient!” the group distributed motivational posters in English and 15 other languages to a variety of key locations, from doctors’ waiting rooms to school corridors.

**2. INFORMATION FOR ALL:** To ensure equal access to the basics of bicycling, critical safety tips and the rules and responsibilities of cycling on the road, the “Toronto Cyclist Handbook” was created. Using illustrations of bicyclists from diverse backgrounds, the Handbook was published and printed in 17 languages and distributed at libraries, schools and cultural events, like the Southeast Asian Community Festival.

**3. MERGING SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND CYCLING ORIENTATION:** Moving beyond the paradigm of one-off trainings, the Partnership created Bike Hosts, a dynamic program that matches up newcomers who are interested in cycling with mentors who ride regularly. In large and small group activities over

several months, Bike Host participants socialize and practice their communication skills and learn about civic engagement, all while exploring Toronto by bike.

**4. POSITIONING BIKES AS A TOOL:** “We expect every mentor to do a ride with their mentee in their neighborhood to figure out a route to the subway station or a nearby library or where they go to work or school, to help them figure out the day-to-day route they may take using their bike,” said Kristin Schwartz, the program’s coordinator. But, for many participants, the bicycle is more than transportation—it becomes a social and professional asset that cultivates friendships and opens doors to professional contacts. “I met a lot of newcomers and a lot of people who are already established in Canada, so it was great opportunity to network,” said Hiba Alhomoud, an immigrant from Kuwait.

### 5. **ENCOURAGING A LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT:**

Because of the success—the Bike Host program invariably fills to capacity each session—many of the mentees go on to be mentors themselves, becoming more engaged in cycling advocacy and invested in the equity, diversity and inclusion of Toronto’s bike community.



PHOTO CREDIT: CultureLink





# CYCLES FOR CHANGE

**BIKE LIBRARY AND LEARN TO RIDE**

**LOCATION:**

St. Paul, Minn.

**POPULATION SERVED:**

Low-income residents, refugees, Spanish-speaking immigrants

**THEMES:**

ACCESS

ALLYSHIP

GENDER INCLUSION

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

JOB SKILLS

LANGUAGE

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**HOW IT STARTED:**

Serving the Twin Cities, Cycles for Change is a community bike shop and hands-on-advocacy organization that grew out of the Yellow Bike Coalition and the Minnesota Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance. With a mission to build a diverse and empowered community of bicyclists, C4C works to “deliver bicycle access and education programs that match the needs, experiences, and perspectives of our participants.” To match the needs of many women, low-income residents and immigrants, the group has advanced equity through its Bike Library and Learn to Ride programs.

PHOTO CREDIT: Cycles for Change

## KEY ELEMENTS:

**1. OVERCOMING FINANCIAL BARRIERS:** The Community Partners Bike Library works with nearly 15 partner organizations to lend 200 bikes to low-income community members. Fully accessorized for transportation purposes, the library includes trailers and tag-a-longs for people with children, too. C4C also offers an earn-a-bike program, through which participants can learn basic bike mechanics and volunteer six hours to earn a bike for themselves. “Our Earn-a-Bike program helps people access a free bike for transportation purposes — and supports people in learning useful repair skills during the program,” said C4C’s executive director, Jason Tanzman. “And the required volunteer component gives participants a deeper involvement and ownership in our work.”

**2. STARTING FROM SCRATCH:** C4C created a curriculum that takes a step back from the standard bike education classes, and teaches adults how to ride a bike for the first time. The Learn to Ride classes have proven especially applicable to women, refugees and immigrants. “In a single summer we taught probably over 60 people to ride a bike, and some of them have become the most amazing bike advocates,” said former Bike Library Directore, Claire Stoscheck.

**3. SUPPORTING SELF-SUFFICIENCY:** To maintain an open and inclusive atmosphere where everyone can continue to cultivate skills and build community, C4C holds a weekly Women & Trans night, creating an inviting space for female-identified riders to learn and practice basic maintenance and mechanics. “You may be great at riding but if, as soon as you get a flat tire,

you depend on a man to fix it, that’s not good for your autonomy and self-sufficiency,” Stoscheck said. “Even more than the realm of riding a bike, the world of fixing a bike is very male-dominated.”

**4. FROM RIDERSHIP TO LEADERSHIP:** After borrowing or earning a bike, participants have access to both bike education classes and leadership development programming. C4C recognizes that community members are the best ambassadors for bicycling and makes it as easy as possible for them to become leaders. “Our ‘Train the Trainers’ course is condensed to two hours and focuses on a specific topic,” Stoscheck said. “A lot of the communities we’re working with are working poor. They don’t have a lot of time; they have millions of responsibilities and it’s really important to respect people’s time and situations. We’re hoping to build capacity in those communities that we’re lending bikes to and have trainers in their communities with their language and in their cultural context.”

**5. EMPOWERING YOUTH:** Cycles for Change’s youth apprenticeship program provides job training for low-income youth, high-school aged young women, and youth of color to build skills that help them be community and transportation leaders. “Through our progressive leadership model, youth grow and develop career and college readiness, work preparedness, health and well-being, and leadership skills,” said C4C’s Youth Programs Coordinator, Micah Thompson.

**LEARN MORE:** [www.cyclesforchange.org](http://www.cyclesforchange.org)

*“I applied for a job that wasn’t on the bus route and it required ‘reliable transportation.’ I told them ‘Yes, I have reliable transportation,’ since I knew I was getting a bike from the Bike Library.”*

— 2011 Bike Library member

PHOTO CREDIT: Cycles for Change







#### THEMES:

ALLYSHIP

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

LANGUAGE

LICS LISTENING

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

PARTNERSHIP

YOUTH

# LOCAL SPOKES

#### LOCATION:

New York City, NY

#### POPULATION SERVED:

Diverse residents of the Lower East Side

#### HOW IT STARTED:

Recycle-A-Bicycle and Transportation Alternatives were two of the nine community groups that embarked on an innovative project in 2010. “Local Spokes was formed in response to a perceived lack of community involvement in the planning process around the growing bicycle movement in New York City, particularly among low-income residents, people of color, immigrant communities, and youth,” wrote Pasqualina Azzarello, then Executive Director of Recycle-a-Bicycle and Caroline Samponaro, senior director of campaigns and organizing at TA, in 2012. “Our coalition was created with intention, in an attempt to add new voices to neighborhood bicycle advocacy in NYC, and to do so by ensuring that community-based organizations are the leaders in the local conversation about expanding bicycling.”

PHOTO CREDIT: Local Spokes



## KEY ELEMENTS:

- 1. INCLUDING NON-BICYCLING GROUPS:** “Focused specifically on the Lower East Side and Chinatown neighborhoods, the effort focused on bicycling, but was intentionally comprised of both bicycling and non-bicycling groups,” Azzarello and Samponaro wrote. “To create a new model for inclusive and actionable engagement, housing, employment, cultural and transportation-oriented groups came together to pilot and advance inclusive and multi-perspective planning around bike programming and street designs.”
- 2. COMPENSATING TIME INVESTMENT:** “For it to be possible for new voices and visions to have a seat at the table, it was essential that Local Spokes was funded,” Azzarello and Samponaro said. “Foundation funding ensured that bike-related organizations and non-traditional partners could invest time and resources into getting at the heart of our cause.”
- 3. LEAVING OPINIONS AT THE DOOR:** “While the Lower East Side and Chinatown have long been the home for diverse immigrant and low-income residents, our neighborhoods have also served as places of community innovation, organizing, and progressive change for decades,” Azzarello and Samponaro reflected. To deeply hear and integrate that expertise and experience, bike advocates had to shift their perspective. “Rather than speaking about and advocating for bicycling itself, bicycling was discussed in the context of other neighborhood concerns like affordability, housing, health, immigration rights, job training and community empowerment.”
- 4. MEANINGFUL OUTREACH:** Local Spokes didn’t just enlist a single focus group; the coalition conducted a tri-lingual survey with 1,200 responses and held multiple vision sessions that engaged more than 250 participants. Issues such as accessibility for low-income residents, safety concerns, the bike share program, job creation, education and infrastructure were included.
- 5. CREATING AN ACTION PLAN:** “The survey and visioning process resulted in the Local Spokes Neighborhood Action Plan, which identifies key findings that address local transportation infrastructure, bicycle education and safety, and the role of bicycling in creating and sustaining local jobs,” Azzarello and Samponaro wrote. The Plan not only synthesized strategic recommendations generated from the comprehensive community process, but set the stage for Local Spokes to follow through and partner with public entities and ally organizations to improve cycling in the neighborhood.
- 6. INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS:** Also central to Local Spokes is a Youth Ambassadors program. Local teens explored the Lower East Side and Chinatown neighborhoods by bike and were introduced to basic principles of urban planning, bicycle infrastructure, community process, community organizing, public space, public housing, and gentrification. Participants gathered information, processed their findings, and worked together to create educational materials to share what they learned with local residents. In the short term, youth became educators, stewards, and champions of this work. In the longer term, bike advocacy as a whole is enriched when its young leaders are encouraged and supported to envision more livable communities and are taught the tools to help build them.

**LEARN MORE:** [www.localspokes.org](http://www.localspokes.org)



*“When we came together as a coalition, we made a decision to honor the community-driven process regardless of its results. We were being supported to learn, to welcome complexity, to question our own assumptions about the way things work, to meet people in the place they are coming from, and to allow our decisions to be guided by what came forth. In the end, what came of this process was proactive participation, community investment, and meaningful intergenerational exchange. And what’s more, what came of this process can be trusted to lead the way. Investing in the development of new leaders ensures positive transformation and longevity within bike advocacy on a local, regional, and national scale.”*

— Pasqualina Azzarello and Caroline Samponaro



## PROFILE: PASQUALINA AZZARELLO

CO-FOUNDER, YOUTH BIKE

The 2010 National Bike Summit was a turning point. Then the Executive Director for Recycle-A-Bicycle in New York City, Azzarello attended the Summit with a number of youth—all of whom recognized a dramatic lack of diversity at the annual advocacy gathering. “The Youth Bike Summit was literally conceived on the bus ride home from Washington, D.C.,” Azzarello said. “At first we thought the Youth Bike Summit would be a local or regional event, but we quickly learned that the need and desire for youth, educators, and advocates to come together and exchange ideas and learn from one another was bigger than our imaginations at the time.” Now, Youth Bike has evolved to be more than a single event; it’s a national movement to engage young riders in advocacy and leadership.

### BICYCLING AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

“At Youth Bike, bike equity means that all people riding bikes have an opportunity to make their voices heard and to contribute to the larger dialogue of bicycle advocacy that ultimately affects all cyclists. Youth Bike facilitates this engagement through its annual Youth Bike Summit, where youth, adults, educators, advocates, civil servants, and elected officials all come together to explore how the bicycle is a tool for positive social change, through active participation at the National Bike Summit, and through a number of youth leadership initiatives throughout the year.”

### WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

“The success of Youth Bike is due largely to its history and practice of working collectively and collaboratively. On the national level, the Youth Bike Steering Committee (comprised of youth and adult leaders from youth bike education organizations all over the United States) is actively involved in the planning, development, and operation of the annual Youth Bike Summit. On a local level, each of these same groups identifies local allies from within the bike world (education and advocacy organizations, and retail and industry partners) and beyond (youth development, environmental, and social service organizations, and city and state agencies aligned toward health, transportation, education, job training, and economic development).”

### CONNECTING NATIONALLY TO IMPROVE LOCALLY

“While the national youth bike education movement is decades strong, Youth Bike is a relatively new organization. Because of this we have faced challenging and important questions regarding

our ultimate purpose and direction. On a more practical note, we must also take into account the logistical considerations of the youth that we serve. For example, it can certainly require some coordination to schedule a conference call that includes high school students living in four different time zones, let alone running entire programs with youth affiliated with different organizations across a number of different states. But, we’ve learned that by working together, we are more than the sum of our parts. We have also learned that by working collectively on a national scale, our efforts and operations are strengthened on the local level.”

### CONSIDERING HEALTH, JOBS... AND JOY!

“I think it can be easy in this line of work to become too bike-focused. At Youth Bike we try to stay focused on what the bicycle can mean for individuals, families, communities, and the planet at large. Framing conversations and campaigns around health and well-being, affordable and accessible transportation and mobility, job training and job placement, saving money, and even the joy of cycling, we find we are better able to reach new bike riders and to more effectively engage existing leaders.”

### THE POWER OF THE PRESENT

“We encourage bike advocates and industry leaders to recognize that youth are not simply ‘the future of our movement’ but that youth are a present, active, and valuable asset to the movement as we know it today. When policies and infrastructure consider the safety and participation of youth, our communities are safer and more liveable for all people who share our streets.”

[www.youthbikesummit.org](http://www.youthbikesummit.org)



## PROFILE: DEVLynn CHEN

SOPHOMORE, DICKINSON COLLEGE, 2013 LEAGUE  
EQUITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER

While a student at the Bronx High School of Science in New York City, Devlynn Chen interned at Recycle-A-Bicycle where she learned to build her own bike. From there, she became a leader with the Local Spokes program as a Youth Mentor and worked with 10 young advocates to design street signs displayed all over bike lanes in the Lower East Side and Chinatown. In 2013, Chen was the keynote speaker at the Youth Bike Summit and, as a member of its Equity Advisory Council, worked with the League on a project-based internship to better understand youth barriers to bicycling, and how to better engage young people in bike advocacy. Read her full report at [bikeleague.org/equity](http://bikeleague.org/equity).

### BARRIERS TO BICYCLING FOR YOUTH

“The results [of my survey] stated that all the youth identify fun as the number one reason to ride a bike. Some of the main barriers to youth riding are inclement weather, safety and parking concerns, lack of a bike available to youth, and far destinations. It would be interesting to have survey replies from across the nation, and the League will be working to collect additional data through this survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/youthbiking](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/youthbiking)

### MOVING BEYOND TOKENISM

“In my outside research during the internship, I discovered Hart’s Ladder of Participation. This ladder is a scale of youth participation when working on a project. The top rung is the one with most youth participation where the children initiate the project and adults are listeners, observers and facilitators. The bottom rung is when adults use children as a tool to carry out the adult’s message. In many opinions, tokenism, the third rung, is the most difficult to overcome even among adults who want to help young people. I think the best way to allow youth to surpass the tokenism rung is to trust that they have the ability to add and build the project.”

### 10 RULES FOR ADULTS

“The development of rules started with a discussion [with the Local Spokes Youth Ambassadors group] on situations where adults were discouraging to teens. Next, we discussed situations where adults were encouraging to teens—the first steps towards finding a solution. With inspiration from the situations, the Youth Ambassadors were each asked to brainstorm three rules they would want adults to follow when it came to an advocacy conversation involving teens.

Using a dot survey method, the following 10 rules were identified as the most important:

1. Don’t judge and assume teens have nothing to offer
2. Be respectful
3. Keep a positive attitude
4. Be patient
5. Be fun and enthusiastic (don’t drone on and don’t be boring!)
6. Don’t be condescending (speak to teens as if they’re 8 years old)
7. Don’t fling insults
8. Don’t be biased; don’t have favorites
9. Be authentic
10. Ask for teens’ opinions

### ACCOUNT FOR SCHEDULES AND SOLIDARITY

“Be aware of school schedules and other commitments teens have when involving youth in advisory roles or committees. For instance, I was often unable to attend the monthly meetings of the League’s Equity Advisory Council because these calls were scheduled at a time when I was in school. During meetings or discussions, consider facilitation that allows for everyone to have a turn to speak rather than open conversation, so youth aren’t required to step in while others are talking. Reconsider having a single youth voice; allow several or a small group of youth to be involved, so youth have peers in the process and aren’t expected to speak for all youth.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STEPS TO ENGAGING YOUTH

Push for safer places for bike parking. Provide bikes for youth or provide youth with earn-a-bike programs similar to NYC’s Recycle-A-Bicycle. Generate a list of destinations around the city for youths to explore. Provide a list of youth-oriented group rides.





#### THEMES:

ALLYSHIP

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

LANGUAGE

LICs

RECYCLING



# SANTA BARBARA BICYCLE COALITION

## BICI CENTRO

### LOCATION:

Santa Barbara, Calif.

### POPULATION SERVED:

Latino riders

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### HOW IT STARTED:

With a small size, flat terrain and sunny weather, Santa Barbara has a visible and growing bike culture with numerous gathering spots and consistent community events. “But none of these hubs benefit from the participation of Santa Barbara’s largest bike culture, made up of low-income, Latino commuters, who ride to work at restaurants, hotels, and landscaping jobs on their well-used bikes,” said Lynnette Arnold and Carmen Lozano, leaders with the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition (SBBIKE). Bici Centro, an SBBIKE-run community bike shop, is changing that.

PHOTO CREDIT: Christine Bourgeois

## KEY ELEMENTS:

- 1. AN OUTWARD INVITATION:** “When Bici Centro was created, it intentionally aimed to provide a space that facilitated exchanges across different bike cultures—choosing a name that reflected these intentions,” Arnold and Lozano said.
- 2. AFFORDABLE REPAIRS:** “During open-shop hours, cyclists bring their bikes into the shop for repair and maintenance,” Arnold and Lozano said. “The shop has a DIY philosophy that espouses getting your hands dirty, and dedicated volunteer bike mechanics help customers become mechanically self-sufficient. Bici Centro represents the only local option for affordable bike repair, so many of the shop users are from the low-income Latino commuter community.” Bici Centro also takes its services to the streets, with “El Taller Movil,” a mobile repair service that’s staffed by bilingual volunteers.
- 3. CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS:** “Coming to the shop brings [Latino riders] into close contact with volunteer mechanics from the bike community, as user and wrencher work together one-on-one on bike repairs... The shop has succeeded in increasing contact between members of these two separate bike cultures, and the consistent presence of Latino cyclists at Bici Centro has contributed to increasing the visibility and legitimacy of this bike culture.”
- 4. ADAPTING TO DIFFERENCE:** “This work faces ongoing challenges, such as frequent language barriers between monolingual Spanish-speaking shop users and volunteer mechanics who speak limited or no Spanish. Another challenge at times is that the DIY philosophy regarding repairs at Bici Centro involves a significant investment of time and effort, a heavier burden for Latino cyclists who work long hours at physically demanding jobs. Often, the DIY agenda does not work for them because they just need a fast fix so that they can ride their bike to their next job.”
- 5. INCORPORATING LATINO CYCLISTS NEEDS:** “By far the most important outcome of such intensive contact between these communities has been to push the bike activists to include the needs of the Latino cycling community in their bike advocacy work. The Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition has an active Spanish Language Outreach Committee, which, since 2011, has conducted regular surveys among Latino cyclists, using the resulting data to enrich discussions at public planning meetings about bike infrastructure.”

**LEARN MORE:** <http://bicicentro.org/>



*“There are many challenges in bridging multiple bike cultures across socio-economic differences, but Bici Centro is a clear example of the power of intensive intentional contact between bike cultures. Towns like Santa Barbara and communities around the country should consider the advantages of developing intentional hubs where bike-minded people from many different cultures can come together to learn from each other’s experiences and to feed inclusive bike advocacy.” — Lynnette Arnold and Carmen Lozano*



# EARN-A-BIKE AND APPRENTICE PROGRAMS

## LOCATION:

Nationwide

## POPULATION SERVED:

Predominantly low-income residents, immigrants, youth, people of color

## THEMES:

ACCESS ALLYSHIP JOB SKILLS LICs RECYCLING YOUTH

## HOW IT STARTED:

Over the past 20 years, earn-a-bike programs have grown from the intersection of community supply and demand: old bicycles being discarded and interested riders lacking financial resources to buy new bikes. With Recycle-a-Bicycle providing a leading model in New York City, many community bike shops have at their core a program through which low-income or youth participants invest a certain number of hours fixing up an old bike and, in return, get a bicycle of their own. By embedding basic bike repair and maintenance skills, as well as connection to the local bike community, participants also gain a level of self-sufficiency and engagement that can inspire long-term involvement in riding and advocacy.

## HIGHLIGHTED PROGRAMS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY:

### COMMUNITY CYCLES, BOULDER, COLO.

BY JENNIFER MARIE SHRIVER, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



Community Cycles is the only organization in Boulder meeting the transportation needs of low income residents. Our model is based on diverting 2,500 bicycles per year from the waste stream, and restoring them to active use in the community. Our earn-a-bike (EAB) program enables low income folks and people on prison work-release to learn safety and mechanic skills and “earn” a bike for their own for transportation through a sweat-equity opportunity. Program participants build their own bicycles during a series of four classes on bike care and repair, refurbishing a bike for their commuting needs. With support from EAB instructors, staff, and volunteer mechanics, participants complete the program with a dependable bike and the knowledge, skills, and resources to maintain it. Through free membership in our bike co-op, EAB graduates have access to ongoing support for bike care and repair with workshops, classes, and access to our bike shop, ensuring their new bikes remain safe and road-worthy for years to come. Earn-A-Bike graduates aren’t just riders — they’re empowered agents of transformation in our community, building a culture of cycling.

PHOTO CREDITS: (From top) Seattle Bike Works, Community Cycles





## **WEST TOWN BIKES, CHICAGO, ILL.**

**BY GARTH KATNER, MANAGER OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Since 2011, West Town Bikes has been committed to helping underserved young people throughout Chicago cultivate entrepreneurial and employment opportunities by training them in bicycling and bicycle mechanics. In the three years of our Bicycle Mechanic Apprentice program, we've encouraged and guided youth through the process of creating and sustaining 20 successful entrepreneurship ventures, helped these new endeavors earn nearly \$11,000, and placed 36 individuals in bicycle-related employment independent of West Town Bikes.

For this innovative program, we typically recruit from the predominantly Latina/o and African-American communities of Chicago's West Side neighborhoods. More than 55% of the households in our communities earn significantly less than the area median income. But, while our apprentices are motivated by the need for employment opportunities, they also value our mission of promoting bicycling ultimately to address fundamental community issues: promoting a sustainable, equitable, healthier, active, and more socially conscious city. As a result, they discover that the skills learned working on a bike go far beyond turning a wrench or going for a ride. The bicycle is a powerful tool in transforming their lives and the lives of their communities.

We intensely train our apprentices in every facet of bicycle-related employment: sales and service, cargo bike and trailer fabrication/production, youth instruction, bicycle advocacy, and community outreach. This includes enhancing their overall professional skills in resume writing and personal finance, as well as their business planning and entrepreneurship abilities. The apprentices have greatly expanded their engagement in local community events and festivals, as well as committees and planning groups.



## **BIKE WORKS, SEATTLE, WASH.**

**BY DEB SALLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

At Bike Works, our youth programs are the cornerstone of our mission, offering an innovative combination of environmental education, bicycle repair, outdoor activities, and community service. They are all rooted in the belief that young people thrive when they are valued, value themselves, and feel a sense of belonging.

Many youth enter our organization through our earn-a-bike program, a progressive 8-week series of after-school classes for youth ages 9-17. In our multi-level classes, students learn beginning to advanced bicycle repair while fixing up bicycles that will be donated to other youth in need. Once they have completed a few extra service hours they can start fixing up a bike for themselves. And they can continue to come back year after year to learn more and earn more hours toward bikes and accessories. As we say at Bike Works: "Ride it like you earned it!"

Our classes and bike rides have a philosophy rooted in personal empowerment and provide many opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills. Through the 'Bicycle Leaders' program, youth mentor their peers. If someone is stuck on a bike repair issue they first go to the Bicycle Leader. If together they can't figure out the problem, they consult books. Only after they've exhausted these methods do they go to the adult staff for help. The message is that youth really can do it for themselves. And they do!

Our youth also have the opportunity to serve as youth apprentices in our community bike shop, be summer interns on our bike camps, get a summer job with us, serve on our Youth Advisory Committee or be one of two youth who serve on our Board of Directors.



## **BIKES NOT BOMBS, BOSTON, MASS**

**BY CORRINA ROCHE-CROSS, YOUTH EMPLOYEE**

I began to involve myself in youth empowered movements when I became an employee at Bikes Not Bombs, a non-profit organization that uses the bicycle as a vehicle for social change. Bikes Not Bombs thrives on the belief that youth can successfully run programs and even be teachers of adults. When I first became an employee, myself and four other high school students began to develop the basis for a project that came to be known as Chain Reaction.

Boston's first ever youth-run, mobile bike shop, Chain Reaction focuses on the numerous communities lacking access or resources to nearby bicycle shops. As a mobile bike shop, we bring all of our tools with us on a bike-pulled trailer which allows us to travel from community to community, providing youth in low-income areas with affordable bikes, bike repairs, and free bike safety and mechanics lessons.

Such an immense project seemed impossible at first. Nevertheless, months of hard work taught me the importance of dedication. Soon, all of our work began to turn our vision into a reality. This process strengthened my abilities in public speaking, and helped me gain more confidence in my own ideas and intuition. I saw myself become a leader, but I also understood that none of this transformation would have been possible without the supportive network of youth that surrounded me.

Over past couple of years, I've realized that no attempt at social change can be effective without the support of young people. I will someday reach a stage in my life where society will consider me an adult. Despite this, I intend to continue to prove to the world that age is not and will never be a barrier against bringing positive social change to one's community and having an impact on the decisions that will affect a young person's future.



## **RECYCLE-A-BICYCLE, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

**BY LISA RODRIGUEZ, EARN-A-BIKE PARTICIPANT AND MECHANIC**

I was born in 1990 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. When I was 6 years old, my mother gifted me with a purple Pacific mountain bike. My brother Anthony taught me to ride at the park in front of my building. In the projects, there's a park in front of every building and I would go there everyday. At first, I was scared to ride a bike, scared I would fall. But after practicing and practicing, I became fearless. My bike gave me freedom; my bike was my friend.

When I was 16, my whole world opened up. I rediscovered my love of biking and pedaled my way beyond the barriers and familiarity of my neighborhood. I found favorite routes through the Village, 14th Street, Chelsea Piers, and up the West Side bike path. It was me, my bike, and the road. One day, I rode up to 59th Street, gazed west across the river, and looked at New Jersey. I remember feeling such peace to have brought myself to this quiet place in the middle of my big, loud city.

That summer was the first time I walked into Recycle-A-Bicycle. I'd never seen so many bikes in my whole life. There were all different kinds, too. I was excited to learn how to take them apart and get them running again. It's been five years since my introduction to R-A-B and in that time, I've repaired thousands of bicycles, led bike rides for hundreds of kids, and I teach bike mechanics to teenagers who sometimes remind me of me.

I have learned that every bike has a story. I learn from their dents and the shapes they come in and the tales that their owners tell. Every bicycle has a lot to say. Everyday, these old bicycles teach me something new, as long as I am willing to listen.

**PHOTO CREDITS:** (From top) Bikes Not Bombs, Recycle-A-Bicycle



## PROFILE: REN BARGER

FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TULSA HUB

The founder and CEO of Tulsa Hub, Ren Barger has a long and eventful history as a vehicular cyclist and active-transportation educator. Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and raised between Wisconsin and Nantucket Island, she settled in Chicago after high school, where she began using a bicycle as her primary means of transportation. It was here in the Windy City where she earned a living as a bike courier while attending Columbia College Chicago and volunteered for Working Bikes Cooperative and Blackstone Bike Works. In 2004, after completing a self-contained bike-tour of the state of California, Ren was hit by a motorist and sustained several broken bones, including a spinal fracture, and was confined to a wheelchair for two months. This experience galvanized her commitment to active-transportation safety education and equity promotion for all users of the roadway, and resulted in ongoing analysis of the built environment and the inherent prejudices within the concept of “normal.”

### CONNECTING BIKES AND JOB ACCESS

“After my biking accident in 2004 I ended up recovering in Cook County hospital — a public institution — and the people coming to that facility were from a high-poverty social sphere. I had the opportunity over months as a convalescent in a wheelchair to visit with people who were not from where I was coming from. I realized the scale of how dramatically transit inequity affects every facet of people’s lives. Our programs at Tulsa Hub are designed for low-income people. They’re designed for people seeking employment who don’t have a vehicle to aid them, or to maintain a job they have that’s transit inconvenient and where a bike may assist them.”

### BIKES + SOCIAL SERVICES

“I was interested in making the connections between bicycling as a vehicle to get to work — but not just sending people off on a bike but identifying what other comprehensive social service support could be offered through partnerships in the community. The local day center for the homeless and the Salvation Army are magnets for low-income folks and there’s also smaller nonprofits that do rehabilitative work with felons just exiting prisons. We’ve cultivated a relationships with the Department of Justice for their programs looking at felon rehabilitation into society and other social service entities who’s main focus is finding employment, income-generation or skills training.”

### ALLOWING PARTICIPANTS TO ENVISION THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS

“I used to think all I wanted to do is make bikes available to people. Through Tulsa Hub, I’ve found that what’s most important

is asking the communities of people who are suffering what they need — and listening as best I can. People who are not like me, who are coming from intense poverty, who have been institutionalized. It takes a far higher degree of listening skills, because often times people are so traumatized or used to an organization or system telling them the formula, telling them what they need to do to get out of their situation. So I’m really focused on listening to understand what their need is.”

### PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE SERVICES THAT MEET AN EQUITY MISSION

“We developed an application form for partner organizations because a very wide breadth come to us, saying they would like us to provide bikes or education or some kind of engagement with their group, because I’m really emphasizing the attractiveness of longer-term partnerships. Often start-up non-profits are looking to get their mission out there, and, in the beginning, I never said no. But now we’d like to be able to evaluate how their mission complements our mission with some measureable goal or outcome. We get a lot of referrals and now, in a lot of cases, we’re asking them to pay — even if it’s just a token fee to get them to treat it like a professional service.”

### ADVICE FOR ADVOCATES

“Support your local bike co-op, whether that’s writing them a check, becoming a member or going into your garage and pulling out old cycling equipment to donate. Cultivate a relationship with a staff person or volunteer or donor of your local bike co-op because a lot of them are at the front lines of equity exploration.”

[www.tulsahub.org](http://www.tulsahub.org)





# SPOKE'N REVOLUTIONS YOUTH CYCLING

## THEMES:

ACCESS ALLYSHIP

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY

LICs YOUTH

## LOCATION:

North Carolina's Triangle Region, including Chapel Hill and Carrboro

## POPULATION SERVED:

High school students in under-resourced homes

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## HOW IT STARTED:

“Spoke’n Revolutions Youth Cycling came to be as a result of not seeing kids, and particularly kids of color, riding bikes in our neighborhood and the countryside outside of town for enjoyment or transportation,” said Kevin Hicks, of Triangle Bikeworks and co-founder of Spoke’n Revolutions. “We were inspired by the Rwandan Tour de France team and wanted to give youth an opportunity to do something extraordinary that they didn’t think they had the strength or willpower to do. After a very successful pilot project we began planning distance adventure touring; incorporating history and historical locations to enhance the experience of the youth participating.”

## KEY ELEMENTS:

### 1. TAPPING INTO READILY AVAILABLE

**RESOURCES:** “Triangle Bikeworks is affiliated with the two neighboring bicycle advocacy organizations: Carrboro Bicycle Coalition and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board of Chapel Hill,” Hicks said. “We work together to bring cycling related issues to the forefront of discussion and work to make both towns and surrounding areas more bicycle friendly. Both groups work toward equity and inclusion. The more comfortable people are with the bicycle as a utility for transportation and not just entertainment the broader the reach and participation of underserved communities.”

**2. ACCESS AND INCLUSION:** “In our efforts to include everyone there should be no fence building around groups,” Hicks reflected. “In a capitalist society there may always be haves and have nots. So, with that context, bike equity means that each person shares the

joy and benefits of cycling in its many forms with whom ever would listen,” Hicks says. “It means that your old bike might be traded or donated so that it can be passed down and someone else can upgrade or now have access to this wondrous tool. That regardless of race and social status, cliques and factions, people are welcomed into the overall ‘community’ of those who love the bicycle.”

### 3. FROM CHALLENGE TO ACCOMPLISHMENT:

“Our goal is to provide opportunities not likely to be given to the youth due to many factors beyond their control,” he said. “We use the challenges of distance cycling and other outdoor activities, like hiking and camping, as a catalyst for confidence building, self-reliance, and a building block for greater accomplishments in their future.”

**LEARN MORE:** <http://trianglebikeworks.org/>



## REFLECTIONS FROM THE SPOKE'N REVOLUTIONS YOUTH RIDERS...

*“We were on our bikes, and the feeling was amazing,” wrote Jose Patillo. “The open road with nothing but the beauty of nature surrounding us. The feeling of being in nature that I had never paid attention to before. I felt like I had been cheated on all other travels because, when I rode by in the car, I paid little to no attention to the surroundings and I never really stopped and looked; to appreciate the scenery. It’s a life-changing moment when you realize that the smallest things can make a difference.”*

*“Riding the first couple of days were physically challenging, but I think the mental part of it was the most difficult,” Fernando Sanchez wrote. “I had fractured my wrist right before I went on the trip and that was a big aspect making me think I couldn’t do it. That did not hold me back, though, because I have ridden every single day of the tour and have been on my bike the whole time and haven’t gotten in the van yet, which is a good accomplishment for me.”*

*“When we unzipped the rain fly, the first thing my eyes noticed were the most beautiful, most vibrant stars I had ever seen,” wrote Ali Thomas. “Their twinkle brought joy to my heart, and amazement to my eyes. I honestly couldn’t believe it!”*

*“Because of Spoke’n Rev, I recognized my strengths and weaknesses and I realized that I am not alone,” Khin Aye wrote. “Everyone has problems and getting to talk to someone who won’t judge you and knows you very well is truly a blessing. I thank all of them for being a part of my life.”*

*“One of my favorite things is being told that we are inspiring,” wrote Jazmine Carter. “We met a man at the gas station who went on and on about how much he appreciated our group. I didn’t get his name, but he inspired me to know that I was inspiring him.”*



## PROFILE: KEITH HOLT

SOUTHEAST REGION DIRECTOR WISCONSIN BIKE FEDERATION  
& CO-FOUNDER OF MILWAUKEE BIKE WORKS

Keith Holt has spent the past decade spreading the idea that bicycling is a tool for sustainable change in the community. In those 10 years, he's been advocating for urban trails and bicycling in urban communities, emphasizing ridership in communities of color. For Keith, this work often boils down to serving as a translator. "I see myself and others who understand 'equity, diversity and inclusion' really as being translators," Holt said. "You have to translate points of view, vision, and expectations between the way two different groups—for example, an urban community of color and the local bike advocacy organization—interact."

### FORGET THE BOX

"My key lesson learned is to commit to outside-the-box thinking. The 'build it and they will come' mentality works in communities that are already biking. But we cannot continue to utilize the low-hanging fruit philosophy for a new bike facility. Many city bike/ped coordinators are pressured for immediate results. Therefore they mainly install any new bike lanes, especially innovative ones like separated bike lanes, in or near communities already riding in strong numbers. So bike lanes are often not going in communities that could really utilize them, too. But we don't know when that will be successful and it might be too long to wait. So we build it and they will come, but we're ignoring the places that could really benefit. Innovation in this area would be a real game-changer."

### GO FOR A RIDE

"I get the feeling a lot of bike advocates and industry people who are in positions of power or are knowledgeable or visionary, overall, think they know all they need to know. There are folks who just say, 'Black people don't ride bikes.' I often ask, 'How do you know this?' If they use that as a premise, then that becomes the narrative everywhere. How do I navigate that? I try to help people to understand difference and to start thinking differently by going on a bike ride with them. A bike ride is an equalizer. We ride in other communities and I ask them to think, 'OK, you live here.' Think about it: There are no bike lanes, there isn't a bike shop for three miles. I try to tell that story."

### BIKESHARE HAS FORCED THE CONVERSATION

"Because so many bikeshare systems are utilizing so much public money, the conversation of equity has come up loud and consistent. Are we being fair as we spread these stations? Do low-income communities have access, too? These are the same conversations around 'equity, diversity and inclusion' in general that bike advocates over the decades have been neglectful of. Bikeshare has raised the question of biking in those communities, more than anything else in the past. And it's being asked — and things are happening in response — more than ever before."

### BIKE LANES ARE OVERRATED

"The general belief out there is, 'If we just put more bike lanes in communities of color or make sure low-income folks have a voice at the table that's the big key for this.' Honestly, I think that's part of the equation that gets more communities of color or low income communities to bike more. But I know that realistic access to affordable bike ownership and repair will make a huge impact, too. A bike shop either for profit or non profit is a tool for the change everyone seeks. How do we make that happen? How can we make that happen as policy? Bottom line: if there is no bike shop in a neighborhood, it's much more of a challenge for someone to start and continue to biking."

[www.milwaukeebicycleworks.org](http://www.milwaukeebicycleworks.org)





## PROFILE: DOROTHY KIEU LÊ

### RUTGERS UNIVERSITY AND BIKING PUBLIC PROJECT

Dorothy Le's resume is an example of the diverse ways transportation equity takes shape in different settings, from college campuses to city streets to national parks. With a focus on intersecting interests and access for underrepresented populations, Le shares how her work has deepened her understanding and effort to unite social, environmental and bike justice.

#### IDENTIFYING GAPS

“One of my first memories of equity as a concept was when I was in college at the University of California, Los Angeles and learned that pollution and other negative environmental externalities affected low-income communities of color disproportionately. I also noticed that most of the mainstream environmental groups didn't have members who were people of color and that there was a rift between identity-based groups and environmental groups on campus. I wanted to be part of a movement that would be able to address environmental concerns from a lens of marginalized peoples, working with student-of-color organizations and my own ecological group — E3: Ecology, Economy, Equity — I helped develop cross-programming and campaigns which addressed both of our platforms.

My first job out of college was with the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, working on an environmental justice grant through the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), planning bicycle and pedestrian friendly access to six transit stations which served predominantly low-income communities of color. Again, I noticed that even though my work tasks were addressing justice issues, I knew the work could be deeper and more direct. Once one of my interns, Allison Mannos, expressed an interest in working with the Spanish-speaking day laborer cyclists in Los Angeles, I was very much in support of this new initiative and became an active member in the burgeoning organization, City of Lights.”

#### TAKING INSIGHTS INTO NEW TERRITORY

“After LACBC, I attended graduate school for urban planning and specifically chose Rutgers University to obtain a more diverse perspective. Like LA, in New Brunswick I noticed a Latino worker cyclist population riding in unsafe bicycle infrastructure conditions. In New York, I noticed delivery cyclists and non-white cyclists riding, but not being part of the main story that was the success story for cycling. In graduate school, I focused on equity and planning, studying how equitable bicycle infrastruc-

ture was distributed across six cities across the nation and how to create a more equitable bicycle network in New Brunswick.

After graduate school, I took a one-year position with the National Park Service, developing ways to support better infrastructure and programming for urban national park systems, in order to increase access to parks for underserved populations. From my one-year position, I was able to create more equity-focused criteria for project prioritization.”

#### JOINING EXISTING EFFORTS

“During the summer of 2013, I also worked with a group of diverse youth as program coordinator for the Local Spokes Youth Ambassadors Program, which gave me a grounding of the needs of youth in equity discussions. From my observations on New York City cycling, I also got involved with the Biking Public Project (BPP), which aims to expand local cycling advocacy discussions by reaching out to underrepresented bicyclists including women, people of color and delivery cyclists. In just one year, BPP conducted outreach and photography in order to understand and communicate the needs of diverse cyclists in New York City and also published a zine to tell our story and potentially inspire other groups to participate in the broader movement.

Now, I'm the campus bicycle and pedestrian planner for Rutgers University, and in that capacity, I hope to help encourage a more equitable bicycle network in Central New Jersey and beyond. With a range of experiences organizing, advocacy, and planning — in California, New Jersey, and New York — inclusion and fairness have always been and remain a strong and consistent thread in my bike advocacy work and beyond.”



#### THEMES:

ACCESS ALLYSHIP

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY

LICs YOUTH



# BIKING PUBLIC PROJECT

## 'BEYOND THE WHITE GUY' ZINE

### LOCATION:

New York City, NY

### POPULATION SERVED:

Underrepresented bicyclists in New York City including immigrant cyclists, people of color, and delivery cyclists

### HOW IT STARTED:

The Biking Public Project started after the 2011 Youth Bike Summit as a way to increase the representation of diverse cyclists in the bicycle advocacy discussion — to understand who benefits and who loses from bicycle programs and projects and to consider and include those traditionally left out of the conversation. “We created the ‘Beyond the White Guy’ zine as a way to distill what we learned in the first year, in terms of forming an advocacy group and doing effective outreach,” BPP leaders said.

*“Our goal is increasing awareness so that bike organizations incorporate diversity, equity, and access into their missions so we can be a stronger bicycle movement.”*

*—Helen Ho, BPP co-founder*



PHOTO CREDITS: Biking Public Project

## KEY ELEMENTS:

### 1. SPEAKING TO RATHER THAN SPEAKING FOR:

BPP clearly articulated its definition of inclusivity from the start: “Our goal is not to speak for riders who are traditionally excluded from the conversation. Instead our goal is to encourage all riders, regardless of age, race, gender or cycling ability, to let their voices be heard.”

**2. USING NEW ENGAGEMENT TOOLS:** One of BPP first projects was capturing portraits of bicyclists in Jackson Heights, a diverse area of Queens where more than 160 languages are spoken. “Bike Portraits are a great way to engage bicyclists who are new to the concept of advocacy,” BPP found. “It slows down the interaction with the subject and creates an environment where people are more responsive to have open and meaningful conversations.” The resulting images “served the dual purpose of encouraging invisible cyclists to advocate for their say in the future of their streets and reminding the public that the city’s biking population is diverse and largely ignored.”

### 3. UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS OF POWER:

During the portrait project and at community events, BPP gathered data from people who bike, asking questions like: Why do you ride? Is there anything on the streets that you bike now that you would change? Do you feel you have the power to change those problems? The surveys found that, in 62% of participants’ households English was not the primary language spoken and 49% of respondents said they did not feel they had decision-making power in their community.

### 4. LEVERAGING EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

**THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS:** For BPP, one of the most important lessons learned was the critical importance of partnerships. “Forming partnerships with diverse stakeholders allows for cross-pollination of ideas, resources, and reach,” BPP leaders said. “Groups with similar missions can serve as mentors, sounding boards, and support networks for new groups like BPP. Partners

can also provide funding and fiscal sponsors, expand one’s reach, and open doors to new opportunities. Reach out and work with partners already doing equity work and try and find projects to work on together. Make an effort to identify shared values and high-level goals between your group and other groups working on transportation planning, public health, and urban planning.” Currently, BPP is in the planning stages of an academic partnership to conduct participatory action research with delivery cyclists.

**5. SHARING WHAT THEY LEARNED:** In 2014, BPP published a zine—Beyond the White Guy—to share their story, survey data and lessons learned. While provocative “the title is a great conversation starter with people,” said BPP co-founder Helen Ho. “It clicks right away with folks that have been thinking about these issues already and we had quite a few conversations at the National Bike Summit about how our goal is expand the bike movement, not outcast those that are already in it. White guys are very important allies to expanding the bike advocacy conversation.” To reach a wider audience, the zine was translated into Spanish and, in addition to promotion through bike networks and social media, BPP joined other groups’ events like 596 Acres zine party and a Streetfilms benefit.

**LEARN MORE:** [bikingpublicproject.tumblr.com](http://bikingpublicproject.tumblr.com)







# DES MOINES BIKE COLLECTIVE



## THEMES:

ACCESS ALLYSHIP LICs

## LIGHT DISTRIBUTION

### LOCATION:

Des Moines, Iowa

### POPULATION SERVED:

Predominantly low-income residents

## HOW IT STARTED:

Serving Des Moines, the Bike Collective opened in 2008 as a downtown community bike project. Three years ago, the Collective received a grant that enabled them to purchase bike lights at a deep discount thanks to Planet Bike. Carl Voss, one of the organization's founders, said the Collective's "Light Brigade" handed out 300 lights its first year.

## KEY ELEMENTS:

- 1. TARGETED IMPACT:** "One of the first stops we made was at a local YMCA in a residential area of the city during night hours," Voss said. "There are a lot of riders going to jobs at fast food restaurants and other service jobs that lived in the area. Some people call them 'shadow riders'—people who ride down alleys and try not to attract attention and don't have any lights on their bikes. But people are genuinely thankful for the free lights. We actually had a couple people who tried to pay us. At first they think there's a catch—'What do you mean the lights are free?' 'Well, we care about you and we want to give you these lights so you get home safely.' 'Seriously?'"
- 2. BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER:** "We know that bicycles are the primary mode of transportation for many people," he added. "Bicycling is not a choice for some. However the non-biking public often see the people who do bike by choice. And for riders that are strictly recreational or fitness riders, this work gets them in touch with another part of the bike community. I think that's key to be aware of other people that make up biking. For some, there's probably not a reason that you would otherwise interact with some of these riders. This is all part of being a complete advocacy group."
- 3. MAKE IT A PRIORITY:** "Instead of going on a 30-mile ride after work, make it 15 and stop early and give away a few lights and put a smile on people's faces."

**LEARN MORE:** [www.dsmbikecollective.org](http://www.dsmbikecollective.org)

PHOTO CREDIT: Des Moines Bike Collective



## PROFILE: SAMANTHA OLLINGER

FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BIKE SD (SAN DIEGO)

Samantha Ollinger is the founder of BikeSD, Inc, a non-profit cycling advocacy organization whose mission is to transform San Diego's streetscape to be a world-class bicycle friendly city. As the Executive Director, Ollinger sees San Diego exemplifying the ideal urban city that civic leaders around the world can only aspire to. An immigrant to the U.S. from India and a graduate of Temple University with a Business Administration degree with a focus on Accounting, Ollinger evaluates the movement around livability through a financial lens.

### WHAT DREW YOU TO BICYCLE ADVOCACY?

"I was inspired seeing a plaque dedicated to Sue Ann Miller on a bike path in West Virginia during my cross-country bike trip. Realizing that women had a place was inspiring to me because that was when I committed to joining the movement in some capacity. My intention was to be in a supportive role, but lack of good leadership locally made me a reluctant leader. Gender equity plays a huge role in how I approach my work, because I believe women leaders have a valuable contribution to the dialogue. Racial and ethnic equity plays a secondary role. It would be on par with gender, but since discussions on race are so fraught, I don't feel empowered to tackle this subject from an organizational perspective without significant resources, backing and support. An anthropology undergrad class that discussed sociological equity issues has framed how I personally look at inequities in society. I live in a low-income community by choice because I feel I can use my privilege and skills to empower my community and neighbors. So for me, education about the issues was key especially since an immigrant from a fairly privileged background in India, I was very surprised at so much inequity in the U.S.

### WHAT DOES BIKE EQUITY MEAN IN YOUR WORK?

"Parity in resources, access, respect, policy success."

### HOW HAVE YOU COLLABORATED AND BUILT COALITION WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS OR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS?

"From the very beginning of BikeSD's launch as an organization, we've proactively committed to working with coalitions and organizations specifically focused on equity issues. Our partnerships with coalitions like the Community Budget Alliance are even stronger than our partnerships with like-minded organizations (bike/walk) locally."

### WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED IN YOUR WORK (AS RELATES TO EQUITY)?

"Our challenges have been specific within the bike/walk movement primarily in that there isn't a focused approach or even recognition broadly speaking that inequity is a concern worth addressing. This is also reflected within the leadership of local advocacy organizations — for example, in San Diego, I'm the only person of color who is leading a advocacy organization focused on biking. So meetings discussing racial disparities can be challenging as both my experiences and realities do not compare with my colleagues' experiences."

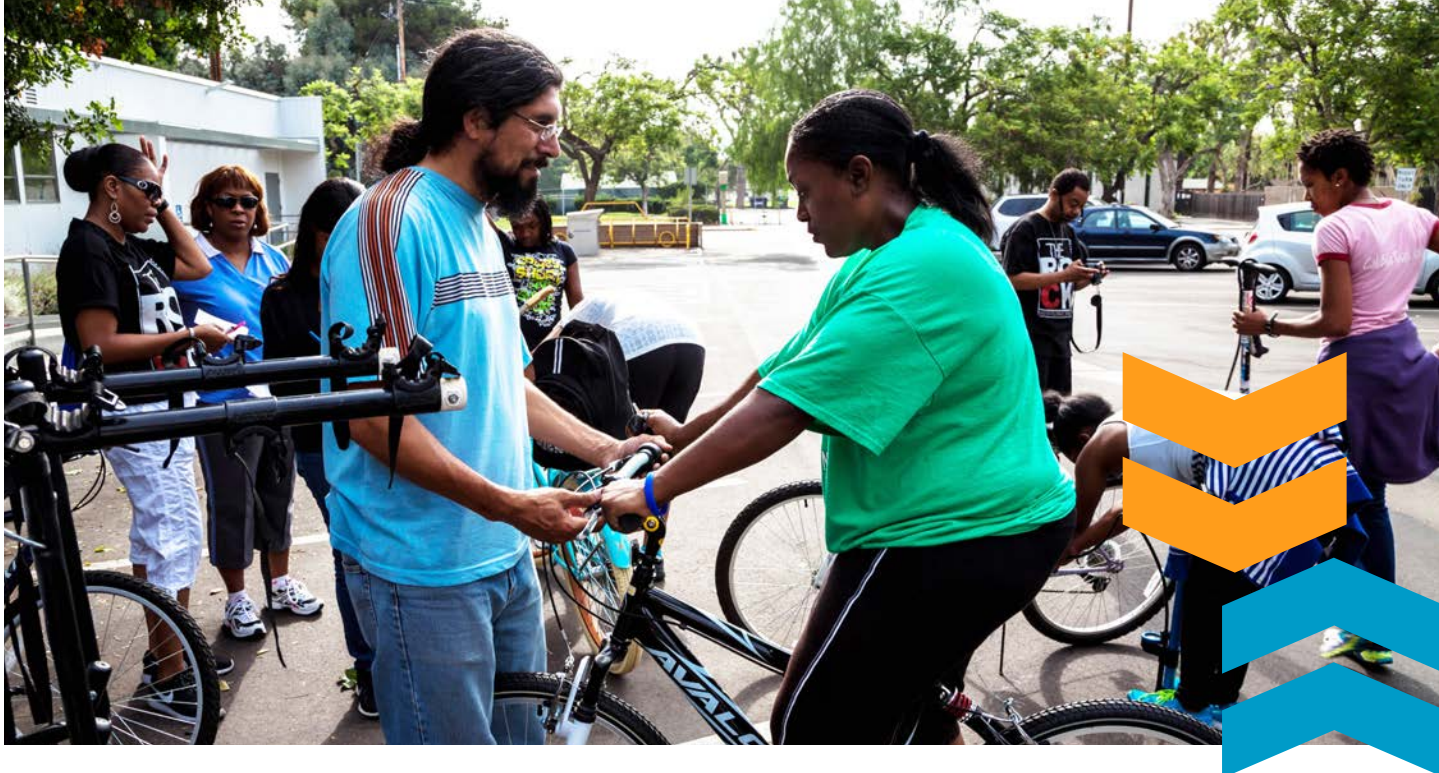
### WHAT ARE SOME LESSONS LEARNED (AS RELATES TO EQUITY)?

"The issue is a figurative minefield. But the network I met last week [at the League's Future Bike gathering], makes me feel comfortable to address the issues mentioned above because proactively addressing it is much more important than passively acknowledging it. I'm inspired by Cascade Bicycle Club [see page 24] to create a leadership position within our organization that focuses on diversity and culture, and I'm confident that the bike movement can be a model for change that society at large can learn from."

### ADVICE FOR OTHER BIKE ADVOCATES?

"Don't let a lack of technical or contemporary or even contextual historical knowledge prevent you from getting involved. Not everyone needs to know everything, but there are different ways of plugging in and getting involved to advance equity in our work. While being unaware of the challenges is inevitable from focusing on equity, I'd urge an open mind as challenges to long held beliefs allow for growth and creation of new ideas and avenues for collaboration."





# BIKE TO CHURCH DAY

## LOCATION:

Long Beach, Calif., and beyond

## POPULATION SERVED:

People of faith, particularly in the African-American community

## THEMES:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY HEALTH

IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY

## HOW IT STARTED:

Elizabeth Williams, a Long Beach native, has been advocating for bicycling for years, in addition to running her own bike touring company, Cali Bike Tours. She also used to ride her bike to church on most Sundays. In doing so, a question emerged: what would it be like to get the congregation riding to church on two wheels? Bike to Church Day was the result.

## KEY ELEMENTS:

### 1. OPPORTUNITIES ARE EVERYWHERE:

“Unfortunately, many churches in communities of color, particularly those in the Black community, have a higher rate of health issues,” Williams said. “I thought if I could get more people to ride to church, it would hopefully be a kickstart to get them to ride regularly and promote healthier lifestyles.”

**2. FIND PARTNERS:** Williams was able to connect with a local minister, and the rest is history: 45 people joined the group ride to the church, with riders ranging in age from 2 to 78 years old. “At the end of the service, the

minister talked about the importance of focusing on healthy living and how a bike can be used as a tool to help achieve this goal,” Williams said.

**3. LOOK AHEAD:** Williams hopes to spread the event to churches around Long Beach and beyond. “Most of the people riding with us hadn’t been on a bike in decades, since they were kids,” she said. “It was really good to see mothers and fathers and their kids riding, and doing it together.”

PHOTO CREDIT: Danny Gamboa





## PROFILE: **ELIZABETH WILLIAMS** FOUNDER AND CEO OF CALI BIKE TOURS

Elizabeth Williams, a native of Long Beach, California, has been advocating for bicycling for years. She also started a bike touring company, Cali Bike Tours, to showcase bicycling in Long Beach.. She recently started a grassroots bike advocacy project, Empact Long Beach, seeking to create an inclusive bike community in Long Beach.

### ASK FOR COMPENSATION FOR YOUR WORK

“I started a bike touring company and from that business I was exposed to a broader view of the bike community. The more involved I got, the more I started to see the inequities in the city related to biking and active transportation. It made me want to do something about it. With that, I started attending lots of meetings related to active transportation, and I wasn’t being paid for any of it. One lesson is that I cannot afford to work for free, and the bike movement cannot afford to have advocates working for free. As advocates, we need to put a monetary value on our work and require others to respect that. We should find, reach out to and support organizations that already see our value and fund our work. I’m confident that the more we value our work, more organizations will start seeing our value and provide more funding to move our work forward.”

### THE CITY WASN’T BUILT IN A DAY

“You must be committed. It can take a long time to see any progress in active transportation. Just because a community has no real bike infrastructure or doesn’t have anyone saying ‘Hey, we want this!’, does not mean that the community shouldn’t benefit from new bike infrastructure and the city’s resources shouldn’t be invested there. If the city isn’t doing much around targeted community engagement and encouragement, these communities probably won’t show up to participate. And if they don’t show up, the city thinks they don’t care about having bike infrastructure in their neighborhoods. And then the city goes forward with their plans to not include new bike infrastructure or provide limited infrastructure or installs it in locations the communities doesn’t use. There is a lot of work to be done in active transportation and you might not see results immediately.”

### WALK THE WALK

“It can be difficult dealing with organizations that have been historically lacking in diversity and helping them understand that equity should be a focus in their work if they want the com-

munity to grow as a whole. With organizations that have been historically white, it can be a challenge getting them to respect our work around equity and understand that they can be a part of the process and solution — but their organizations need to reflect what they say they believe by showing diversity on their boards and staff members. Some organizations will receive funding for projects — some of which requires them to work in underserved communities — and the organization goes into neighborhoods with someone who does not connect with or reflect the community at all. Some of these organizations say they support equity and they want to help create healthy, vibrant communities, but if you look at their staff and board, they are all or mostly white men and there is no real diversity. In these organizations, there are not many women, there are no people of color or the ones they do have do not hold any decision making roles. That, to me, says you’re not serious about equity. What you’re doing is making as much money as possible and not truly serving the community and this, unfortunately, has been the pattern historically. This type of behavior is no longer acceptable. I like to call people and ask how many people of color are on their board and on their staff. If you don’t have anyone, that’s a problem for me. If you’re working on it, I can work with you. If you’re serious about this work, you need to show it.”

### COUNTLESS OPPORTUNITIES

“In Long Beach there aren’t many people of color involved in this work, but particularly black people and black women. I think that’s a major problem for black communities because if we want to reach out to these groups of people and no one represents them, how do we expect them to respond positively? It’s an opportunity to train advocates and engage diverse communities and get them involved in creating healthy and safer communities. I think there is a lot of opportunity out there if we can connect people.”



## PROFILE: STEPHEN ZAVESTOSKI

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF  
SOCIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

For Professor Stephen Zavestoski, bike equity is a door to so much more: “It’s an access point into the much larger challenge of creating equitable and just cities for a sustainable future.” Zavestoski runs a class at the University of San Francisco that brings together students in his class with low-income high school students in the city, and in its most recent iteration, focused on bike education, with repair lessons and safety instruction, in addition to riding around the city together. In addition to his work at the university, Zavestoski runs a blog about bike equity issues, called *Invisible Cyclist*, which is a compilation of research on these issues. He’s also the co-editor of *Incomplete Streets*, a new book that takes a critical look at Complete Streets planning.

### SUSTAINABLE FOR WHOM?

“I come to the topic out of a concern for the ways in which city planners, policymakers, and in some cases the public, embrace and pursue sustainability without looking critically at equity issues. Whether urban agriculture, green buildings, ‘smart’ city technology, or bike lanes, we should always be asking ‘sustainable for whom?’ I also happen to be trained as a sociologist, so my perspective on the world is often shaped by a sensitivity to difference and an attempt to understand underlying causes of difference, inequality, and injustice. So it is humbling when despite this sensitivity, my own privilege (as a middle-class, white male) still produces considerable blind spots. For example, as a lifelong bike commuter, it was not until the last several years that I began to “see” the invisible cyclists all around me—minimum wage workers on bikes riding home from dishwashing and other restaurant jobs late at night, people of color in other parts of the city than the gentrifying bike-friendly corridors I was used to riding, and day laborers’ bikes locked up on the sidewalk in front of Home Depot.”

### SIMPLY LISTENING

“As an academic very new to this topic, I’m still getting a feel for the issues, challenges and approaches that the bicycle advocacy movement is facing. With Julian Agyeman, I blog about bike equity issues at *Invisible Cyclist* and we’ve compiled some fascinating research on equity issues around streets and “Complete Streets” planning in our book. As an academic, I am coming at bike equity issues with an interest in identifying the gaps in our understanding about who bikes and why. I’m trying to engage with the people already doing this kind of research so that I can see where my knowledge and skills might best be applied. Sometimes that means simply listening. One collaboration I’m hoping to continue is a project with Upward Bound. My university hosts

the Upward Bound Project which is aimed at preparing students from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed in college. In 2013, a group of students in my Environmental Studies Senior Capstone Seminar organized an ‘Urban Bike Education’ course for the high school students in the Upward Bound Program. They integrated a bit of formal academic content with some bike repair and bike safety skills. Mostly, it was an opportunity for aspiring high school students to socialize with college students over some bike rides and lessons about urban bicycling.”

### A HOLISTIC APPROACH IS THE WAY FORWARD

“We need to be conscientious of the bigger picture. If lower-income people, because of housing market dynamics, are forced to live great distances from their places of work, the bicycle will never be a viable transportation choice. We can work to connect poorer neighborhoods to public transit nodes with bike infrastructure, but perhaps the movement also needs to ally with affordable housing, labor, and other movements to develop a more holistic approach to equitable, livable and sustainable cities. We have policies in San Francisco that require new construction to include bicycle parking. There are also policies requiring employers, under certain circumstances, to provide indoor bicycle storage and showering/changing facilities. But the way these policies tend to be written, only companies employing white collar employees are forced to comply. In some ways that’s understandable. Small restaurants and other small businesses that might have a more diverse workforce can’t afford expensive retrofits of their facilities. But that’s precisely where we need to be more creative about engage our communities in problem solving and policymaking.”

<http://invisiblecyclist.com>



## PROFILE: BRIAN DRAYTON

### FOUNDER, RICHMOND SPOKES

Growing up in Baltimore, Brian Drayton was a bike entrepreneur before he hit high school. “As a pre-teen, I realized on bulk trash day that people were throwing out bikes all over the city,” he recalled. “I could roll around and I probably had 40 different bikes when I realized I could take them all apart—and make new bikes from the old ones. So, at 13, I basically created my own build-a-bike program. People started buying them from me. I was the \$15-bike dude in my neighborhood.” Meanwhile, the middle-class black neighborhood where his family lived fell into decline, struggling with drugs, crimes and affordable housing. Drayton learned quickly the value of mobility. “The bike became synonymous with escape,” he recalled. “I could ride to anywhere on it.” Decades later, through the Spokes model he developed, Drayton now works to provide that same mobility and opportunity through bicycling to youth in Richmond, California, and low-income communities nationwide.

#### “WHY REINVENT THE WHEEL, WHEN YOU CAN TIGHTEN THE SPOKES”

Outside of San Francisco, in Richmond, Drayton has become the go-to resource and catalyst for an area that lacked bicycling resources. “There was no bike culture,” he said. There wasn’t a single bike shop, either. So he established Richmond Spokes, an effort that goes beyond fixing up and giving away bikes to creating a new economy with bicycling at the hub. The Spokes vision: “We believe that youth entrepreneurs are capable of creating businesses, opportunities for personal growth, advocacy and local and global stewardship for themselves and their community. Through Spokes, youth gain access to mentors, green jobs, mobility, accountability, and community partnerships... Through immersion in the cycling culture, innovative internships and exchange programs Spokes exposes youth and their communities to the local and international cycling industry opening doors and developing replicable and transferable business models.”

#### CONNECTING PLANNING TO COMMUNITY

Beyond the work with Richmond Spokes, Drayton pushed local officials to connect to the community by conceiving and piloting a series of Reality Rides. These rides bridged the gap between officials and local road users, allowing riders to assess existing and proposed bike routes, while also documenting safety, accessibility and road hazards. “These became key because the bike-ped advisory committee [BPAC] was doing all this planning at conference tables with no local investment whatsoever,” Drayton said. “When I joined the BPAC they would say, ‘Well, we should put bike lanes on this street,’ and I’d say, ‘I would never take my daughter on that street.’ That conversation led to a series of rides that were very helpful to them.”

#### CREATING A MODEL FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES

While Drayton set out to create “a homegrown bike organization in Richmond,” his youth and community development model quickly gained interest from other communities. While calling attention to bike shop deserts and lack of investment from traditional bike organizations and the industry in communities of color, Drayton has pioneered new ideas to provide both jobs and affordable biking to disinvested neighborhoods. His “scalable model” revolves around portable, pop-up shops that contain all the resources to get a community rolling. “Imagine getting a container stocked with everything you need for a bike shop,” he explained. “Picture the hardest-case neighborhood in Detroit; one with a couple of gardens and a bunch of bombed-out houses. What if you could rally enough support to do a pop-up bike shop for that community, where they would set up and run it on their own terms?”

#### ADDRESSING QUALITY AND COST ISSUES

For many people of color, the only place to purchase a bike is a big-box retailer that stocks lower-end bicycles that quickly break and, without access to mechanic services, end up dumped on the curb or left in the garage. Rather than continuing the cycle of consumption, Drayton sees the solution in up-cycling the resources that already exist. “We need to empower people with the bikes that are already here,” he said. “The only way that happens is through community bike shops.”

<https://sites.google.com/a/richmondspokes.org/about>



**THEMES:**

COMMUNITY HEALTH

IDENTITY ROOTED IN HISTORY

MEDIA

# RIDE IN LIVING COLOR

**DOCUMENTARY FILM****LOCATION:**

National

**POPULATION SERVED:**

African Americans

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**HOW IT STARTED:**

“Fifteen years ago, I was transformed,” said Yolanda Davis-Overstreet. “After doing the AIDS Ride in 1996, my life changed. After that ride, I no longer just rode a bike; I understood what it meant to move on two wheels and experience the space and communities around me. It became my mission to find ways to incorporate this lifestyle and ways of thinking about biking within my family and beyond. *RIDE: In Living Color*, my first documentary, tells the stories of African American cyclists within diverse communities in California and beyond.”

## KEY ELEMENTS:

### 1. CONNECTING CYCLING AND COMMUNITY

**ISSUES:** “My personal journey in initiating the documentation of *RIDE In Living Color* was to ignite hope and show how something as simple as riding a bike has and can play an instrumental role in helping a culture—African Americans in this story’s case—to stand up against adversity and inequities, including obesity, chronic diseases, emotional stressors, and racial injustice on many levels.”

### 2. EMBRACING THE POWER OF STORYTELLING:

Over years of documentation, Davis-Overstreet has interviewed Olympians (Nelson Vails, Karla Bland), civil rights activists (Angela Davis), historians (including Andrew Ritchie, biographer of African American competitive cyclist Major Taylor), a wide range of community advocates (including Tafari Bayne of CicLAvia, John Jones III of the East Side Riders, Adrian Lipscombe, co-founder of the Major Taylor Cycling Club in Austin, Texas) and scores of individual riders. “I too have been educated and enlightened with real stories on how cyclists are changing their lives for the better,” Davis-Overstreet said. “The individuals I’ve met on this journey have demonstrated how, when I experience the world beyond myself, change does happen.”

**3. TAKING RISKS:** “When I stepped out on the limb to advocate for and document RIDE, it was with no budget, public questioning and doubts about the viability of the topic. ‘African Americans and bikes’

was not a hot topic at the time, and I heard some fear-based responses that RIDE might lead to more racial divides and racial tension. I had to follow my heart, and the passion inspired by my personal biking experiences to come to this realization that how we live and move in public space really does matter as it relates to humane existence and fair treatment.”

**4. THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORSHIP:** “Over the past three years, I have personally been mentored or had meaningful dialogue with a wide range of equity change agents. That insight and those ah-ha moments have led me to follow as close as I can in their footsteps, rallying for just and healthy solutions that will lead to a more sustainable and renewed communities.”

**5. FINDING COMMON GROUND:** “In the end, though, it is my intention that this film’s message will offer more insight into our commonalities than our differences. My journey has shown me that the bike is being utilized as a tool to help us find our own internal happiness and can be used as a vehicle for change in any community.”

**LEARN MORE:** <http://rideinlivingcolorfilm.com>

*“Who would have thought a bike would be the tool used to roll-out the message that change must take place now in our neighborhoods and communities-at-large —sharing a message about a means of getting around and to diversify the ways we meaningfully interact with each other. This blows me away daily!”*  
—Yolanda Davis-Overstreet



# PHOTO GALLERIES

Recognizing that predominant images associated with biking often show a very narrow segment of the bicycling population, many groups are mobilizing to ensure diverse population see themselves represented as members of the bike community. Here are just a few of such efforts that are creating more inclusive visual representations of who's riding.

**THEMES:** **MEDIA**



## BLACK GIRLS DO BIKE

Urging women of all ages and abilities that they, too, can inspire more black girls to bike, Monica Garrison has collected images from across the country in BGDB's Gallery.

<http://www.blackgirlsdobike.com>

## COMMUNITY CYCLING CENTER

With a grant from Kaiser Permanente, the Community Cycling Center created an "I Ride" poster campaign featuring bicyclists from different areas of the community. The premise: "Health behavior research shows that the more people see individuals like themselves engaging in healthy activities, the more likely they are to try and adopt those behaviors."

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/communitycyclingcenter/sets/72157627047439921/>

## BIKING PUBLIC PROJECT

To engage the community and shine a light on overlooked bicyclists, New York City's Biking Public Project created a mobile gallery of portrait posters.

[https://www.facebook.com/BikingPublicProject/photos\\_stream?tab=photos\\_stream](https://www.facebook.com/BikingPublicProject/photos_stream?tab=photos_stream)

## BIKENYC PORTRAIT PROJECT

To show the spectrum of riders in New York City, Dmitry Gudkov photographed bicyclists of all ages and purposes for his Bike NYC portrait project.

<http://gudphoto.com/bikenyc/>

## PEDAL LOVE

Led by Melissa Balmer, Pedal Love has cultivated galleries of professionally photographed women on bikes, showcasing both the style and diversity of female riders.

[www.pedallove.org/lisa-beth-anderson-photo-gallery/](http://www.pedallove.org/lisa-beth-anderson-photo-gallery/)

## ALLIANCE FOR BIKING & WALKING PHOTO LIBRARY

Recognizing the lack of images of women and people of color, the Alliance included Equity and Women categories in its 2011 photo contest, and shares submitted images with other advocates.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/thunderbeadalliance/sets/72157634110838170/>





# NETWORKS

Many community bike activists come together online and at annual conferences as part of knowledge-sharing networks.

## THEMES:

ACCESS

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



## YOUTH BIKE SUMMIT

In 2010, youth advocates from Recycle-A-Bicycle attending the National Bike Summit noticed that they were the only young people and among the only people of color in the room. With support from adult staff, they organized the first Youth Bike Summit as a response. YBS held its fourth annual conference in February 2014, and it annually connects earn-a-bike programs, community bike shops, and other bike projects focused on raising youth voices.

<http://youthbikesummit.org/>

## BIKE COLLECTIVES NETWORK

Around the world, people inspired by popular education and resource sharing have founded autonomous bike repair workshops of every shape and size. These projects emphasize the value of reuse and cooperative ownership, and, as the most affordable place to fix a bike, they often serve individuals who use bikes out of economic necessity. On their email listserv, the Think Tank, new organizers have the opportunity to learn from seasoned coordinators and get the word out about community bike events.

<http://www.bikecollectives.org/>

## BIKE EQUITY NETWORK

This email listserv is administered by the Equity Initiative at the League. Started in December 2013, it is a resource for bike advocates and professionals who work toward equity, diversity, and inclusion in bicycling. Topics regularly covered include coverage of bicycling in the media, opportunities to connect with other transportation equity dialogues, and bike jobs.

<http://bikeleague.org/equity>

## WHEELWOMEN SWITCHBOARD

Started in 2013, this is an online message board where women bike enthusiasts can post questions and advertise events and other projects.

<https://wheelwomen.switchboardbq.com/>



## PROFILE: MELISSA LUGO

### VELOPASO

A founding member of the VeloPaso Bicycle-Pedestrian Coalition, Melissa Lugo has been at the forefront of advocating for bike-friendly infrastructure in predominantly Hispanic communities in El Paso, TX. Throughout the city, which is approximately 80% Hispanic, very limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure exists and Lugo has led VeloPaso in not only organizing public awareness campaigns to encourage biking, walking, and mass transit, but also pushing for inclusive citywide planning.

#### WHAT BIKE EQUITY MEANS

For Lugo, bike equity isn't just about demographics, but the balance of power on the roads and in the decisionmaking process. Her bike equity vision is three-fold: "Bicyclists are given equal priority of road use as motorized vehicles; cyclists along with all road users are part of a transparent city planning process; and bicyclists are represented at the city council level."

#### SHIFTING PRIORITIES

"In El Paso those not transporting in a motor vehicle are treated like third-class citizens," she says. "We have been working fervently to create awareness and to change the paradigm. Our coalition encompasses ALL vulnerable road users—mainly pedestrians and cyclists. The current built environment has been designed with motor vehicles as the first priority. Sidewalks and bike lanes start and stop without rhyme or reason. There exists no concern for anyone not driving a 2,000-pound motorized metal box." Lugo is pushing for a shift in that paradigm: "Our streets should be designed to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation users and motorized vehicles in that order [and] bicycles should be accessible to everyone regardless of income."

#### IGNORANCE RATHER THAN INTENT

"West Texas has a long way to go [when it comes to bike equity]," she said. "Geographically and economically we are far away from state concern for funding. The 'Car is King' mentality expressed

by our state Department of Transportation district engineer is about 40 years behind schedule. The lack of transport equality is not just that of discrimination but also shortsightedness and misinformation. What I've found works for me is sharing personal experiences as to how riding a bicycle empowers me and others to become active in our community."

#### AWARENESS ISN'T ENOUGH

"The more awareness created, the better equipped elected officials are to make better decisions for ALL road users. As an organization VeloPaso connects with city officials in person, by email to voice growing concerns for equal access to safer roads and supporting accessible, multimodal, bicycle transportation... [But] we cannot just *educate* ourselves to safer, more bicycle-friendly streets. We need *action* to change the built environment to accommodate all road users."

#### UNRAVELING A LIE

"Our fight is the good fight. What we do as bicycle advocates is extremely important. Our dependence on auto transport, even for the most menial tasks has been fabricated and adhered to by developers, auto manufacturers and energy suppliers. Open up the eyes of the soul and find the truth."

<http://www.velopaso.org/>



Recognizing that predominant images associated with biking often show a very narrow segment of the bicycling population, many groups are mobilizing to ensure diverse population see themselves represented as members of the bike community. Here are just a few such efforts that are creating more inclusive visual representations of who's riding.

#### **THEMES:**

**ACCESS** **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

### **BETTER BLOCKS**

Active Transportation Alliance in Chicago hosts free “Better Blocks” workshops in communities across the city. With the aim of making the block a safer and more active place, the workshops spur neighborhood discussion of speeding motorists, dangerous intersections, and broken sidewalks.

<http://www.activetrans.org/betterblocks>

### **EAST OF THE RIVER**

An initiative of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, the East of the River program works in D.C.'s predominantly African-American wards 7 and 8. The program is aimed to support the existing ridership in these neighborhoods, in addition to encouraging new riders.

<http://www.waba.org/programs/east-of-the-river/>

### **CITY OF CAMBRIDGE'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

These city staff connect underserved Cambridge families to community events and resources. This has included a partnership with the Food and Fitness Policy Council to conduct focus groups in the fall of 2013 with immigrant and African-American residents. The project resulted in a report on cultural considerations for physical activity that could be used to develop workshops and trainings serving community-identified needs.

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programs-foradults/communityengagementteam.aspx>



# REFLECTION AND ORAL HISTORY

Reflecting on our community helps us understand who is included in the bike movement. A few projects have focused on learning more about the history of bicycle culture and defining it as a group process.

## THE LOS ANGELES BIKE MOVEMENT HISTORY TIMELINE

In 2013, about 50 people who had been active in shaping L.A.'s bike movement came together for a meeting at the Los Angeles Eco-Village, long a gathering space for bike activists in Koreatown. With facilitation from Ron Milam, one of the co-founders of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, the group told the story of how Critical Mass, LACBC, Midnight Ridazz, the Bicycle Kitchen, CicLAvia, and other L.A. bike institutions came to be. They also contributed to a timeline that was later posted online.

[labikemvmt.org](http://labikemvmt.org)

## DINNER & BIKES

For years, journalist/publisher Elly Blue and filmmaker/publisher Joe Biel have traveled the United States following a simple model: a local institution hosts, vegan chef Joshua Ploeg cooks, assembled visitors eat, and Elly and Joe share their work, followed by questions and discussion. Elly has shared stories from these travels in her books *Everyday Bicycling* (2012) and *Bikenomics* (2013), and Joe's film on bike movement history in Portland is *Aftermass: Bicycling in a Post-Critical Mass Portland*.

<http://dinnerandbikes.com>

<http://takingthelane.com>

<http://microcosmpublishing.com>

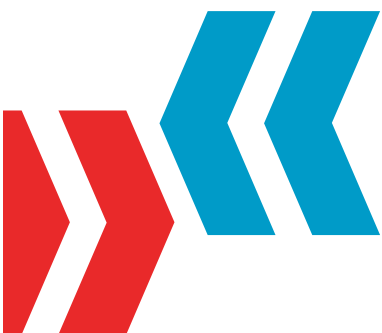
## BICICULTURES

A "bike culture" can develop anywhere that a group of bike users shares vocabularies, styles, and ways of riding. There is no one bike culture. But to outsiders, bike cultures can seem exclusive, especially if there's some version of bicycling that seems more "normal" than others. For this reason, a group of academics has been emphasizing the diversity of bike cultures through the Bicultures project since 2010. This network of graduate students and professors investigate what knowledge we can gain about the world through studying bicycle users and how they spend time together. Many of the authors featured in the "Studying Bike People" section of this resource belong to the Bicultures email list-serve, or attended the Bicultures Roadshow that included events in Los Angeles and Davis, California in 2013. Most Biculturistas use qualitative research methods such as interviews and participant-observation, which are common in the disciplines of anthropology, geography, sociology, and cultural studies. Researchers like this are a great resource for meaningful community engagement.

[www.bicultures.org](http://www.bicultures.org)



PHOTO CREDIT: Dinner and Bikes



# CONCLUSION

What can we learn from the existing efforts to grow an equitable bike movement?

These are some common themes that our interviewees shared in their work to build shared bicycle visions that meet the needs of the whole community:

- » Invite new input
- » Learn about the lived experiences people have of their streets
- » Acknowledge community expertise by listening and trusting
- » Create a shared language
- » Identify gaps in data and address them
- » Put relationships first
- » Find new opportunities for inclusion in designing programs and campaigns
- » Be honest about the challenges of cross-cultural work
- » Respect existing transportation values
- » Be curious about different meanings of bicycling
- » Find out why people do or don't ride
- » Validate the connections that community members see between bikes and other issues
- » Invest real resources
- » Stay open to new outcomes
- » Multimodal perspectives are key
- » Celebrate diverse bike cultures
- » Move forward together

What lessons have you learned? Join the Bike Equity Network to share your work and ideas to further this conversation.

And find more, get engaged, and stay tuned for additional reports and toolkit at [bikeleague.org/equity](https://bikeleague.org/equity).



Learn more and find  
additional resources at

**[WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG/EQUITY](http://WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG/EQUITY)**

Join our effort to build a Bicycle Friendly America  
for everyone: *[bikeleague.org/join](http://bikeleague.org/join)*