



The National News

A publication of Trips for Kids

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Trips for Kids Chapters

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Trips for Kids Helps Youth Turn the Corner

TFK knows that mountain biking can be a powerful tool to build self esteem, encourage teamwork, and offer a sense of accomplishment on trail that can change lives off trail. While we have always believed that the work we do is important, this story from one of our volunteers offers proof positive!

While on a ride on Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County, California, a TFK volunteer, David Klinger, ran into two "tough, streetwise" Latino teenagers. David noticed that one of them had many tattoos, the markings of having been a member of a gang, and what looked like cigarette burns on his body. On talking to them the youth said that he had been into a "heavy" scene; he even had scars all over his back as proof. The young man went on to mention that he would be "dead by now" were it not for this group called Trips for Kids. He had been on one of our rides a couple years ago and said it had made a big difference in his life to discover a viable alternative and to know that there are people who care. That day he had brought a friend with him to share his new-found love of mountain biking. All we could say was WOW...TFK's work really does make a difference!

Trips for Kids National is a non-profit organization that provides the instructions, organizing guidelines, and inspiration for individuals and groups to successfully start a Trips for Kids Chapter in their community. Based on the Trips for Kids Model Program in Marin County, California, we provide **mountain bike outings** and **environmental education** for kids that would not otherwise be exposed to these types of activities. Our goal is to combine lessons in **personal responsibility, achievement, and environmental awareness** through the development of **practical skills and the simple act of having fun**. Trips for Kids Marin was founded in 1988 by director Marilyn Price. The Trips for Kids National program was initiated in 1999 and now supports the dedicated work of 39 chapters across North America.

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www.tripsforkids.org

TFK Chapters: So Many Different Shapes and Sizes

Don't take it from us. Find out what the kids have to say about TFK rides...

"I learned that you sort of have to try stuff that you've never done before...I liked just being able to come out here and have a great experience," – Max, age 13 Seattle, WA

After the first long down hill, John says *"This is great! I've always dreamed of doing this, but I never had the chance until now."* – age 19, from an assistance program for homeless youth, Denver, CO

"I liked listening in the woods. I could hear the wind, which you can't hear at home." – Alicia, age 16, Detroit, MI

"We made it to the top! And I still can't believe that I did it!" – Angela, age 14, Oakland, CA

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While some Trips for Kids chapters are started by an individual as did TFK founder Marilyn Price, other chapters have been started by organizations like the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Boys Scouts of America. Still more have evolved out of public and private agencies committed to serving under-privileged youth such as charter schools, public health agencies, non-profit organizations, and bike clubs. If you volunteer or work for a bike club, agency, school or other organization, read on to find out how Trips for Kids has become a fantastic and fun component of the programs below. Consider starting a chapter in your own organization or community!

Mountain bike club: TFK SORBA is run by the Gainesville Southern Off Road Bicycle Association. The chapter has been operating since 1999 and works primarily with after-school programs in the Gainesville, GA area. Currently the only TFK chapter run by a mountain bike club, TFK SORBA has an enthusiastic crew of committed volunteer mountain bikers who ensure that local kids get to experience the outdoors from the seat of a bike, participate in races and engage with the larger bike community in the Gainesville region.

Non-profit youth organization: TFK Dunkirk is a program of the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Chautauqua County in Dunkirk, New York. The club's mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. Their TFK chapter is one of many in house activities that attract and hold youth to the Club and teach the tools needed to build positive lives, attitudes, and behavior. TFK Dunkirk takes youth on 4 to 5 co-ed rides each week throughout the summer months to enjoy the wonders along the shores of Lake Erie.

Volunteer program: TFK Seattle was founded in 2002 by Kat Sweet, inspired by her own career in mountain bike racing and outdoor sports. Mountain biking excursions form the foundation of the program, providing the perfect opportunity to combine physical activity with lessons in personal responsibility, achievement and environmental awareness. TFK Seattle is also developing a winter program to include athletic alternatives such as snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and indoor rock climbing. Other future plans include a recycled bike shop modeled after the one created by Trips for Kids Marin where kids from the community can work on and earn bikes.

Community learning center: TFK 21st Century is a program of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) in Northampton, Massachusetts. The 21st CCLC runs after school programs at twelve middle schools and two elementary schools. The programs provide academic tutoring, enrichment activities, and recreational opportunities. 21st CCLC firmly believes that true learning and growth does not have to take place in a classroom. Through its TFK ride program, 21st CCLC encourages kids to explore their natural surroundings and learn about themselves and their world in a meaningful way.

Community health organization: TFK Project Transformation became a chapter in July 2003. Project Transformation is a non-profit agency that serves over 400 kids each year by promoting health maintenance, environmental education, and team building. This TFK chapter is part of Project Transformation's Smart Bodies programming and gives volunteers the opportunity to build relationships with children in a unique setting.

Counseling and treatment center: TFK East Tennessee is one of the many programs offered by the Life Development Center of Oak Ridge, TN. The Life Development Center's mission is to provide opportunities for personal growth through adventure by focusing on goal setting, problem solving, communication, trust, and improved self-concept. The Life Development Center is one of seven programs of the Anderson County Health Council, serving youth and adults in drug and alcohol treatment programs as well as school based groups including alternative learning centers. As it just so happens, the facility is located in Haw Ridge Park – the premier mountain bike trail system in the Knoxville metro area! Those lucky kids!



Team Nomad Tackles 7 Peaks in 7 Days to Support Trips for Kids

If you're part of a bike club, team or informal ride group and want to help TFK provide kids with increased access to cycling and the outdoors, consider organizing your own fundraising adventure! In September 2003, Team Nomad tackled 7 peaks in 7 days, creating an unforgettable epic week of riding and an immensely generous contribution to TFK.

Founded in 1999, Team Nomad combines their love of multi-day and multi-sport adventures with a commitment to fundraising. With treks and races in New Zealand, Vermont, Utah, Arizona, and Maine under its belt, Team Nomad set out to hike and bike 7 major New England peaks in 7 days in support of Trips for Kids National and Trips for Kids Boston. Starting in Rhode Island and finishing in Maine, the team tackled 750 miles, summiting each of the highest peaks in the six New England states.

While Team Nomad's primary activity is to race in competitive endurance events like the infamous Southern Traverse in New Zealand and the Appalachian Extreme Adventure Race, "7 Peaks in 7 Days" offered team members a special chance to take their time and enjoy the ride. "It was a lot more relaxed – if you wanted to stop and smell the roses, you could," explained Scott Berk, Team Nomad's navigator. By getting out there and enjoying time on the trail together, Team Nomad raised \$6,000 for Trips for Kids National and the Boston chapter.

As regular volunteers for the local Boston TFK chapter, Team Nomad riders have witnessed the transformation of so many kids during these rides. No doubt these volunteer efforts reminded each of them, as they tackled up to 160 miles of trail each day, of the unique gift we can all experience by combining a physical challenge with a charitable mission and the simple act of having fun!

If you want to organize your own fundraising effort to support TFK's youth programs, give us a call at (415) 459-2817 or email tfknatl@pacbell.net.

YES! I want to get kids off the couch and in the saddle by supporting Trips for Kids!

Here's my tax-deductible contribution:

- \$25 - Provides a "How To" manual to a new director.
- \$50 - Buys 10 helmets for a new chapter.
- \$150 - Buys one bike to be used over and over by different kids.
- \$250 - Provides the tools necessary to start one chapter.
- Other \$ _____ - The sky's the limit with your help!

Major contributions can help us increase our chapter base and the amount of support and equipment for existing chapters. Feel free to contact us to find out more about how your contribution can make a difference in the lives of children all across North America.



Name _____

Address _____

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Trips for Kids National Sponsors

Please help us say thank you to these generous companies by supporting their businesses.



Re-Cyclery Bike Thrift Shop at 610 4th St, in San Rafael, CA offers year round bargains.

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Start your own Trips for Kids Chapter

Do you see a need in your community to give more kids access to the beauty of the outdoors? All of our chapters were started by dedicated individuals who recognized this need. They saw that there were kids who rarely had the chance to get outside and experience the world from a different perspective. Each chapter is an independent organization; all are working towards the common goal of changing kids' lives by sharing the joy of mountain biking.

By starting a Trips for Kids Chapter in your area, you can help fill a need as well. Our goal at **Trips for Kids National** is to provide the moral and physical support to help you develop a local chapter. We have a strong network of individuals who have already gone through the process and are willing to help. Along with 5 bikes and other equipment, we are happy to share our 16 years of experience with you.

The "How-To" Manual, which covers the detailed aspects of creating and sustaining a ride program is available for \$20 (to cover the costs of printing and shipping.) Please order by sending a check and request to the address below.

There is a wealth of information on our web site. Please visit us at www.tripsforkids.org for more information. Feel free to call us anytime to discuss the details of your specific situation. **Donations are also gratefully accepted to help fund the development of a new chapter.**



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We welcome your comments and contributions to The National News.