

{PAYING IT FORWARD}

The CYCLE EFFECT

BY KATE LAPIDES

PAY IT FORWARD by teaching young women to roll it forward—that’s the inspiration behind The Cycle Effect, an Eagle-based nonprofit that teaches mountain biking to girls who otherwise would never experience the joy of riding trails. Ninety percent of the participants are from lower-income Hispanic families with neither the funds nor the familiarity with mountain bike culture to introduce girls to the sport.

The Cycle Effect’s roots lie in the mutual passions for singletrack and racing held by its founders, husband-wife duo Brett and Tamara Donelson. Tamara competes professionally on the XTERRA circuit; Brett’s worked as a coach for more than ten years. They wanted to create opportunities for local young women—no matter their economic or social background—to take part in a sport that has enriched their own lives, and The Cycle Effect was born.

The work, says Donelson, simply “makes us feel good. A successful workday for us includes training successful CEOs and working with elite athletes. But we often get home and find that we talk about how working with the girls was the best part of the day. We decided we want to spend our time doing things that make us feel good. And so far, that’s about helping these kids, helping the community, and riding our bikes.”

“It teaches you determination like no other sport can,” says Estefania Loera, who took part in the program for three years. “I’ve learned how to stick to things even when it’s super hard. I probably would have never found a sport that I loved so much without The Cycle Effect. I didn’t even know about mountain biking [before], its far too expensive to do and I would have never gotten the skills that I have now if I was out riding by myself. Now its my favorite thing to do.”

While race training is a significant focus of The Cycle Effect, the notion of giving back is also embedded in the program’s curriculum. Participants engage in volunteer trail maintenance projects, teach bike repair skills at summer camps and assist at local mountain bike races.



Above: A Cycle Effect participant at the races



Left: Jaime Brede, 3rd from left, with her Summit County Cycle Effect protégés

Mentors, SOS Outreach, and the Family Intercultural Resource Center (FIRC). The job is providing a way for the longtime Breckenridge-based racer to pay it forward in her beloved sport.

“I have never really been into the whole ‘women in sports’ movement before,” notes Brede, “but I am now realizing just how important it is, especially for young women that are just beginning to learn how to navigate this life’s journey. My journey in athletics has shaped not only what I do and how I choose to spend my time, but who I am. Being an athlete makes me a better person. I can only hope to share that with the girls.”

Last summer The Cycle Effect expanded its reach to include Summit County and fifteen girls took part. At the helm of that expansion is Jaime Brede, another professional XTERRA racer.

Brede reached out to numerous non-profits to search for girls who would benefit most from The Cycle Effect’s programs, including Mountain

Interested to learn more and support The Cycle Effect?

Check the organization’s website at www.thecycleeffect.org for upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Fundraisers include:

June 5 (need to confirm date): The Cycle Effect Biker Ball in Beaver Creek sponsored by Dionysus Hospitality Group.

August TBD: The Cycle Effect Biker Ball in Keystone (same format as Biker Ball in BC). Sponsored by Dionysus Hospitality Group.

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