

POSSIBILITIES IN MOTION



VeloYouth Changes Lives... And Not Just The Students'

By Jennifer Stokes

I started volunteering with San Diego VeloYouth (SDVY) in 2014. I was going through a rough patch professionally and wasn't happy with my position at a research company. I had gone to school, and then even more school, because I genuinely loved learning. While in graduate school, I picked up cycling and found it to be a great way to meet new people and help with my daily stress levels. Within the cycling community I met Matt Hoffmann, who introduced me to SDVY, and I immediately fell in love with its mission. I'd worked with a number of volunteer groups, but none that uniquely combined cycling with life lessons and academic scholarship.

By serving as a coach with the program, I get to work with at-risk students teaching life skills through cycling. Engaging the students in a series of cycling and fitness activities over a 6-week period, we focus on the motto "STARS Create Possibilities" with emphasis on Self-Respect, Teamwork, Achievement, Responsibility, and Success.

Some of these students have never ridden a bike before, and in the end teaching them how to ride a bike is the easy lesson. What is much harder is relating the values to students who live in very unstable environments and who are used to adults who give up on them.

It is important to note that the bikes used at the velodrome do not have traditional brakes, as they are fixed-gear bikes, so a level of cycling proficiency and trust with your fellow students and coaches must be achieved. This is no easy feat, even for adults, but through group activities in a safe environment, we help the students build trust with each other and with us, creating a positive and collaborative environment for them to gain the courage to try new things, develop a positive attitude, and achieve their goals. As coaches, and teachers, we also relate these activities to positive choices and discuss how those choices can affect others beyond yourself, including your teammates, friends, and family.

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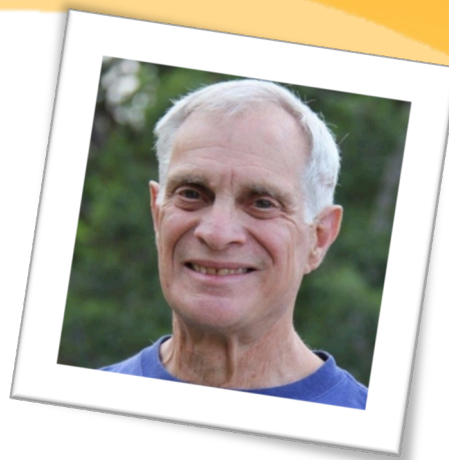
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Meet Our Board: Marty Katz

We are fortunate to have added Marty Katz, JD as a Board Member in 2016. Marty is the senior partner in Wood Phillips, an intellectual property law firm, and represents a number of corporate clients in the life sciences area. He previously was the Assistant Director of Patents at Merck & Co. and the Patent and Trademark Counsel at Abbott Laboratories. Marty is an avid competitive cyclist and enjoys both road and track cycling. As our programs expand, Marty's legal, regulatory and risk assessment experiences are an invaluable asset to the San Diego VeloYouth Board.



Why does Marty choose to share time with VeloYouth?
"It is very rewarding to provide disadvantaged youth an opportunity to be exposed to a program where they can improve their self-worth, learn personal responsibility, teamwork and other skills that will help them grow beyond self-imposed and other limitations and be successful in life."

Reminder... As you shop online this holiday season, when you log into **smile.amazon.com** and select **Quality of Life Connections**, Amazon will make a donation to San Diego VeloYouth.



Words of Wisdom

At SDVY, the biggest lessons learned are usually not about the bikes. Our program is about values and respect. It is amazing how quickly the message is heard and absorbed. We see changes in behavior, language, and attitudes because the program reaches out to each youngster's highest and best self. The kids overcome challenges on and off the bike. It is their time to prove themselves, to be of service, and it is their choice.

Some of the feedback we receive speaks volumes about the effect of SDVY:

"I learned that I can do anything if I believe in myself."

- Ammy, Monarch School
for the Homeless

Gratitude

Gratitude comes in many colors and shows up daily at SDVY. The smiles on the faces of our athletes as they conquer fear and experience the freedom of cycling fill our hearts, making us grateful that they have found our program to bring new opportunities to their lives. We are filled with gratitude for our community partners and supporters who help us with fundraising and awareness. You are the folks who make the smiles possible.

Heartfelt thanks to **Tiger!Tiger!** and **Blind Lady Ale House** for hosting fundraisers in November; and to all of you for your generous support that allows us to enter our 10th year of teaching values, one lap at a time. Thank You!

Visit our new website

VeloYouth.org



Coach Matt Honored As A Local Hero

At this year's Momentum Awards, Matt Hoffmann was awarded the SDG&E Local Hero Award for his work with San Diego VeloYouth. The Momentum Awards are given annually to people and projects in San Diego that improve the region's walking, biking and transit options while putting us on a path to a more sustainable future. The Momentum Awards are hosted by non-profit Circulate San Diego, whose mission is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant healthy communities. Congratulations, Coach Matt!

VeloYouth Changes Lives

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My favorite aspect of working with the VeloYouth program isn't teaching the students to ride bikes. Beyond the fun and excitement of riding a bike, I absolutely love seeing the smiles on their faces after they complete a new skill that they never thought possible. Or when they ask each other for help and learn to work together; thus, building a strong community that will help them succeed outside the velodrome in their daily lives.

The students have taught me a valuable lesson, as well: not only do I love to learn, but I love to help others learn, too. As a result of this amazing experience as a VeloYouth coach, working with inspiring people, about a year ago I took the steps to re-center my career path to education. I couldn't be happier now, working with students both in the classroom and the lab, helping them learn new things everyday. And I have San Diego VeloYouth to thank for teaching me a valuable lesson, too!

About Our Organization

QOLC is a California-based 501(c)(3) founded in 2006. We operate with a volunteer staff and Board of Directors. QOLC is funded by in-kind donations, grants and private gifts. All monetary donations benefit the youth we serve.

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Positively Impacting
Our World, One Life
at a Time.

Visit our website for photos and information: www.VeloYouth.org The public is welcome to watch **SDVY** cyclists in action at the San Diego Velodrome in Balboa Park's Morley Field.



*"I learned to trust my
classmates and trust myself."*
– Keila, 8th Grade
Monarch School

Wish List

As a nonprofit organization, **San Diego VeloYouth** is limited by financial constraints. Dedicated people who believe in making a difference are vital to the ongoing success of the program. We welcome your support and have many opportunities for gifts of time, money or equipment.

- Volunteers to support young athletes – cheering and encouraging the kids. Cycling experience is not required.

- In-kind donations: Helmets, Cycling shorts, Jerseys, Bicycles in good condition, and Office Supplies.
- Monetary donations: QOLC is working towards our 2016 goal of raising \$120,000 for the purchase of: Bicycles & Equipment.

All donations are welcomed, appreciated and tax deductible TIN #20-5173974.