

## How Outride's Riding for Focus Youth are Pedaling for Social, Emotional and Cognitive Health

**MORGAN HILL, Calif. [for immediate release]** — Outride, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of youth through cycling, is pleased to announce the release of its long-awaited report, *Riding for Fun, Friends, and Fitness: Advancing Youth Health and Well-being through Outride's Riding for Focus Program*. Drawing from youth surveys at more than 20 middle schools across the U.S., the report serves as a first-of-its-kind investigation into the positive socioemotional and physical benefits of cycling for young people.

“Our Riding for Focus program is currently operating in more than 225 middle schools across the country. We all intuitively know that bikes bring joy, but we wanted to demonstrate that there are rigorous, replicable, positive effects of getting youth on bikes — and that Outride has a program and grants that can be implemented in any school that wants to bring these outcomes to their students,” said Skye DeLano, executive director of Outride. “We’re thrilled to have partnered with PeopleForBikes to get the word out about this programming, and by doing so increase awareness and access to Riding for Focus.”

Riding for Focus (R4F) is a middle-school-based PE program that promotes cycling as an outlet for students to improve cognitive, physical and socio-emotional well-being. Schools can acquire R4F via two pathways: by purchasing the program, or, for Title I schools serving under-resourced communities, by applying for a program grant. Currently, more than 95% of schools are granted the program for free. As part of the grant, Riding for Focus schools are provided with everything they need to get their 6th-8th grade students riding, including Specialized bikes, helmets, curriculum and intensive teacher training.

Outride was founded in 2014 on the belief that cycling and well-being are connected. Outride partners with academic institutions and schools to better understand how bicycles impact how we think and feel and collaborates with community partners, coaches, teams and cyclists to cultivate inclusive cycling communities. In addition, Outride’s programs are supported by industry leaders Specialized Bicycle Components and PeopleForBikes who share a commitment to getting more kids on bikes and ensuring safe places to ride in every community.

“Outride's research helps demonstrate what we know and what we feel — riding a bike positively changes lives. Their research continues to show the holistic health benefits of bicycling, especially for youth,” said Nick Aguilera, PeopleForBikes’ youth and community partnerships manager. “We are inspired by Outride's national leadership providing youth cycling education, increasing youth bicycle access, continuing their research and empowering youth and their communities through bikes.” PeopleForBikes entered into a partnership with Outride in

July 2020 because they strongly believed in supporting Outride’s mission of improving the lives of youth and cultivating inclusive communities through bicycling on a national scale.

“Riding for Fun, Friends, and Fitness” outlines several key findings that underscore the powerful impact that bikes can have on the lives of children and adolescents:

- Bicycling offers a bright spot at a time when youth mental and physical health continues to worsen: At baseline, youth who report riding more regularly also report higher levels of mental well-being.
- Students reported higher levels of well-being after participating in Riding for Focus than before participating, with females seeing a 9% boost in well-being scores.
- Students were more likely to report spending fewer hours in front of screens after participating in Riding for Focus compared to before participating. This difference was most dramatic for female students: 81% of females spent more than 2 hours of screen time a day before Riding for Focus — that figure dropped to 73% after the program.

The research findings were determined through pre- and post-surveys conducted in schools that implemented the Riding for Focus program. The results clearly showed that students who engaged with bikes over the course of a year — amid the COVID-19 pandemic — displayed better social, emotional and cognitive health than those who did not.

“The youth emotional health crisis is only becoming worse as the pandemic continues, so having ways to combat it is increasingly important,” said DeLano. “We already knew intuitively that riding bikes makes you feel better, but now we have the data to support it.

For more information or to read the full report visit [outridebike.org/researchreport](https://outridebike.org/researchreport). For inquiries please contact [hello@outridebike.org](mailto:hello@outridebike.org)

### **About Outride**

*Outride is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of youth through cycling. Through research, Riding for Focus middle school cycling programs, and matching community grants, Outride harnesses the benefits of cycling for the cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical well-being of youth while also helping to cultivate inclusive cycling communities. Outride has partnered with over 225 schools in its Riding for Focus program and committed over \$1M in matching grants to 134 youth cycling programs across the United States. Applications for Riding for Focus grants are open through April 15th. Learn more at [Outridebike.org](https://outridebike.org)*