

A woman with tattoos and a helmet is riding a bicycle in a tunnel at night. The tunnel is illuminated by warm, yellow lights, and the background is blurred, suggesting motion. The woman is wearing a light blue and white cycling jersey and black shorts. The overall atmosphere is energetic and focused.

MARLEY BLONSKY

Building a Connected & Inclusive
Bicycling Community

Iowa Bicycle Summit
April 6, 2023

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340TH ST

Marley Blonsky

Co-Founder All Bodies on Bikes

Size Inclusion Consultant

Professional Cyclist





Time Travel with Me

It's 2014. Obama is President

I was freshly divorced,
wanting to ride a bike.

I'm 5'1, 250ish pounds

My budget - less than \$400

Within one month:

3 FLAT TIRES
2 BROKEN SPOKES
BROKEN SEATPOST
DROPPED ON 2 GROUP RIDES
COMMUTING DAILY TO WORK



Why in the world did I keep riding a bicycle?

COMMUNITY
JOY
A STUPID DETERMINATION





I got a new bike (that was strong enough) and learned to bikepack.

I learned that my body had power.





And then I got angry.



I stopped apologizing.
Started taking up space.
Researching. I couldn't be the only one.



**Over 50% of the
US lives in a
larger body**

LOCAL

They call themselves ‘fat cyclists’ — and they want to get more people, of all sizes, on bikes



Perspective by [Theresa Vargas](#)
Metro columnist

January 18, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. EST



Google

2-Step Verification
was built to **secure** ✓
your account, even
if your password is
compromised

 Safer with Google

[Learn more](#)



Weight Limits

Components

Gear

Clothes

LIA

-weig

-ass

-chest

-ass



all BODIES on bikes





PARTNERSHIPS

PEARL iZUMi Partners with Body Positivity Advocate Marley Blonsky

All Bodies are
Good Bodies

All Bikes are
Good Bikes

All Rides
Should be
Celebrated





Let's Talk Inclusive Communities

Is it a community or a group?



Shared Values

Concern for other's well being

Moral proscriptions (acceptable behaviors)



There's a big difference between feeling included, and feeling like you belong.



How do you *Actually* Do it?

1

DEFINE YOUR
COMMUNITY

2

IDENTIFY THE
BARRIERS TO FULL
INCLUSION

3

BUILD YOUR TEAM
DO THE WORK
ASK FOR FEEDBACK
ITERATE & IMPROVE

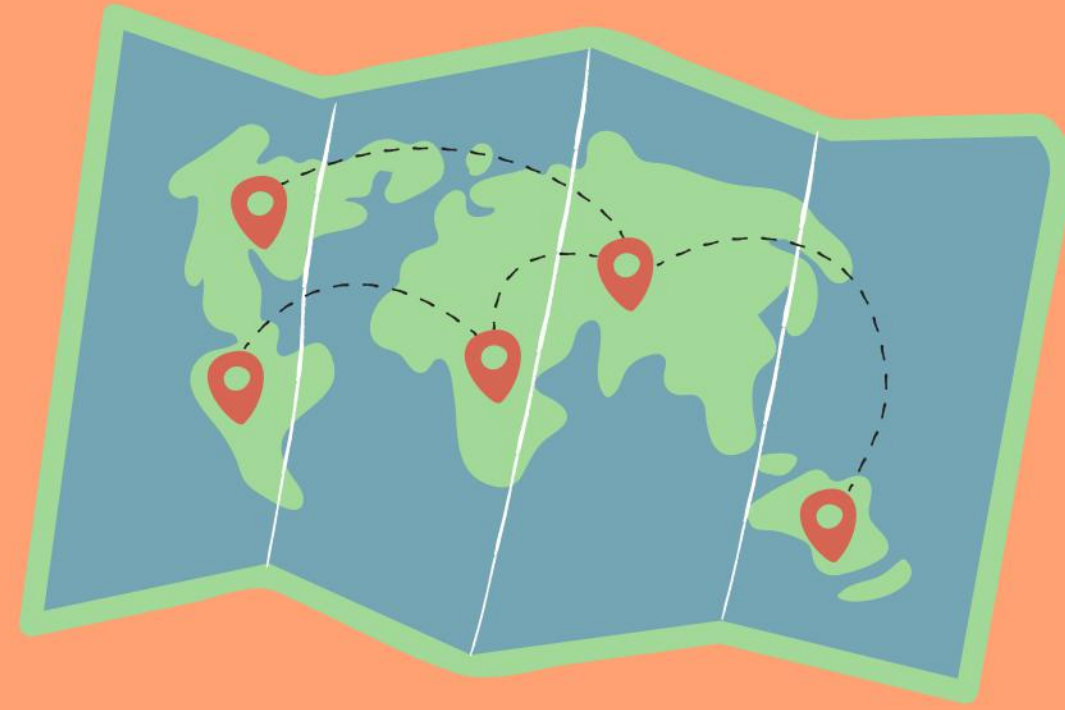


Who is your community that you want to serve?



**IDENTIFY YOUR
COMMUNITY**

What are the shared values?



What barriers do they face towards inclusion?

BUILD YOUR TEAM





Find allies.
Make partnerships.
Who else is facing this
same challenge?

Are there groups already
doing the work?



HONDA



GET OUT
AND DO THE
WORK



Organize your own rides, hikes, dinners, events, talks, etc.
No body needs to grant you permission to organize.

Volunteer for speaking, ride leading & organizing opportunities.





What does that
look like in
practice?

3 Radically Inclusive Events

1

GROUND NEBRASKA

Rider Support Program
Childcare available
3 distances + walk
Free camping
Prize Parity

2

PEDALPALOOZA

3 month celebration in
Portland
Community-led &
organized rides
Embracing the Weird

3

BIKE MS

Full weekend event
"I Ride With MS"
Celebrating Every
Rider

Cycling is For Everyone

Gravel lends itself to being a welcoming atmosphere. We just give it a little “umph” to ensure Grounded Nebraska is a space to celebrate and embrace all bikes bodies, and people.

\$8500 Equity-Based Podiums

We believe in equity until equality, and pay disparity within cycling is blatant. Podium finishers of the women and non-binary/gender-expansive 125-mile winners will win 20% more than those in the men’s category.

Three Gender Categories

Within our first year, we shattered the industry averages of 80% men and 20% for gender splits with 40% women and 15% non-binary gender split in our riders.

Rider Support Program

Pooling resources and calling on sponsors for support, we created a Rider Support Program for gravel-curious BIPOC and WTF-NB folks to attend and ride Grounded Nebraska.



PEDALPALOOZA
BIKE SUMMER

✿ JUNE, JULY, & AUGUST 2022 ✿

#BIKESUMMER

**Pedalpalooza BIKE
SUMMER 2023 is June,
July, & August. LIST
YOUR RIDES NOW on
the Shift calendar
HERE.**

Follow us on Instagram
for the most up-to-date
information.

RIDE ON!

**Over 200 rides
No entry fees
Embrace the weird!**



I Ride with MS (IRWMS)



No Podiums
Mission Driven
Celebrate every Ride

5 easy ways to make your ride more inclusive



Be honest about what pace you are going and stick to it.



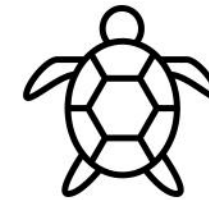
Publish your intended route before the ride.



Have a sweeper who knows the route and destination.



Regroup at the top of hills and give people a chance to rest.



Drop judgement based descriptions like "beginner" when you mean slow.

Let's Revisit



01.

Define your community

What are the shared values that define your community? Who are you trying to serve? What is your binding ties?

02.

Identify the Barriers to Inclusion

Name them. Be brutally honest. Figure out what is holding your community back from being inclusive?

03.

Do the Work.

It's not always going to be pretty, or easy. Get used to being wrong, messing up, and owning your mistakes. Growth comes through challenges.

THANK YOU.



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