el GRUPO
empowering youth through bicycles
10th Anniversary ~ Annual Report
Dear Supporters,

I open this first annual report with a deep sense of pride and gratitude. I could not be more proud of both the youth riders as well as the staff of El Grupo. And, I could not be more thankful to incredible donors, like you, whose generous support allows us to continue and grow. Thank you!

The support contributed by all of you in 2015 directly resulted in the character development, physical confidence, personal responsibility, and increased competence of hundreds of youth through El Grupo. In particular, I’d like to thank Angel Charity for Children, Zuckerman Community Outreach Foundation, Ride on Cycling, and Jackson Family Charitable Fund.

This year, 2016, has been a breakout year for El Grupo. The organization has moved significantly from a founder organization to a professionally run paid-staff model. We now have the right mix of skills to work more broadly on youth issues while maintaining an organized, efficient and, most importantly, sustainable organization.

Our ability to provide effective role models and mentorship — making a lasting impact across more ages — is better than ever before.

When I think of my association with El Grupo over these past few years, serving on an outstanding Board of Directors, the single word that comes to mind is PRIDE. Pride when I see El Grupo youth on the roads of Tucson, pride when somebody yells El Grupo! as I ride by, and pride when I watch the organization continue to expand and positively effect more young peoples’ lives every year.

Thank you El Grupo, thank you Tucson, and thank YOU for your support!

Don Hubman, Board President

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Daniela Diamente  
Executive Director & Co-Founder
Ignacio Rivera de Rosales  
Head Coach/Program Director & Co-Founder
Carmen Elena L’Annunziata Monge  
Associate Program Director
Morgan Adams  
El Grupito Coordinator & Head Coach
Lynn Hudson  
Clubhouse Manager & El Grupito Coach
Luke Murray  
El Grupito Coach
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Thanks to you, it’s been a remarkable ten year ride!

Our 2016 Fall Fondo was a huge success!
El Grupo empowers youth through bicycles by fostering values that support youth both on and off the bike, now and into their future.

**Responsibility → Character = Pride**

Expecting consistent participation and accountability develops a responsibility to one’s self, teammates, and the community that supports them.

**Commitment → Camaraderie = Fun**

Creating personal and team goals, combined with the hard work required to achieve them, drives and develops each individual’s personal commitment to themselves and their teammates.

**Skills → Confidence = Leadership**

Developing youth’s skills, knowledge and confidence so they can mentor younger riders through El Grupo programs and out in the community.

“Let’s just ride bikes with kids,” Ignacio said. And yet, from that first statement we both knew it was going to be much more than just bikes.

After the initial ride with City High students in downtown Tucson, it didn’t take long to realize that so many young people didn’t seem to have anything else in their lives that they were passionate about. Riding bikes with the encouragement of fun adults and other youth made them shine from the inside out, some for the first time.

After that first ride I asked, “How can we NOT do this?” And we did do it! And we are still riding bikes and empowering youth thanks to an amazing community of supporters and an incredible group of Tucson youth who are passionate about bikes. Thank you!

It is thrilling to be celebrating 10 years of El Grupo Youth Cycling. What began on our back porch with a handful of kids is now bursting at the seams in a 3,000 square foot clubhouse, with over 90 kids in weekly programming. In celebration of our 10-year anniversary, our first annual report gives us the opportunity to reflect on and share our accomplishments. Throughout this report you will hear from El Grupo youth riders about their achievements and their pride in participating in El Grupo programs.

I am grateful that YOU have been a significant part of the past 10 years. As we continue to build strong youth we look forward to your support to get us another 10 years down the road together.

It’s been a remarkable ride and we are still saying “How can we NOT do this?!” The best thing about saying it now is that the WE represents so many more people!

Thanks to these VALUES, their IMPACTS, and our COMMUNITY, we are proud to say...

- We now serve over 1,000 youth between the ages of 7 and 22.
- Every high school student who has participated in our program has earned a high school diploma.
- We are able to provide jobs for alumni as coaches, mechanics, and staff.

Thank you!

Daniela Diamente
Executive Director

“Let’s just ride bikes with kids,” Ignacio said. And yet, from that first statement we both knew it was going to be much more than just bikes.

Ripley Russum and Pearl Dixon (front, left and right), recent graduates of Tucson High (Pearl was Salutatorian!), are now coaching El Grupito.
Celebrating Ten Years of Empowering

2004
Ignacio is asked to start a “bike riding” fitness elective at City High School in downtown Tucson.

“El Grupo has taught me to be strong, to be confident, and most importantly, to be brave.” Ana, 13

2005
Fitness elective grows. Ignacio and Daniela begin to hold practices outside of school hours and youth from other schools ask to join. Riding and community outreach are the core goals from the start.

2007
El Grupo youth ask to participate in a self-contained bike tour and a road race. Daniela and Ignacio begin the process of forming their own non-profit youth cycling club and El Grupo is born.

“El Grupo is a youth cycling team that, instead of taking talent and developing it, takes a bunch of people and develops the talent.” Tyler, 16

2008
El Grupo rents its first clubhouse and forms a board of directors. Daniela takes the team to Mexico to ride with local youth. The first middle school youth joins the team. The team rides the Tucson Bicycle Classic together in team jerseys.

“Ignacio always stresses the importance of consistency and hard work, which can be applied not only to training, but to school work and just being successful in life.” Ben, 18

2009
At the request of the youth, mountain biking is added. Two female alumni, Julia and Ashley, complete a self-contained tour of the Pacific coast.

“Our riders learn from each other and then influence others, spreading the impact beyond everyone directly involved.” Isabel, 14

2010
The first sponsors appear on the team jerseys. Budget increases to $30,000. Daniela organizes the first Cyclovia in Tucson and El Grupo youth set up a bike skills area for young riders at the community event.
Youth!

“After El Grupo, I hope to be racing bikes, and then passing riding skills along to other kids, even my kids.” Christian, 18

“I was making a lot of bad decisions before I joined El Grupo — El Grupo won’t put up with less than your best.” Daniel, 17

“They make me work hard. They make me do things that I would probably never do by myself, like climb mountains.” Leila, 17

“It’s a team where anyone and everyone feels welcome and is pushed to be the best cyclist and person they can be.” Samantha, 18

2011
El Grupo runs a summer bike camp for youth ages 7-12. El Grupo’s budget grows to $85,000. Panaracer sponsors the team. Head Coach Ignacio is recognized as a Local Hero by the Tucson Weekly for his work with youth.

2012
First girls-only tryout is offered. El Grupo youth host Kidical Mass community rides for families. El Grupo receives United Way Award “In Recognition of Fostering the Next Generation of Healthy Youth”

2013
El Grupo wins the the first-ever Arizona High School Mountain Bike League State Championship. A team member receives the Gates Millennium Scholarship.

2014
With more youth, bikes, and the new El Grupito program, El Grupo moves to a larger clubhouse. With major support from Angel Charity for Children, El Grupo hires an Assistant Director, and begins paying El Grupito coaches.

2015
Seventeen El Grupo youth ride at USA Cycling nationals in Lake Tahoe, California, and El Grupo is named National Junior Club of the Year.

2016
Alumni request to ride with El Grupo as a U23 team. Several of these older youth also coach El Grupito. A Clubhouse Manager and full-time Associate Program Director join the team.

“I’m more confident as a person. Shaving one’s legs changes one’s character too.” Kyle, 16
A youth cycling and leadership development team. We ride bicycles for the physicality and camaraderie of it and to build skills, character, and confidence. Members range in age from 12-18.

Helping a new generation to learn to love all things about riding bikes. El Grupito provides the valuable framework; teaching how to ride safely, encouraging youth to develop their abilities and how to have fun! Ages 7-12.

“El Grupo has been such a positive, mind-expanding, body-strengthening, all-around good thing for our whole family.”
Maggie Crowder, El Grupo parent

We encourage youth to be civic-minded through giving back to the community. Each Team El Grupo & El Grupito rider is expected to contribute towards community outreach. Through our community engagement, we are getting more youth on bikes and they, in turn, are teaching and inspiring the other youth (and adults) to ride, enjoy, and love bikes as much as we do!

A summer camp in a peer-led environment with activities focused on developing safe-riding skills, mechanical knowledge, and bike handling for every skill level. Youth are introduced to the benefits of environmental stewardship, health, and wellness. Camp designed for youth ages 7-13. Team El Grupo teenagers gain valuable job experience as camp counselors.

Our U23 team aligns with El Grupo’s mission to empower youth through bicycles and provides its graduated riders a place to continue pursuing their cycling passion, while also developing their life and work skills. Members aged 17–22 also help coach El Grupito.

“When a second grader sees a teen riding a bike and then gets to ride with him or her and hears their encouragement, it takes the child to a whole other level.”
Emily Yetman, Executive Director, Living Streets Alliance
El Grupo Makes Strong Girls; Literally, Strong Girls  
by Veronique Pardee

I am now entering my fourth year as a volunteer coach for El Grupo, giving me the opportunity to observe firsthand the essential role El Grupo plays in keeping girls on bikes, riding through their teenage years into adulthood.

How does El Grupo do this? Starting from the top, El Grupo’s female Executive Director models outstanding achievement, both professionally and athletically, that sets the tone for the organization. El Grupo’s programming teaches young female riders a healthy respect for their bodies that counteracts negative messages girls get elsewhere. By challenging the girls to meet high standards and achieve far-reaching goals, the girls learn that self-esteem and self-worth come from within. El Grupo helps keep girls engaged in the sport, surrounded by a dedicated peer group and coaches modeling all that can be gained through consistent dedication to cycling.

El Grupo makes strong girls. Literally, strong girls. Because the girls are strong physically, they demand a respect through their sheer physical presence. I see the girls exuding this strength without necessarily even being aware of it. It is impressive! Strong girls are good for boys. The boys of El Grupo are surrounded by powerful women and girls that shape their attitudes. In this way, El Grupo helps raise good men.

Female alumni of El Grupo are well positioned to deal with challenges — both in cycling and wherever their life paths may take them. It is an honor and a privilege to give my time and efforts to an organization that impacts youth in such a profound and beneficial manner. I reap far more than I give.

“City High School served as an incubator for the awesome scrappy startup that has developed into a thriving high-impact nonprofit in our community.”

Carrie Brennan, Executive Director, CITY Center for Collaborative Learning

“Over the past forty years, I have participated as a board member for a variety of organizations — El Grupo stands apart from all the others.”

Marc Fleischman, El Grupo Board
What a Difference Your Donation Can Make: One Bike that Touched Many Lives

In 2008 a generous supporter donated a carbon frame bike to El Grupo. This was the nicest bike the El Grupo team had seen. Youth remember Coach Ignacio being concerned that the bike was TOO NICE compared to the other El Grupo bikes. And, unlike all the other steel bikes in the small fleet, this one did not have the old-school threaded headset and bottom bracket. It was, quoting Ignacio, “…monkey mechanics. You put it together and it just worked.” Turns out that is actually a good thing!

This carbon bike was ridden by 8 youth in 8 years. Max Cronyn won his first ever (and El Grupo’s first ever) State Championship race in the 13–14 Boys category. Following Max, team members Logan Boyd, Donovan Caputo, “Newgan” Foster, Keenan Duncan, Etienne Bouef, Colter Thomas, and “Newben” Schroeder covered thousands of miles on this bike. Retired in 2015, this amazing bike still hangs in the clubhouse with the current fleet. It serves as a reminder of what an impact your support can make. Thank you!

If you have a bike or other cycling gear to donate, contact Lynn, our clubhouse manager, at lynn@elgrupocycling.org