

This Just In

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March 8th, 2010

Hardly Just Another Bike Ride

Brendan Leonard rides to help troubled kids because he knows—better than most of us—what they're going through.

Brendan Leonard's story is an archetype that *Bicycling* readers know well: It's the tale of a young man whose life was changed by a bike. But there's a twist to Leonard's arc as a rider that's a bit unusual—and worth hearing. Like a number of the [Biketown participants](#) we've profiled over the years, Leonard took the strength he discovered in the saddle and turned his bike into a tool for the greater good. He didn't just get fit, or crank up his wattage, or learn to tear through the mountains. He did those things, sure, but he has also hit the road to affect the lives of teens—challenged ones like he used to be. As we speak—literally, this very moment—his effort is inspiring a wide network of outdoor enthusiasts to pitch in.

Leonard grew up in Iowa, aimless, troubled, into drugs and alcohol. Incarcerated at the age of 23, he was destined to be another overlooked statistic. But an opportunity to participate in outdoor adventure—cycling, climbing, and backpacking—was the lifeline he needed. [These outings literally saved his life](#), and he soon determined to give back what he'd gained. Today, Leonard works for a nonprofit based in Denver called [Big City Mountaineers](#) (BCM), a team dedicated to helping urban teenagers transform their lives through outdoor experiences. Week after week, he's been fighting a tough economy to raise money and find volunteer mentors for the organization. It hasn't been easy: Charitable giving plummeted 30 to 40 percent in 2009, making it harder than ever to expose underprivileged teens to bikes and hikes.

ABOUT

Listen up. The editors of *Bicycling* Magazine finally have their own little corner of the World Wide Web. *Bicycling.com's* This Just In Blog is your ticket into the minds, hearts and heads of the passionate people who produce the best biking magazine in the world. You'll find the latest gear reviews right from the front lines, commentary on racing in the U.S. and all over the world, tips on training, nutrition, and diet, and pretty much whatever else this bike-crazed bunch feels like writing about. Check This Just In daily to read up and chime in on everything going on in the world of cycling.

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