

Aspire. Achieve. Empower.

# PYD Profile

Partners for Youth with Disabilities | 2013-2014

## Inclusive Team Rides for PYD



Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) is fortunate enough to work with super heroes every day: our volunteers. Among these “super heroes” is Mentor of the Year, Juan Botero. Juan was born in Colombia and lives in Cambridge, MA. He has been devoted to mentoring through PYD since 2009. His experiences have encouraged him to advocate for mentoring and disability awareness in Massachusetts and internationally.

Thanks to support from Mass Mentoring Partnership, this was the fifth consecutive year that Juan led PYD’s team in the annual Rodman Ride for Kids. Members of the PYD community biked 25 miles in the Ride to raise awareness and funds for PYD. The Ride is a matching gift charity for social service agencies that support at-risk children in Massachusetts.



Members of Team PYD with Executive Director Regina Snowden at the Ride.

Juan has been the only rider with a physical disability in this increasingly high-profile event, but this year, thanks to a donation of adaptive bikes from Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, PYD mentee Dejan joined him and became the first blind rider to participate.



Dejan joined the Mentor Match program in 2011 and became the first blind person to participate in the Rodman Ride this year.

Dejan, inspired by Juan’s story, was motivated to ride a bike for the first time and take on the 25 mile route, using a tandem recumbent bicycle and a sighted guide. With aspirations to be a sports announcer and work in radio broadcasting, Dejan kept the team morale high as he enthusiastically called out for support of disability athletics to everyone we encountered along the ride.



Juan was diagnosed with Ataxia over a decade ago, and over five years ago began using a wheelchair for greater mobility. Juan has hiked across the globe, with

the use of assistive guides and cross-terrain wheelchairs. Such equipment enables him to continue following his passions for the outdoors and travel, including climbs to Mt. Kilimanjaro’s summit and the bottom of the Grand Canyon.



Juan hiking Bryce National Park in 2012.

His goal is to encourage young people facing challenges: “For this reason I believe in Partners for Youth with Disabilities, and I became a mentor: because I hope I can share my strengths and my stories, and I can show that we can all climb Kilimanjaro in our own terms.” The inclusive team that rode for PYD this year in the Ride for Kids demonstrates the key values of PYD, to aspire, achieve and empower ourselves and others to reach our full potential.



PYD empowers youth with disabilities to reach their full potential by providing transformative mentoring programs, youth development opportunities, and inclusion expertise.

For more information, please visit [www.pyd.org](http://www.pyd.org).

