

Dear Ryders Eyewear,
2010

18 March,

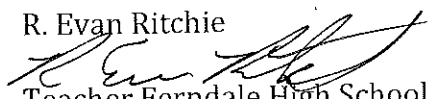
Last week, Ryan Leech, a rider whom you sponsor, came to Ferndale and Bellingham Washington to perform his first "Trials of Life" presentations in the US. He addressed 3 different schools and more than 2,500 students over 2 days, all pro bono publico due to recent changes in US immigration laws and the vagaries of dealing with public education in Washington State. I attended two of those assemblies, and watched as 1,500 high school students at Ferndale High School sat riveted to the bleachers as he talked and rode. This despite the assembly happening at the very end of the day. General comments I heard as the students exited the gym centered on "Best assembly we've ever had!" and "Wow, that guy can RIDE... did you see..." I have never seen the student body at my school so enthused, save when they won the state championship in football.

The following day, I was at Kulshan Middle School in Bellingham. With his quietly authoritative spirit, he spoke to those young people so genuinely that they followed everything he said, despite there being nearly 600 kids sitting on the floor in a space not much larger than Ryan's setup. It was a treat to watch as cell phones and cameras moved to collect the images Ryan was creating. Others forgetting to talk in their awe.

In the evenings I had the opportunity to share meals with Ryan, as well as watching him interact with friends and my own children. To a person, each individual commented to me afterwards how comfortable he is to be around, and that each felt a personal connection with him based on his interest in what they had to say. We even went out for a short urban ride and were joined by a dozen or so young people, from elementary to college age on a wide variety of bikes. As I watched, Ryan made himself available to each person, to talk, share interests and passions, or to talk about how to perform certain skills. His low-key welcoming approach inviting each to be at her/his ease. Quite aside from his ability to ride, Ryan is a wonderful individual.

I want to commend you, Ryders Eyewear, for having the wisdom to not only sponsor Ryan, but for also supporting his pursuit of his own goals with the Trials of Life tours. I recognize that your logo is prominently displayed on each jersey, as well as the trailer and truck he uses, but you also afford him the latitude and opportunity to be himself while riding your product, and so speak from his heart to young people who absolutely need to hear the positive messages he gives. The trust you've placed in him is well invested. Thank you for supporting Ryan in this work. Many young people are being quite positively influenced by Ryan, a wonderful soul.

R. Evan Ritchie



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