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**The HASE BIKES “Trike therapy”:
Wheels of Fortune for Kids with Special Needs**

Cycling is a great and easy way to support the development of children with disabilities. The “Challenge Weeks” organised by manufacturer Hase Bikes in Germany show how this can be done.

Mia is still learning to walk and talk. But in spite of her disabilities, the 12-year-old can already ride a trike like a race-car driver: she navigates speedily but safely on her Hase Bikes Trets from one curve into the next, squealing with joy. It is easy to see how much she loves being able to move around so freely under her own steam. “The pupils can experience the joy of independent mobility by piloting their own vehicle. For us teachers, it’s just so exciting to see what cycling can do for the pupils!” says Thomas Rienth from the Kaywald School in the southern German town of Lauffen. It was the school’s outstandingly successful cycling club that inspired Hase Bikes to organise its first Challenge Weeks programmes three years ago. Cycling helps children and adolescents not only develop more body awareness but also learn social competencies, build self-esteem and gain confidence in their own abilities – which is particularly important for kids with disabilities.

The programme initiator: a bike manufacturer

These multi-week programmes are now organised every year at several schools in Germany. Even the teachers and parents who are sceptical at first are amazed by how much fun the kids have when learning through play on the trikes. Younger kids



ride the Hase Bikes Trets, and adolescents the larger Trix, both of which are recumbent trikes with two wheels at the back and one at the front, offering superb stability. Specially developed for people with disabilities, these vehicles are extremely safe and easy to ride. Furthermore, their excellent agility and manoeuvrability guarantee great riding fun. During the programme, teachers can decide how to use the trikes in their lessons and projects. Activities range from regular riding lessons on obstacle courses to short excursions into the surrounding areas. Technical support is provided by Hase Bikes' partner dealers in the respective region.

At the end of these Challenge Weeks, many of the participating schools organise a celebration for all pupils and their parents. Here, kids have the opportunity to show off their new "triking" skills and all the things they have learned. But the biggest motivation for the pupils themselves is how much fun they have riding the trikes from Hase Bikes. So much in fact that parents and schools often purchase these trikes for their kids after the programme.

Although the systems and structures in Germany may be slightly different, dealers and school representatives may also want to brainstorm about how these Challenge Weeks could be organised in the UK. Where there's a will, there's always a way. And no one knows this better than the parents and teachers of kids with special needs.

Pictures:

Note: These photos can be downloaded in high-quality format via the following link:

<http://www.amedes.de/ftp/hasebikes/CW.zip>

HASE **BIKES**

PRESS RELEASE



Enjoying the challenge: A pupil takes a ride on the HASE BIKES Trix.



Special bike for special kids: the HASE BIKES Trix

About HASE BIKES

Since 1994 company founder Marec Hase has been developing innovative tandems and recumbent bikes and trikes that offer exceptional practicality and versatility, along with unparalleled riding fun. The KETTWIESEL “cornering machine” has since attained cult status, and the versatile PINO tandem is not only a beloved family taxi and cargo bike, but also the most widely used touring tandem in the world. The HASE BIKES manufacturing facility, with more than 40 employees, is situated on the historical grounds of the former coalmine Zeche Waltrop in the famous German Ruhr district. Information on the latest HASE BIKES specials and the ideas behind its vehicle designs can be found at www.hasebikes.com. The German version of the website links to the informative HASE BIKES BLOG.