

R.I.P. KEN KOSIOREK

(RACERS WHO CARE, INC.)

Racers Who Care was in the midst of planning a Quick Tips on Winning in Life presentation for Ken Kosoriek to make to kids in the greater El Cajon area near where he worked when news arrived that Ken Kosiorek had very sadly passed away.

"Baja Turtle" Ken Kosiorek, who just began racing in recent years, rode a street-legal motorcycle to SCORE International Off-Road competitions such as the prestigious Baja 1000, raced it, then rode it back home afterward. During the 2010 BAJA racing season, he scored third place, for the ninth time in a row. His personal mantra was: "Plan your Work, Work your Plan, Race and Complete the BAJA 1000 as The BAJA TURTLE IRONMAN!!!"

He often came in last in competitions and heartily embraced the nickname given him, The Baja Turtle!

His message to kids was: "Dream it, Then Do It. Value yourself, value your time. Value that time to teach others. Always be nice to everyone and never litter the earth." He recently designed and published a comic book/coloring book for kids describing his racing experiences entitled "*Las Aventuras de la Tortuga in Baja.*"



KEN KOSIOREK.
(Photo by Chris Ellis)



Because of their school's commitment to soccer games, only two students arrived for Ken's presentation during RWC's Quick Tips on Winning in Life Field Trip Program for elementary school students at the 2012 Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach. Ken very generously insisted on giving the students his full attention and a full presentation. (Photo by Judy Strawn)

He was one of the founders of the Baja Cancer Foundation, through which funds are raised and gifts collected for kids suffering from cancer.

Ken worked as a sales engineer for Airgas, which distributes industrial, medical, and specialty gases, welding supplies, safety products, and tools. He studied marketing and sales at San Diego State University, and served five years in the U.S. Navy.



Along with fellow off-road racer, Julie Newell, Ken participated in a question and answer session during RWC's first Quick Tips on Winning in Life Field Trip Program for elementary school students at the 2010 Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach. (Photo by Judy Strawn)



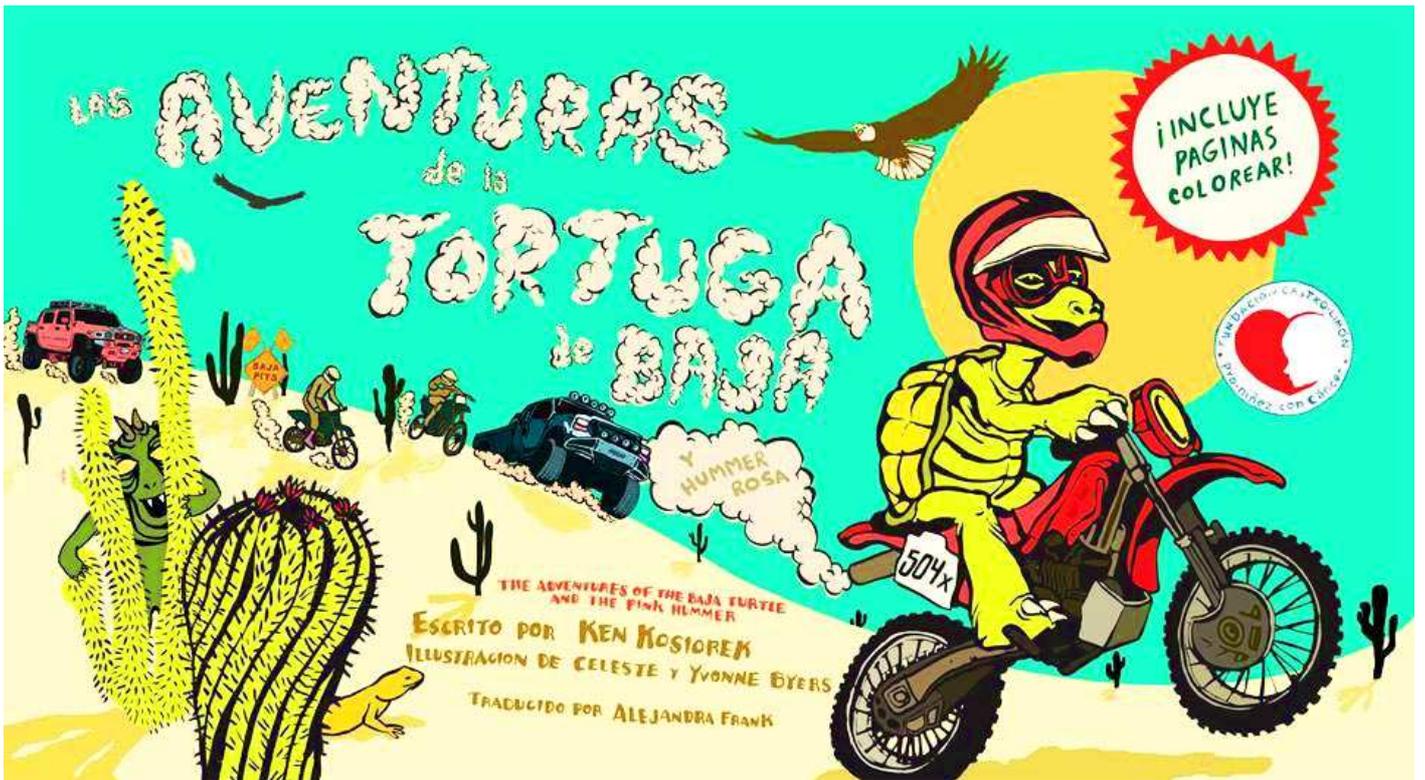
Ken's message to kids during RWC's 2012 Field Trip Program at the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach, was partly "Map Your Life." He brought along cartoon maps to give to the students. (Photo by Chris Ellis)



Ken made a Quick Tips on Winning in Life presentation to 191 kids at the El Cajon Boys & Girls Club in June 2013 and to another group there in December 2013. RWC was in the process of setting up another presentation for him in the area when we heard of his passing. (Photo courtesy of El Cajon Boys & Girls Club)



Ken began working with RWC in 2010 and inspired many kids with his personal career experiences, encouraging them to "map their lives" and reach for their goals and dreams. (Photo by Britney O'Donnell, courtesy of El Cajon Boys & Girls Club)



Ken's comic book that he wrote and designed for children.



Ken was dedicated to encouraging kids to believe in themselves. (Photo by Judy Strawn)

'Baja Turtle' visits Boys & Girls Club in El Cajon

By Britney O'Donnell
FOR THE EAST COUNTY CALIFORNIAN

Monday, June 24, Ken Kosiorek, otherwise known as "The Baja Turtle," packed up his dirt bike and gear to visit the busy Boys & Girls Club located in El Cajon.

Boys and Girls Club in El Cajon provides kids with a safe environment for them to interact and relax to just be kids. Open to children from ages 6-18, the fees for the club are low enough for most kids to be a member and there are interactive activities for the kids to participate in.

Kosiorek, who grew up riding dirt bikes on a farm in New York, said he did not start racing until he was 50. He said at that time he needed a new thrill so he decided to take on the task of soloing the Baja races that occur in Mexico every year.

He earned his name the "Baja Turtle" by arriving last in many of the Baja races. This is a huge compliment, he said, considering he accomplishes the race on his own, while the other race contestants are a part of a team.

Around 190 kids lined the bleachers in the gym of the Boys & Girls Club to hear about the exciting man who came to visit with his big motorcycle.

Gorgees Darraj, an 8-year-old boy who attends the club on a regular basis, had a few curious

questions for Kosiorek concerning this exciting hobby.

When asked if he now wants a motorcycle, Gorgees said, "My mom wouldn't let me have a motorcycle, it's too expensive."

Kosiorek kept the kids engaged by sharing exciting information regarding his bike and his fun hobby. He encouraged the kids to save money in a piggy bank, to use all the proper gear when riding and staying in school because education is vital to helping make dreams come true.

"Everything is math related in life," said Kosiorek. "Learning math is very important."

Kosiorek, who raced in 12 different races, eight of them in a row, received nine trophies, said what is unique about the license plate on his bike is that he rides his bike to the race, will finish out the race and then ride his bike back home.

"Whatever you start, finish it because you can do anything you want in life," he said.

When he is not speaking to kids about making their dreams come true or riding his motorcycle, Kosiorek is an industrial sales engineer at Airgas in El Cajon, a gases, welding and safety company.

Kosiorek said he usually speaks to children in L.A. for the Racers Who Care, Inc. program but was asked if he would like



Photo by Britney O'Donnell

Ken Kosiorek with 8-year-old Gorgees Darraj, a member of the Boys & Girls Club in El Cajon.

to speak in a local area closer to him.

After agreeing, he was shocked to find there were so many kids and that they responded to him in such a posi-

tive manner.

"The kids were so excited and interested, I was expecting them to be bored after 15 minutes, and I was pleasantly surprised," he said.

After his motivating speech to the kids, Kosiorek took the motorcycle outside and started it so the kids could hear the intense sound the motor made.

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