



TAHOE DONNER DOWNHILL SKI AREA AND TAHOE DONNER GIVING FUND HELP AT-RISK KIDS

This past November, the Tahoe Donner Giving Fund (TDGF) made a \$3,000 grant to SOS Outreach to assist them in their mission to help at-risk youth.

SOS Outreach is a national youth development non-profit which utilizes adventure sports to engage underserved and at-risk students in long-term mentorship relationships. The SOS curriculum encourages responsibility, self-confidence, service, and leadership skills by instilling the SOS core values: courage, discipline, integrity, wisdom, compassion, and humility.

“The SOS presentation to the grant committee was very compelling, particularly how they collaborate with other non-profits,” said Jennifer Jordan, TDGF Committee member.

“This is a great example of how Tahoe Donner gives back to the greater community.”

SOS works with local school districts and youth agencies to identify those students who will benefit from the structure and consistency of the curriculum. The program encourages students to set and achieve goals while increasing their ability to combat the risk factors they face.

“SOS Outreach has been coming to the Downhill Ski Area since the 2010-2011 season. It’s a great partnership to continue to teach young skiers and snowboarders who are new to the sport while also introducing great core values to our youth generation,” said Rob McClendon, Tahoe Donner Downhill Ski Area manager. “Tahoe Donner Downhill is

the perfect fit for programs like this. We pride ourselves on being the best place to begin and will continue working with groups like SOS Outreach to allow kids an opportunity to get outdoors and learn how to ski and snowboard.”

This season’s SOS Learn to Ride Program started at the Downhill Ski Area on February 1 with participating youth from Truckee and Reno. Each program is five days in length and each day centers around one of the SOS core values. Each morning starts with a circle where youth share their definition of what the day’s core value means to them. They then participate in a snowsport lesson with instructors from the mountain, SOS volunteers, and staff. At the end of the day they participate in the closing circle where they reflect on the

day's value and how it was used.

The kids are always excited on the first day to get out on the mountain to learn a snowsport. In addition, Dick Schulze, SOS Program Coordinator and Tahoe Donner member, was excited to help kick off the programs at Tahoe Donner this winter.

"I've been involved with SOS since 2000. It's a wonderful way to get kids thinking positively about themselves and their futures. Many times I've seen and heard the kids applying the SOS core values in their sports," Schulze said.

Tahoe Donner is a great fit for the Learn to Ride program because it allows the youth to get comfortable with their surroundings as they are learning to ski or snowboard. SOS Outreach programs will be serving over 500 youth in the Tahoe area this winter. In addition to Tahoe Donner, participating mountains include Heavenly, Northstar, Kirkwood, Sierra-at-Tahoe, and Diamond Peak.

SOS Outreach also has a university program for those who have graduated from the Learn to Ride Program. This winter, the university program in Tahoe will serve over 180 youth. These youth continue on with a mentor and not only ski and snowboard, but also complete service-learning days in the community, as well as attend life skills workshops which include leadership skill development and goal setting. Youth in this program have already completed over 225 hours of service in Lake Tahoe this winter.

For more information about SOS Outreach, visit sosoutreach.org. To get involved or make a donation, contact Theresa Papandrea at 775-298-0260 or via email at tpapandrea@sosoutreach.org.



"I like Tahoe Donner because it's big and not so busy, and it's nice to learn with other beginners," — Sophia, age 8.

"Being here made me feel comfortable and was a lot of fun," — Sandra, age 13.

The Tahoe Donner Giving Fund is chartered by the Tahoe Donner Board of Directors. All contributions are voluntary, tax-deductible gifts from Tahoe Donner members and friends. The TDGF is administered through the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation. For more information on the TDGF or to make a contribution, visit tahoedonner.com/giving-fund/.



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