

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

TAHOE DONNER MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

By **TIFFANY CONNOLLY**

To visit Truckee is to escape from the stresses of city life, traffic and noise. It's a place to unwind, unplug, and recharge. And behind the scenes exists a community of families, professionals, business owners and labourers who keep Truckee running by cleaning houses and yards, preparing and serving food, and maintaining recreational facilities.

Living and working in Truckee has undeniable advantages, but with rising home prices and low wages, some members of the community struggle to stay afloat. Tahoe Donner homeowners and philanthropists took notice of this and founded The Giving Fund as a way of alleviating some of the financial burden local non-profits and individuals shoulder.

GIVING BACK

"The Giving Fund is a way for Tahoe Donner residents to pool their resources in order to be part of the local community and not just 'those people on the hill,'" explained Suzanne Sullivan, Giving Fund founding member and chair. "It's a way of saying thank you to the people who create and maintain the Truckee region and environment that we all love."

By securing donations from Tahoe Donner members, the Giving Fund is able to provide significant scholarships for deserving students as well as grants for local non-profits in the areas of education, the environment, human services, and arts and culture.

"It means giving back. The local students and the effect that our giving has on the community is what drives me. It's tedious work, but when I read the scholarship applications and read these kids' stories and see the need, I just can't turn my back on that. It's the opportunity to change a life and improve a situation," says Barbara Ramsey, Giving Fund Committee Member.

For some scholarship recipients, the gift sets the course for educational and career opportunities that wouldn't be obtainable otherwise.

PHILANTHROPY FOR SCHOLARS

Arturo Colmenares, a recent graduate of Truckee High School is one of the most recent recipients of The Giving Fund's Impact Scholarship, a 4- to 5-year award of up to \$10,000 per year. He reflects on his freshman year, "I was being raised in an extremely unhealthy environment. My teacher realized that I was smart but not able to complete my work because of the way things were at home. She stepped in and decided to help. I was able to turn my life around from being the bad kid to being a focused student," explained Arturo.

Together, Arturo and his teacher filed for a change in guardianship that allowed him to move out of his unsupportive home. Arturo thrived from then on. In his senior year, upon learning that he was accepted to the University of Reno, Nevada, he began applying for financial aid and scholarships.

"I've worked at The Boys & Girls club for three years, and I love working with kids. I want to keep doing that for the rest of my life." With the scholarship money that Arturo received through The Giving Fund's generous donors, he plans to become a teacher and hopes to serve children in need. And there are plenty of families in Truckee that are in need.

"Following a school break like ski/skate week or spring break, there are some kids who take really amazing trips. However, there are a number of kids who are not going on vacation. They are staying at home alone and unsupervised because their parents, who can't afford daycare, are working in the service industry, cleaning homes or working multiple jobs," explained Diane Welch, a Truckee teacher and Tahoe Donner homeowner.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

It's not only students that benefit from the philanthropy of Giving Fund donors. Since 2015, The Giving Fund has given out over \$89,000 in grants to community programs. Some of the recipients of these grants include The Boys and Girls Club, Sierra Senior Services, Arts for the Schools, Truckee Community Theatre, Sugar Pine Foundation, the Family Resource Center, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Tahoe-Pyramid Trail, Give Back Tahoe, and many, many more.

"The Giving Fund has done so much great work, but there is so much more we can do. Awareness is a key issue. Second homeowners buy in our amazing Sierras to have a place to rest and recreate. We honor that but want our TD neighbors to also be aware of the needs within Truckee, of the people that make it possible for them to enjoy their homes here. We hope greater awareness will result in more contributions. If every homeowner gave just \$100, think of what we could accomplish in the community," reminds Suzanne.

BY THE NUMBERS

107

Tahoe Donner members donated to The Giving Fund in 2018

\$89,000

Donated to local non-profits over the last 5 years

\$1,000

Scholarship amount awarded in 2015

\$16,000

Scholarship amount awarded in 2018 as six scholarships*

\$52,000

Scholarships awarded since 2015*

\$200,000

Donated by one anonymous donor

\$200,000

Awarded to scholars as four Impact Scholarships

*Not including the Impact Scholarships

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Support the community you love by considering a donation to The Giving Fund. Every dollar adds up and you'll know that you are helping to change lives for the better.

DONATE

The Giving Fund is currently collecting used laptops for the students who received scholarships. If you have a laptop that would benefit a student, please send an email to tdgf@tahoedonner.com.

To make a financial donation please visit our website at tahoedonner.com/giving-fund. Any amount helps!

ALL ABOARD THE GIVING FUND TRAIN!



Join us for a special evening at the Giving Fund's 5th Annual Dinner & Silent Auction. Scrumptious food. Convivial camaraderie. Unique and exciting auction items. Informative speaker. Worthy cause!

This year's theme ties in with the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad. In keeping with this motif, our speaker is Jerry Blackwill, President of the Truckee Donner Railroad Society. Jerry is a Tahoe Donner resident and keeper of Truckee area railroad history. We know you will enjoy his presentation – and acquire a new perspective of Truckee as a train town.

Purchase your tickets now and support the community you love – visit July18Dinner.brownpapertickets.com.

WHAT: Tahoe Donner Giving Fund's 5th Annual Dinner & Silent Auction

WHEN: Thursday, July 18, 2019

TIME: 6PM hospitality | 7PM dinner

COST: \$100 per person (plus ticket service charge)

WHERE: The Pavilion Tent at The Lodge Restaurant & Pub