

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
September 30, 2015

Changes for Whitetooth Affordable Ski Program

All Grade 4s & 5s will get to ski/snowboard more often this winter

(Golden, BC) A group of organizations has collaborated to ensure that the Whitetooth Affordable Ski Program provides the greatest benefit to local children in Golden & Area A.

The Whitetooth Affordable Ski Program was originally created and sustained by the forward-thinking of the Whitetooth Ski Society. Upon the sale of Whitetooth to Ballast-Nedam (developers of Kicking Horse Mountain Resort (KHMR)) in the late 1990s, proceeds from the sale were used three ways - first, to pay off the Society's debt; second, to allocate some of the proceeds for the Whitetooth Legacy Fund (currently held with the CSRD); and finally, to create the Whitetooth Ski Society Fund (WSSF), which has since been held by the Golden & District Community Foundation (GD CF).

Demand for the needs-based Whitetooth Affordable Ski Program has diminished in recent years, roughly following the strength and weakness of the local economy. In 2014-15, actual skier days of the 19 participants were quite low (4 days per participant), mainly due to challenges in transportation to and from the Resort and the participants' not having a friend or family member to ski/snowboard with.

Compounding challenges in recent years, the GD CF's capacity to support local youth has been limited by lower investment returns on the WSSF's \$325,000 endowment fund. So in September, after research and careful consideration of the original intention of the Whiteooth Ski Society, the Board has decided to modify the program so that it can maximize the Fund's impact and focus on the local grade 4 & 5 classes.

"We surveyed the parents of Whitetooth Affordable Ski Program participants this summer and found out the two biggest challenges to their participation was first, getting to the Resort and second, not having a someone else to ski or snowboard with," explained Ryan Watmough, Executive Director for the GD CF. "We reached out to the local school administrators and, with Maxime Cretin's help from KHMR and the TELUS school program, we were able to develop this revised program in just one meeting."

This change is one that seems to be welcomed by teachers and administration alike.

Lois Ehman, Principal of Nicholson Elementary School confirmed that, "The staff at Nicholson are very supportive of the new program arrangements for the downhill ski program.

The grade 4/5 teachers will be happy to participate by taking their students for four full days of skiing during the school year.”

And while none of her students will benefit by this change directly, Angela Stott, Vice Principal of Golden Secondary School believes that this change in focus “exemplifies a community culture of activity, access, and sport for life.”

Under the new program, the collaboration of [Kicking Horse Mountain Resort](#), [School District #6](#), Lady Grey Elementary School, Nicholson Elementary School, the Parent Advisory Councils, and GDCF, the Whitetooth Ski Society Fund will help provide the opportunity for approximately 125 children to ski or snowboard 4 full days at a greatly reduced cost at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort (totaling 500 skier days). By directly involving the schools, this new program will address the issue of transportation and improve social inclusion for this age group.

GDCF Board Chair, Lynne Romano, further clarified, “This change will help address Golden & Area A’s ‘Vital Signs issue areas’ of ‘Recreation & Leisure’ and ‘Belonging & Leadership’ for this age group. By downhill skiing and snowboarding as a class, there will be a real improvement with respect to social inclusion in these downhill winter sports. All 125 Grade 4 & 5 students from Lady Grey & Nicholson will have 4 days of this shared experience. And I can’t think of a better way to foster their affection for their community, outdoor recreation and classmates.”

If you would like to ensure that future generations of local kids will get to learn to ski and snowboard, please give to the GDCF’s Whitetooth Ski Society Fund at www.canadahelps.org.

About the Golden & District Community Foundation

The Golden & District Community Foundation’s mission is to attract and effectively grow permanent funds; provide leadership and administration that helps in addressing significant community needs; and help donors fulfill their philanthropic interests.

To learn more about your community foundation and Golden & Area A’s Community Grant Program, please bookmark www.goldencommunityfoundation.ca.

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For more information contact:

Ryan Watmough, Executive Director
Golden & District Community Foundation
PO Box 1485 Golden, BC V0A 1H0
Phone: 1-250-344-8610
Email: admin@goldencommunityfoundation.ca
Website: www.goldencommunityfoundation.ca