

# SKY TAVERN



Reno's Ski, Bike and Hike Park | Event & Conference Center

## Annual Report 2018 / 2019



Member of



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## Letter from the Board Chair

The winter of 2019 was one for the record books. The snow began falling in late January and didn't stop until mid-May. Sky Tavern stayed open for 49 days – our longest season to date! Similar to the 2018 season, the snow didn't start until after our November-to-early-January sign-up period, affecting both our overall enrollment and the number of returning members. The continual snowfalls every 3-4 days created non-stop work but our small staff assisted by our many volunteers rose to the occasion. From shoveling to plowing to grooming, they kept Sky Tavern open. Despite these challenges, we had 2,193 members and gave scholarships and/or free equipment to 615 kids.

The abundant snowfall allowed us to break out of our weekend-only schedule and open on select weekdays. One of Sky Tavern's strategic goals is to offer programming and training during the week, and this year we were able to explore how to make that happen. We opened on seven Fridays throughout the season to accommodate special groups or to train instructors, and ski patrol and staff were able to test Sky Tavern's readiness to expand. This real-time experience provided us with valuable insights that we will apply in future seasons.

This year's membership data show us that Sky Tavern is becoming more and more family-focused. There was a dramatic increase in the number of families which joined together. Because many new residents in the Truckee Meadows are from parts of the country where skiing is not a part of life, we are planning to offer adult lessons starting in 2020 so that parents can learn winter sports along with their children. Another trend is the growing number of families comprised of grandparents raising grandchildren. These adults have also expressed an interest in learning to ski so we will be offering specialized senior instruction starting next year. Sky Tavern is a member of U.S. Ski and Snowboard, the Professional Ski Instructors of America and American Association of Snowboard Instructors. Our instructors are trained and certified to nationally recognized standards.

Perhaps the most important development this year, however, is that Sky Tavern's future has been assured! The City of Reno is supporting Sky Tavern with a new long-term lease. With this lease, which gives us 30 years of exclusive use with 20 years of extensions, we will be able to implement facility improvements for snowmaking, guaranteeing a reliable start-date every season. We will also be installing lighting on the ski runs and around the lodge, allowing late afternoon and evening programs and training. Fundraising is underway and several significant gifts and pledges have already been received.

Sky Tavern has been this community's unique resource for winter sports training and year-round mountain recreation for the last 72 years. Our vision is to continue this legacy for at least the next 72! Thank you to everyone in the "Sky family" – the parents, grandparents, siblings, volunteers, alumni, supporters, donors, and businesses – who have helped us to serve the community we are all proud to call home. Through your generosity, Sky Tavern will continue to allow future generations to enjoy Sierra snow!



# Mission

Sky Tavern, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is America's oldest and largest volunteer-based regional center committed to providing exceptional and affordable year-round outdoor mountain sports training, competition, recreation, and events for youth and their families, regardless of capability or needs.



## Our Story

Sky Tavern is located on Mt. Rose Highway, at an elevation of approximately 7,557 feet and 30 minutes by car from downtown Reno. We are best known as the home of the Junior Ski Program. Founded in 1948 by Marce Herz, a local teacher, champion skier and mother, Junior Ski is America's oldest and largest volunteer-based program teaching children how to ski or snowboard. Since its inception, more than 100,000 kids have participated in Junior Ski and our "conversion rate" – beginners who become skiers or snowboarders for life – exceeds national averages. The Washoe County School District recently acknowledged Marce's lasting contribution to our community by naming its new middle school in Arrowcreek – in the shadow of the mountains she loved – in her honor. She would be gratified to know how many children's and families' lives the Junior Ski Program has touched in the last 72 years.

Since 1948, the Junior Ski Program has evolved and expanded to encompass other learning opportunities. These include:

- Sky Kids, a learn-to-ski program for pre-school and kindergarten-aged children.
- Sky Tavern Race Team, an alpine race program for "graduates" of Junior Ski.
- Sky Tavern Adaptive Programs, learn-to-ski programs for children and adults, including veterans and children with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities.

To ensure that income level is not a barrier to participation, Sky Tavern provides scholarships and free equipment to low-income youth and families. We believe that no child who wants to learn should be turned away.

Sky Tavern began offering summer programming, in particular mountain-biking rides and competitions, in 2012. In 2019, in conjunction with our partner, Project Discovery, we had six high adventure camps for ages 8-18 that included zip-lining, whitewater rafting, rock climbing, rappelling, archery, canyoneering, and inner-tube water polo. Sky Tavern also hosts year-round special events, including musical concerts and weddings, as well as corporate and professional conferences, employee events, and retreats.

Sky Tavern prides itself on providing a fun, safe, family-centric environment which encourages all children and their families to experience and enjoy healthy, outdoor recreation. In order to keep our programs as affordable as possible, we rely on the help of community volunteers, parents, siblings, and grandparents. Without their assistance and loyalty, as well as the contributions of generous donors, philanthropists and foundations, Sky Tavern would not be able to operate.

# Volunteers

Sky Tavern has grown through the years but one thing has not changed: our programming continues to be made possible because of the assistance provided by a large army of committed volunteers.

Sky Tavern could be described as a community co-operative; parents, grandparents, siblings, older youth, and community volunteers all contribute their time and talent to make sure that Sky Tavern operates each year to serve local families. Volunteers provide everything from ski and snowboard instruction, to manning the kitchen and lunch services, to helping with snow removal and slope grooming, to overseeing parking, to staffing sign-up and equipment, and, in general, maintaining order for the thousands of children who are part of the “Sky family” each year.

In the 2018/2019 season, Sky Tavern logged more than 25,000 volunteer-hours, including:

- 196 instructors trained to PSIA and AASI national standards
- 429 support members
- 28 National Ski Patrollers

In the 2019 winter season alone, 2,193 children and families participated in our programs.



***“Sky Tavern is the most effective way to teach skiing I’ve ever seen.”***

***“Time is short with these kids and we need to be purposeful with it. To be able to do something where we are all in it together, serving and volunteering and having fun, that’s priceless.”***

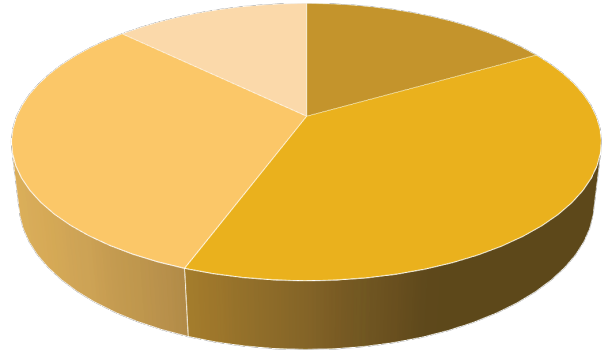
***“Sky Tavern is an amazing opportunity for parents to introduce their kids to a great winter sport and share in the learning at the same time.”***

# Revenues

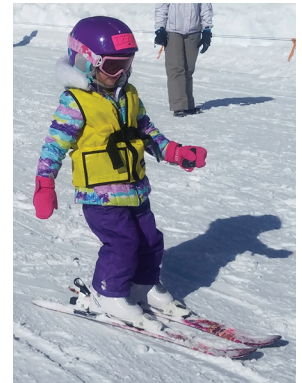
Sky Tavern is an independent non-profit. Our annual operations are supported by program income, grants, donations, revenues from special events, and in-kind assistance from the larger Truckee Meadows community. Contrary to a persistent misconception, Sky Tavern does not receive any annual government funding, including funding from the City of Reno.

In 2018/2019, Sky Tavern had **\$738,708.63** in revenues from the following sources:

Special Events Income	<b>\$123,240.17</b>
Registration	<b>\$287,837.76</b>
Donations	<b>\$233,343.11</b>
Operations Income	<b>\$94,287.59</b>
	<b>\$738,708.63</b>



■ Special Events Income ■ Registration ■ Donations ■ Operations Income

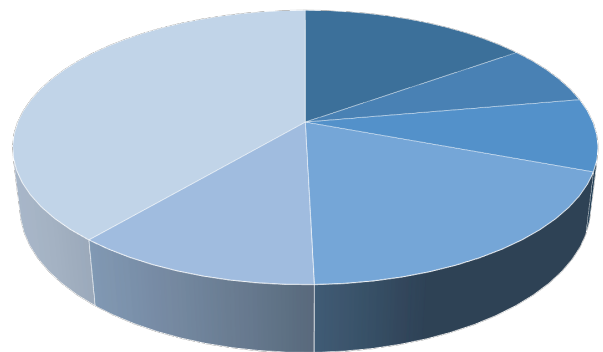


# Expenses

Sky Tavern’s annual expenses encompass the costs of mountain maintenance and operations, including equipment repairs and fuel; insurance and inspections; utilities; staffing for four full-time employees and 35 part-time employees; administration; and community engagement, including marketing and promotions.

Our 2018/2019 expenses for mountain maintenance and operations were higher than usual. While the 2017/2018 season produced more total inches of snow, 2018/2019 was a more difficult season to manage. After late January, the snow fell every 3-4 days. The parking lot needed to be plowed on Monday, then again on Tuesday, then again on Friday, etc. After every 2-foot snowfall, the slopes needed grooming. Because of this, we experienced higher than usual expenses for equipment repairs and fuel.

Cost of Goods Sold	<b>\$111,387.73</b>
Marketing & Fundraising	<b>\$52,161.72</b>
Insurance	<b>\$62,619.66</b>
Ski Area Maintenance Expense	<b>\$139,010.67</b>
Administrative Staffing	<b>\$85,250.00</b>
Operations	<b>\$285,943.09</b>
	<b>\$736,372.87</b>



- Cost of Goods Sold
- Marketing & Fundraising
- Insurance
- Ski Area Maintenance Expense
- Administrative Staffing
- Operations

*“Teaching kids to ski is important, but it’s even more important to teach them to be part of a community by volunteering, being respectful, and learning life lessons.”*

*“We were so impressed by Sky Tavern! On our first day we were running late. Three nervous kids and a spazzy mom trying to shove feet into boots and walk with a lot of gear. A very kind volunteer helped my daughter carry her gear and get her to her lesson. My youngest son and I were directed to Sky Kids and met some of the nicest people you can find. The staff and volunteers were just so great. Thanks to everyone for their dedication and kind hearts.”*

# Programs

Sky Tavern provides year-round mountain sports training and recreational opportunities for area youth and families. Although we are best known for our winter programs, especially Junior Ski, we also offer a growing number of camps and programs in the summer and fall.

## Winter Programs

- **Sky Tavern Junior Ski:** learn-to-ski/snowboard program for youth aged 6-18.  
Junior Ski is not only our oldest and largest program, it is the oldest and largest program of its kind in the United States and one of the largest in the world! Through the years, more than 100,000 kids have learned to ski through Junior Ski, including Tamara McKinney who won four World Cup season titles in the 1980's, the only American woman to hold that distinction until Lindsay Vonn in 2008, and David Wise, a two-time Olympic gold medalist in freestyle.
- **Sky Kids:** learn-to-ski program for preschoolers and kindergarten-aged children aged 4-6.  
Sky Kids was founded by Tom Wise – two-time Olympian David Wise's father – to teach his younger children how to ski while their older siblings were in Junior Ski. Today, Sky Kids is our fastest-growing program and routinely sells out every season.
- **Sky Tavern Race Team:** Alpine skiing for "graduates" of the Jr. Ski program.  
As a USSA Club, Sky Tavern's race team competes and consistently medals in the Tahoe League and Far West Race Series.
- **Adaptive:** specialized instruction and ski programs for youth and adults, including veterans and children with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities.  
Special instructors have the training and dedication to help participants experience the thrill of successful participation in winter sports. Snow is the great equalizer; everyone can learn the feeling of freedom that skiing brings.
- **Junior Instructors:** program for middle- and high-school-aged experienced skiers and boarders who teach younger kids. The program promotes leadership and self-esteem in teenagers and has proven to be very popular and successful.

## Summer Programs

- **Discovery Camps:** summer activities for ages 8-18.  
Offered in conjunction with our on-site partner, Project Discovery, Sky Tavern has six high adventure camps that include zip-lining, whitewater rafting, rock climbing, rappelling, archery, canyoneering, and inner-tube water polo.
- **Mountain Biking:** open mountain biking for all ages.  
The free trails at Sky Tavern connect to the Tahoe Rim Trail, offering access to some of the most beautiful rides in the West! Sky Tavern hosts several races annually, including the Reno Wheelmen and the University of Nevada's NCA Western Races.



# Events and Rentals

Sky Tavern is available as a venue for a wide range of events throughout the year. Rental rates are available upon request. This year, we hosted weddings, corporate events, and even a movie production company! Some of the highlights during the 2018/2019 season included:

- Mt. Rose employee appreciation dinner
- Piston Bully Company Retreat
- Hartbreak Films' "Christmas Reservation" movie
- Outdoor concert
- Multiple weddings

Sky Tavern also holds its own fundraisers and special events at the lodge. One event we were pleased to conduct in 2019 was an Alumni Day and Open House for past members, supporters and current members to participate in a free-ski day and the chance to re-connect during a hosted reception. We plan to host an Alumni Day and Open House every Spring.

Other Sky Tavern events included:

- Pray for Snow
- Reno Ski and Recreation Day



***"I learned to ski here 33 years ago. My father was an instructor. Now I bring my kids and I'm an instructor."***

***"I love teaching at Sky Tavern because it really makes a difference for the kids. Especially in the adaptive program for kids with disabilities."***

***"This was the first year I actually got to ski one afternoon. WOW!"***

# Planning for the Future

Sky Tavern's vision is to serve the Truckee Meadows community for years to come! Our long-term goals include significant capital projects that will improve our winter and summer programming:

- **A snowmaking system**, so that we have a guaranteed opening date and can provide at least 8 weeks of "hill time" to our Junior Ski kids and families.
- **Lift improvements**, so that our kids and families have a great experience.
- **Expanded instructor and training programs**, so that we can increase the number of kids and families we serve.
- **Outdoor lighting**, so that we can provide early evening programming and training, including training for local schools and teams. Because this programming will be mid-week or after-hours, Sky Tavern will use paid staff – not volunteers – to provide lift operations, ski patrol, etc. The volunteer-based Junior Ski Program will not be affected.
- **More year-round outdoor programs and events**, so that community members can enjoy this community asset.

Snowmaking and lighting will entail a range of related capital improvements, including a new shop building, a line extension from NV Energy and a sewer connection. The estimated cost for these improvements is approximately \$2.5 million and encompasses fees for specialized consultants and permits. We are hoping to have the first phases of the improvements done in time for the winter season in 2020/2021.

In the short-term, we will be asking the community's help to fund smaller improvements to the lifts and lodge:

- **Chair bars on the Sky Ridge lift:** est. \$25,000
- **Lighting for the deck:** est. \$1,000
- **Painting rooms and hallways:** est. \$2,500
- **New carpeting:** est. \$3,000
- **Magic Carpet lift:** est. \$160,000

The Sky Ridge and Magic Carpet improvements will make the lifts safer and more efficient. For example, replacing the handle tow lift with the Magic Carpet will enable us to move the "littles," the Sky Kids participants and Levels 1-2's who can get cold and frustrated on line, more quickly. The improvements to the lodge will help with general maintenance and appearance, supporting events and rental opportunities.

For more information on how you can help Sky Tavern, please call us at **(775) 323-5125!**

# Special Thanks to Our Supporters

Sky Tavern gratefully acknowledges the generous donations, grants, pledges, and in-kind gifts from our supporters and friends during the 2018/2019 season.

Bretzlaff Foundation

E.L. Cord Foundation

Thelma B. and Thomas P. Hart Foundation

Robert Z. Hawkins Foundation

Share Winter Foundation

Solecon Laboratories

Stillwater Foundation

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The Bender Group

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Bobo's Ski and Patio

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Cindy Carano

Jim Carnahan

Ann & Tom Carpenter

Thomas Case

Thomas Cates

Christmas Reservation, Inc.

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Greg's Garage

Jack Hayes

Carl Hiavenka

Home Depot

Homewood Mountain Resort

Bob Howard

Kassbohrer All Terrain Vehicles

Aaron Kenneston

William (Herb) Kirby

Betsy Kohan

Lake Tahoe Cruises

Catherine & George Lindesmith

Lowe's

Trevor Lynch

Martini Sports

Tamara McKinney

Katie McKissick

Maureen McKissick

Mesa Rim Climbing and Fitness

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Allison Nelson

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Renown Health Foundation

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Robison Engineering

Gary Rosenbloom

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Benjamin Spillman

The Spina Family

Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows

Randi Thompson

Todd Torvinen

Sarah Warmbrodt

Noland Wasson

Mary Wenata

Western Nevada Supply

Kent Wood

Woodward Tahoe

Yogurt Beach

Boreal Mountain Resort

Heavenly Mountain Resort

Granlibakken Tahoe Ski Area

Donner Ski Ranch

Kirkwood Mountain Resort

Northstar California

Sierra-at-Tahoe

Soda Springs Ski Area

Sugar Bowl Resort

Tahoe Donner Ski Area

Diamond Peak Ski Resort

Vail Resorts, Inc.

Whitefish Mountain Resort

World Market

Yellowstone Mountain Club

## Quick Facts for 2019 Season

Inches of Snow	327
Number of Ski Days	49
Junior Ski Members	2,193
Temporary Members	201
Scholarships	147
Race Team Participants	35
Volunteer Hours	+25,000
Free or Discounted Equipment	555
Opening Day, Winter Season	Jan 19
Closing Day, Winter Season	May 4
Summer Camps	6
Years Teaching Nevada Kids	72

# SKY TAVERN



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