

# GIVING THE GIFT OF SNOWBOARDING.

044 One of the best things about snowboarding is its ability to heal. Not physically (of course, sometimes it's downright dangerous when it comes to bodily harm) but mentally and spiritually, it can be a life-changing experience. That's the idea behind campCARE, a different kind of snowboard camp.

"Our founding vision is to invest in youth, to build character and self-worth while promoting respect for cultural diversity," explains Heidi Landau, founder and executive director of the campCARE Children's Foundation. "The mantra of the camp is 'embracing differences until difference makes no difference.'"

Heidi began the campCARE charity program in 1997, after living through the glory days of snowboarding in the early nineties and eventually becoming one of Whistler/Blackcomb's snowboard instructors. After discussions with many of the area's top pro riders, she wanted to give children who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to ride a chance to experience the snowboarding lifestyle. Although the sport, in general, is inherently expensive, many of the pros at the time started out with nothing and sympathized with Heidi's cause. Burton had just started their CHILL program on the East Coast and assisted Heidi in creating a similar non-profit organization out West. With a high-caliber team of coaches and popular pro riders to interact with the kids, she organized camps at resorts like Crested Butte, Colo., Kirkwood, Calif. and Mt. Baker, Wash. After just a few years, the operation moved to Whistler full-time and has since established itself as an important part of the local community. Supporting the camp, Whistler/Blackcomb partners with The Fairmont Chateau to

host a series of premium monthly learn-to-ride weekends with top professional guest coaches. The innovative program includes Learn-to-Ride, Ride On and the celebrated Junior Development Team.

"Our program is different than anything else," adds Heidi. "We work with a smaller group of kids and create lasting relationships that build self-esteem and self-reliance. What makes it so much fun is not only the amazing time on the hill, but also spending time in the community—hanging out at the hotel, going swimming and dinners that we all do together. Through this bonding, not just with the team but with each other, they learn a lot about making friendships. This process of discovery and growth leads to an increased sense of self-worth, compassion, community spirit, and appreciation of the outdoors."

Working with different youth agencies in the lower mainland, campCARE provides gear, coaching and education to troubled teens, helping them develop skills and resources to improve their lives. With a 100-percent volunteer-run organization comprised of 65 active members, and a 17-person snowboard team that's included past coaches like Kale Stephens, Chris Brown, Marie-France Roy and Travis Williams, campCARE selflessly gives the gift of snowboarding to the ones who need it the most.

"There is no greater return on an investment than seeing a child excel because of personal achievement," says Heidi. We are committed to offering underprivileged youth an opportunity to grow and to discover their self-worth and special place in this world." —Larry Nuñez 🌱

For more info: [www.campcare.com](http://www.campcare.com)

