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Taos Ski Valley Announces Summer Uplift Youth Fund Recipients *Seven local organizations awarded \$50,000 as part of youth focused community initiative*

TAOS SKI VALLEY, N.M. (August 27, 2026) — Taos Ski Valley, Inc. announced the summer recipients for the Uplift Youth Fund, an initiative dedicated to supporting youth-focused efforts in four key areas: outdoor equity and youth programming, environmental stewardship, economic and workforce development, and connection to the Taos community. Seven local organizations were selected, awarding \$50,000 to local youth-serving organizations, bringing the fund's total investment to \$250,000 across 36 organizations in Taos County and Northern New Mexico. With two funding cycles per year, the Uplift Youth Fund awards range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 and are given to selected nonprofits and organizations serving the Taos community. This year's summer cycle received 38 applications reflecting both growing awareness of the new fund while underscoring the continued need for youth-centered investment across the region.

2026 Summer Cycle Awardees

- EnSueños Y Los Angelitos Development Center — Inclusive Outdoor Learning and Therapeutic Environment Development
- MAS Comunidad/The Peñasco Theatre Collective — Youth Multidisciplinary Arts Workshops
- Semillas de Salud — Creating Healing
- Taos County Sheriff's Posse — Rodeo and Gymkhana Programs
- Taos Education Collaborative — Community Summer Camp Expansion
- Taos Youth Soccer League — Soccer After Dark
- The Paseo Project — DISTURBANCE: A Forest in Motion Youth Fire Ecology & Art Education Program and Exhibition

"We're grateful to stand alongside the people who show up every day for our youth, creating opportunities, building confidence, and helping young people see what is possible," said Mona Nozhackum, community relations manager at Taos Ski Valley. "By supporting the work already happening in our community, we can help build a stronger, more hopeful future for the next generation."

Community Advisory Circle

The Uplift Youth Fund is guided by a Community Advisory Circle (CAC) of local leaders, advocates, parents, people who grew up in Taos, and youth representatives who bring community knowledge, understanding and lived experience to the selection process. The CAC reviews all program applications and ensures funding decisions reflect the priorities of Taos County.

As the Summer Cycle comes to a close, so does the inaugural CAC's two-year term. Taos Ski Valley extends its appreciation to Anwar Kaelin, Ashley Padilla, Christopher Madrid, Hawk Foster, Ilona Spruce, Neomi Martinez-Standard, Robyn Chavez, Santiago DeHerrera, Todd Gravelle, and Yolanda Lewis for their service.

"Being part of the Uplift Youth Fund Community Advisory Circle means bringing a local, lived perspective to the table," said Robyn Chavez, founder of Red Willow Hospice and outgoing CAC member. "Having youth, parents, and people actively working in our community at the table gives us a much better understanding of what our young people actually need and what will make a meaningful difference."





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Celebrating Collaboration and Impact

The Uplift Youth Fund investments are already supporting expanded youth programming throughout the region. For example, Assistance Dogs of the West-Taos, a 2026 Winter Cycle recipient, is utilizing its award to expand its student trainer program.

“Where and how funding is allocated means just as much to ADW-Taos as the money itself,” said Denise Dumesnil, LCSW, CESP, Instructor/Trainer at ADW-Taos. “When you are recognized by the community you want to serve — youth — it staves off burnout and gives us the motivation to keep working hard because other people want us to continue, too.”

Taos Ski Valley will celebrate the 2026 awardees, outgoing Community Advisory Circle, and community partners at its annual Collaboration Celebration this fall. The event will recognize the collective work behind the fund and the organizations creating meaningful opportunities for young people across the region. Additionally, on September 14, 2026, Nozhackum will join the Santa Fe Community Foundation’s Funder Panel–Taos at the Taos Center for the Arts to discuss the regional funding landscape and Uplift Youth Fund.

Applications for the next round of Uplift Youth Fund awards will open on December 1, 2026, with an additional \$50,000 available to local organizations serving youth across Taos County. Application details will be available at skitaos.com/community.

About the Uplift Youth Fund

Launched in January 2025 by Taos Ski Valley, the Uplift Youth Fund provides \$100,000 annually to local organizations through youth-focused projects. The fund supports initiatives in four key areas: outdoor equity and youth programming, environmental stewardship, economic and workforce development, and connection to community. Funding ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 are awarded twice yearly to nonprofits and organizations serving Taos County and northern New Mexico youth.

