

Volunteer of the Year 2024

Ski Patrol Volunteer of the Year – Brian Utschig

The Blackhawk Ski Patrol would like to thank and recognize Brian Utschig for his contributions to our patrol and the club this past season.

In the 2023/2024 season, Brian went through the NSP training and certification process to become an Outdoor Emergency Care instructor, and an Outdoor Emergency Transportation (Toboggan) instructor, which involved many hours of preparation, mentoring, and evaluation. These roles will greatly help support the continued education and growth of the Blackhawk Ski Patrol in years to come.

Brian will be helping teach Outdoor Emergency Care to our new candidates this summer and will be one of the key instructors helping run our toboggan class this next winter season.

In addition to patrolling his regular shift on Thursday nights, Brian could often be found on our hills cheering on his son, Ian, during BART Practice or helping train our new patrol candidates during Monday evening toboggan classes.

Thank you, Brian, for all that you continue to do for our Patrol!



Ski Jumping Volunteer of the Year -- Mary Elizabeth Pollard

Mary Elizabeth spent 14 years as a parent volunteer. Her jobs spanned from hill prep, planning multiple Blackhawk Bash's fundraisers to benefit all programs, and organizing countless winter ski jumping tournaments and summer camps. Mary Elizabeth was also the 3rd woman to be appointed to the Blackhawk Board of Directors where served for 9 years.

What makes Mary Elizabeth the ultimate volunteer is the fact that for the past 5 years, when her kids have moved on from ski jumping, Mary Elizabeth is still giving back to the sport. M.E. has worked to revamp the Intro to ski jumping classes and helps at practices and on work days. Behind the scenes M.E. develops programming, posts to the website and plans the yearly budget. Mary Elizabeth is not just the volunteer of the year, but the volunteer for the past two decades. There is no way the jumping program would be where it is today without her continuous dedication.



Mountain Bike School Volunteer of the Year -- Jay Meagher

Jay joined the Mountain Bike School a number of years ago and has become the quiet do-it-all coach. He first joined as a parent who helped out during lessons and is now an important piece of both our mountain bike and ski school instructor list. Jay gladly assists with the beginners, advanced students, or the students who aren't feeling the lesson on the day. He's always willing to help out wherever he can be of the most assistance. Jay is a person who's always smiling and projects the joy of the sport and working with the kids at every lesson he helps teach.



Ski and Board School Volunteer of the Year -- Ali Sammour

Ali first joined the Ski and Board School a few years ago and was immediately one of the student's favorites. Ali now brings the cool factor to the Ski and Board School as well as our Youth Mountain Bike lessons. Ali has a way of leading the kids with an approach which makes them feel like they're boarding or biking with their best older buddy. You can always hear him at the top of the slope or start of the trail with "You

think we can do it like last time, but add in ____" and fill in the blank. The kid's response is similar to an older friend challenging you to do something new; excited, but a little nervous and then pure joy when they conquer the new challenge. Ali is contagiously fun and we look forward to many more years of his help in both the Mountain Bike School and Ski and Board School.



Mountain Bike Trails Volunteer of the Year -- Gerry Anderson

Gerry has helped out on trail work days in the past, but it was his unexpected gift of \$3,000 late last season that allowed us to completely update Be Happy, with the help of Jeremy and Ola on the machines!



Nordic Kids Volunteer of the Year – Jen St. Clair

Our program is indebted to Jen's hard work in re-doing our name-bib system. With over 160 kids in our program and 20 instructors and assistants skiing sometimes in the dark, our name bibs are key to connecting with skiers during lessons. Jen printed, laminated and set up a system for evaluation that has made a huge positive difference on Wednesday nights and Sunday afternoons. She has also stepped in to lead on weeks I have been out of town. Every program needs a super volunteer and Jen is it!

Biathlon Volunteer of the Year – Dave Banker

Dave Banker has been an important part of the biathlon family since his son, David, began participating as a middle school biathlete. He has become an integral part of the coaching staff by attending practices and races. Dave's knowledge of biathlon has grown over the years along with his willingness to coach our athletes. His expertise with rifles has been invaluable. As a trained gunsmith Dave is always ready and willing to take on issues we may have with our rifles. Unfortunately, the 2024/25 season will be Dave's last season as biathlon coach, as David will be graduating high school next spring. Dave's hard work and dedication to biathlon will be sorely missed. We thank him and are extremely grateful for all he has done for the Blackhawk Biathlon team.



Snowmaking Volunteer of the Year – (Adult) Roy Durtschi

Snowmaking Volunteer of the Year – (Youth) Koen Mattison



Telemark Skiing Volunteer of the Year -- Jim Jones

Jim Jones is a decorated veteran NSP Patroller with 25 years of volunteer service whose primary roster is Tyrol Basin. In the middle of the 2023 season, Jim signed on to Blackhawk's secondary roster, as one of two tele night patrollers with the intention to learn to tele ski. Needless to say, he has taken on the skill set well in his tele skiing through this season. Each week, Jim brings his son Collin, and occasionally his son Miles who are learning to tele alongside their father, helping to foster the next generation of Telemark skiers. Jim shares the responsibility for patrolling the hill and allows us to ski both the East side and the West side as the season permits. Jim never shows up empty handed to the now famed tele night après ski, where he contributes masterfully baked cakes crafted by his wife Kyoko, and in some cases made by him and his kids. We want to recognize Jim for his contributions in helping keep tele night safe and fun, and in encouraging the next generation to free the heel. Thanks Jim!



Outdoor Exploration Volunteer of the Year – Leah St. Clair

If you've been to an Outdoor Exploration event this year, chances are you've heard me say "Head on over there and Leah will help you with..." She's always been ready and willing to help kids with cereal necklaces, clean up spills, craft Orienteering Challenge clues, make our event pins, help with crafts, and help with the hardest job of all - unpacking the jeep after all of the fun! I am so grateful for Leah and her generous heart for Blackhawk.

Blackhawk Alpine Ski Team (BART) Volunteer of the Year -- Lori and Eric Strum



Blackhawk Nordic Ski Team Volunteer of the Year -- Pam Schwarzbach

Pam spearheaded the popular rainbow hats as a way for skiers and families to have a unified team style and more easily connect with each other at races. As the co-owner of Hive, along with her partner Troy, Pam donated and organized all kinds of great "swag" giveaways to skiers to encourage and promote race participation. Her efforts have brought in skiers who might not otherwise race and have contributed to a team that finds racing to be fun! Thanks, Pam, for all that you do for BNST!