

# Helping make dreams come true

By **MARY-JUSTINE LANYON**  
Editor

As children, Beth Johnson and Randy Pattison dreamed of racing down the slopes on ski teams. They were, however, stymied by the sport's expensive nature.

Realizing that today's youngsters have similar dreams, the two formed the Alpine Pacific Ski Team at Snow Valley Mountain Resort and began recruiting established young skiers.

Their plans to participate in a race at Snow Summit and a fundraiser at Snow Valley in March 2020 were thwarted by the pandemic.

"Our kids trained for about two years and never had the chance to put that training to use on the slopes," Johnson said. A day and a half before the Snow Summit race last year, the resort was shut down due to COVID-19.

This year, Johnson noted, the team – which the coaches keep at 10 to 12 members – was able to start training early because Snow Valley opened.

Eight young racers participated in their first race on March 6 at Snow Summit. "All the kids got ribbons or medals," Coach Johnson said with pride. "It was so wonderful, so validating."

The racers compete in both age and ability groups. Because of COVID restrictions, there was no awards ceremony. Johnson has the racers' ribbons and medals and plans to award them at an end-of-year celebration.

Prior to the race, Johnson and the team members were able to "slip the course" – slip sideways through the gates "to look at the lay of the land, look at where the gates are without skiing through them. You may come over a rise and see there's a tight gate – you want to remember that," she said.

Johnson and Pattison have trained the team for both slalom – where the turns are tight – and giant slalom, where there are fewer gates, further apart. Giant slalom, Johnson noted, is a faster race with sweeping turns.

The Snow Summit course was marked with blue dye, indicating the path the racers should take. They trip a gate at the start and then drop their hand at the finish line to trip the timing wand.

The racing season is over now, Johnson said. "I'm glad they got one race in. They were excited and a little nervous. They got a chance to see what it's really like on a race course."

While the racing season may be over, the ski team's time on the slopes was not. On March 9 they were able to hold the postponed fundraiser at Snow Valley, raising money for the Ronald McDonald House in Loma Linda.

The Snow Valley ski patrol blocked off one of the runs for the race. Gate judges ensured each skier made all the gates. "They couldn't just go willy-nilly down the course," Johnson said.

Sponsors pledged money per lap or paid a flat rate. Each skier, Johnson said, made 13 or 14 laps in an hour. "That's a lot in an hour," she said.

Johnson and Pattison invited representatives from the Ronald McDonald House to come up to the race. At the end of the day, the team split the proceeds 50-50 with the charity.

"We did this because we wanted our kids to invest in someone besides themselves," Johnson said. "We wanted a charity they could race for to help the team and help someone else in need."

"We were thrilled to partner with the Ronald McDonald House and they were so appreciative."

As each skier reached the bottom of the slope, Johnson marked that lap on their bib, sending them back up the hill on the ski lift. "That gave me a chance to encourage them," she said. "Randy was at the top to start them."

Because neither Johnson nor Pattison could afford to race when they were youngsters, they volunteer their time as coaches. The money that is donated to the team goes for uniforms, equipment and insurance, which Johnson said is a huge expense. "We haven't had to use it but we can't go without it," she said.



Coach Randy Pattison instructs the team during their fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House at Snow Valley.

(Photos: Blissful Grace Photography)

Jack Mellinger was one of the team members who raised money for the Ronald McDonald House.



Team member Sam Mellinger on the course at Snow Summit.



Coach Beth Johnson and the ski team during the course inspection at Snow Summit.



Riley Devlin carving around gate during the Ronald McDonald House fundraiser.

They also paid the entry fees for the racers in the Snow Summit race; the parents paid for very discounted lift tickets, Johnson noted.

"We try to make it as easy as possible for families," she said. "There are no club fees – the kids aren't charged anything. It's our heart's desire to keep it as inexpensive as possible."

Johnson expressed her appreciation and respect for Kevin Somes, general manager and vice president of Snow Valley. "They don't charge us anything. They host us – they are so gracious. Snow Valley gave us a home – that means so much to us."

Johnson also expressed appreciation for the donors who have helped the team get plastic protective gear for the



Libby Mellinger drops down into a tuck as she approached a gate at Snow Valley. (Photos: Blissful Grace Photography)

racers' hands, arms and legs so they can hit the gates without hurting themselves.

For more information on the Alpine Pacific Ski Team or to make a donation, visit [alpinepacific.org](http://alpinepacific.org).