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WinterKids Announces 2024 Grantees to receive a portion of \$25,000

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Westbrook, Maine - WinterKids is thrilled to announce the recipients of its Downhill 24 Outdoor Fund. This year's grants, totaling \$25,000, will go to 10 outstanding organizations across Maine. These grants are aimed at promoting outdoor activities and encouraging children to stay active throughout the year.

The WinterKids Downhill 24 Outdoor Fund was established to further WinterKids' mission of getting kids outside and active with funds raised at the Downhill 24 event. Through a community vote, the top three winning organizations in each category were selected, with one honorable mention winner also being recognized for their dedication and efforts.

Maine 501(c)(3) Nonprofits Category

The top three winners in this category are:

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

- **Location:** Bangor, ME (grant funds to serve Hancock and Penobscot Counties)
- **Grant Amount:** \$5,000
- **Intended Use:** The WinterKids grant will be matched for the Snowbuster program, which is currently only provided in a few rural counties. Funds would allow expansion to Hancock and Penobscot counties. The Snowbuster program provides quality winter outerwear for youth in foster care or living with a kinship caregiver.

Saddleback Maine Community Corps

- **Location:** Rangeley, ME (Franklin County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$2,000
- **Intended Use:** Enable children in grades 1-8 to get free season-long equipment loans and lift tickets, then participate in Ski Tuesday, Saddleback's 8-10 weekly 3-hour professionally instructed group ski/ride lessons accompanied by their Community Corps.

Big Rock

- **Location:** Mars Hill, ME (Aroostook County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$1,000
- **Intended Use:** Purchase skis, boots, poles, helmets, and snowboards to expand the rental fleet that supports the community 'Ski4Life' program.

Maine Public Schools Category

The top three winners in this category are:

Oak Hill, Gray New Gloucester, and Lisbon High Schools and Middle Schools

- **Location:** Wales, ME (Androscoggin/Cumberland County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$5,000
- **Intended Use:** Rent out Lost Valley for a day, provide gear, ski lessons, etc.

Noble Middle School

- **Location:** Berwick, ME (York County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$2,000
- **Intended Use:** Purchase skateboards, cross-country skis, sleds, archery resources, and additional outdoor supplies and/or fund transportation costs for hiking, skating, and fishing trips.

Dirigo Elementary School

- **Location:** Peru, ME (Oxford County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$1,000
- **Intended Use:** Replace old and worn-out gear for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Maine Parks & Recreation Category

The top three winners in this category are:

Eustis/Stratton Recreation Department

- **Location:** Stratton, ME (Franklin County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$5,000
- **Intended Use:** Train Water Safety Instructors and purchase lifejackets, safety equipment and learning tools to create a strong swim lesson and water safety program.

Biddeford Recreation

- **Location:** Biddeford, ME (York County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$2,000
- **Intended Use:** Offset the cost of ski programming to make it more accessible to children of all socioeconomic backgrounds, &/or purchase additional equipment for seasonal outdoor recreation that would allow more children to participate in water programming.

Easton Recreation

- **Location:** Easton, ME (Aroostook County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$1,000
- **Intended Use:** Offset costs for their work with local mountain to provide “ski for life” rates that include rental equipment and lessons for children in their downhill ski program.

Honorable Mention

Princeton Parks & Rec

- **Location:** Princeton, ME (Washington County)
- **Grant Amount:** \$1,000
- **Intended Use:** Support the addition of a bay of swings and playground accessories.

Congratulations to all the deserving grantees! We commend their commitment to getting kids outdoors and active, making a positive impact on the physical and mental well-being of Maine's youth.

For more information about the WinterKids Downhill 24 Outdoor Fund and its initiatives, please visit WinterKids.org/D24Fund.

About WinterKids: WinterKids is a nonprofit organization based in Maine that provides children with opportunities to stay active and healthy and learn outdoors during the winter months. Since its establishment in 2000, WinterKids has been dedicated to ensuring that hundreds of thousands of children embrace the joy of outdoor winter

activities while reaping the numerous physical and mental health benefits they provide. To learn more, please visit www.winterkids.org.

WinterKids' Major Community Sponsor is L.L. Bean. Supporting Sponsors are Agren, Central Maine Power, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, WEX, Zachau Construction, and WMTW Channel 8 and The CW.