


# winter4 kids

 (973) 846-8250

 [www.winter4kids.org](http://www.winter4kids.org)

 44 Breakneck Rd, Vernon  
Township, NJ 07462

## Mission

**Our mission is to influence youth behavior through winter activities.**

Winter4Kids, builds resilience, instills inclusion, supports and empowers youth by providing equitable access to outdoor winter sports and structured learning experiences. Youth discover their potential, strengthen self-agency, and rise beyond the snow.

## Vision

**Our vision is for all youth, regardless of their background, to rise to their fullest potential through powerful outdoor experiences.** To do so we created a vibrant multi-program mountain complex designed exclusively for youth.



## History

### 2014

The former Hidden Valley ski area is reimagined and transformed into the National Winter Activity Center.

### 2015-2019

Building on a successful pilot season, the National Winter Activity Center expands its reach.

### 2019

The National Winter Activity Center publicly rebrands as Winter4Kids, reflecting expanded reach and impact.

### Present

Winter4Kids serves thousands of youth annually through multi-year programs that combine winter sports, mentorship, nutrition, and life-skills development, welcoming over 20,000 youth since opening.

By combining experiential learning with consistent support, the program equips young people with the resilience and confidence needed to succeed in school and beyond.

Ultimately, Winter4Kids is not only teaching youth how to navigate a mountain—it is preparing them to navigate life.



## Our community

Winter4Kids primarily supports families experiencing limited access to financial resources, stable housing, and reliable food, as well as fewer opportunities for enrichment beyond their immediate environments. Many youth also have limited exposure to new activities and consistent positive role models—gaps that Winter4Kids works to address through supportive relationships and transformative experiences.



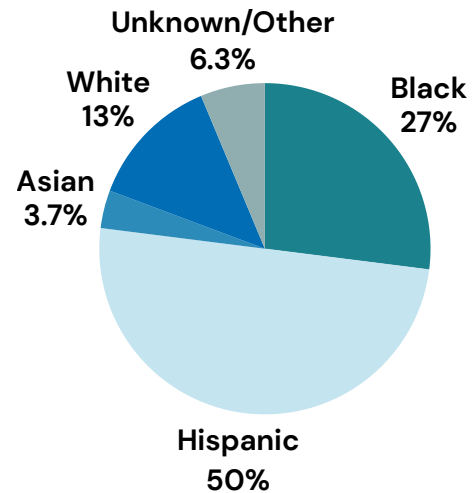
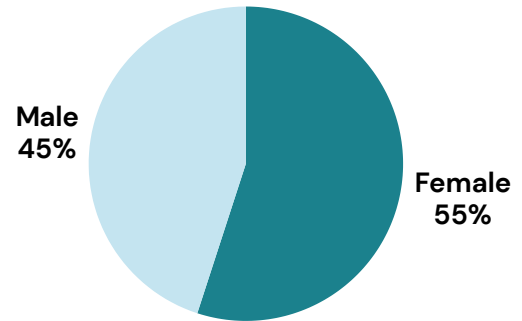
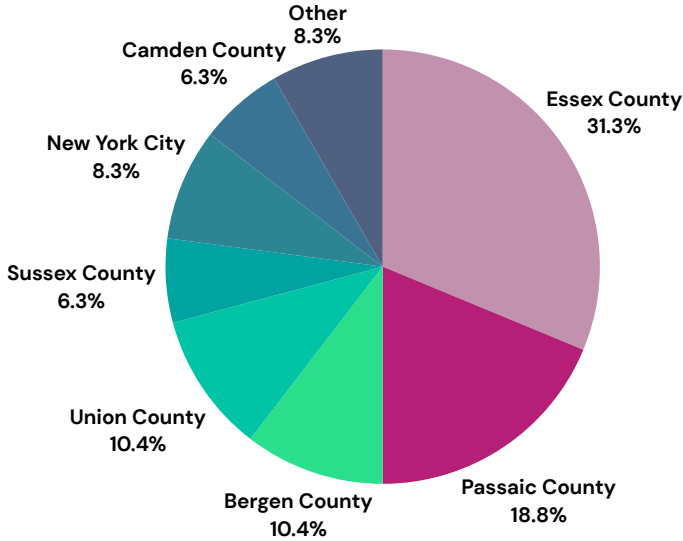
**1,800+ students per year**



**77% low-income students**



**50 partner organizations**



Winter4Kids partners with 50 organizations across the region to expand access to winter sports and year-round enrichment for youth who might not otherwise have these opportunities. These partnerships are central to our reach, connecting students to transformative experiences both on and off the mountain.

# Our framework

At the core of our model is the RISE framework—**Resilience, Inclusion, Support, and Empowerment**—which intentionally cultivates what we define as “mountain agency”: a participant’s ability to navigate challenges, make decisions, and persist in the face of uncertainty. Over time, this mountain-based learning translates into “real-life agency,” equipping youth with the mindset and skills needed to succeed in school and beyond.

**Our program does more than teach winter sports**—it develops resilient, confident, and capable young people who are prepared to navigate challenges, build meaningful relationships, and pursue expanded opportunities in all areas of their lives.

When youth become drivers of their own growth...

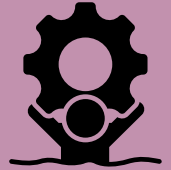
...agency is built.



decision-making

responsibility

persistence



## R – RESILIENCE

*Fall down, Rise up.*



We help kids push through discomfort, frustration, and fear, developing self-regulation. Whether they’re strapping into a snowboard for the first time or navigating real-life challenges, we teach them how to get back up, stronger every time.

## I – INCLUSIVITY

*Belonging starts here.*



We intentionally design programming where every participant, regardless of identity, background, or ability, feels welcome, valued, and safe; achieving a sense of belonging. Our environment celebrates diversity and ensures all youth have equal access to activities, opportunity, and growth.

## S – SUPPORTIVE

*Growth happens together*



*Over 10 years of coaching youth, we have seen that being part of a community fosters growth. Support is more than encouragement, it’s collaboration. We create a culture where kids work together, lean on each other, and build strong relationships with peers and mentors. Every kid is surrounded by people who believe in them and lift them up.*

## E – EMPOWERMENT

*Find your Strength.*



Empowerment is not just about mastering skills, it’s about understanding yourself and others. We help youth build self-awareness and empathy, so they gain confidence not only in what they can do, but in how they connect with the world around them.

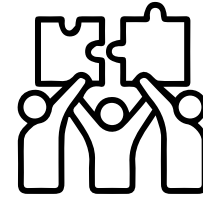
# First Tracks

- Winter sports facility and gear
- Coaches and mentors
- 50 youth partners
- Nutrition program
- Funding and volunteers



# Our activities

- Extended outside physical activity
- Goal and milestone accomplishments
- Healthy lunch and snack breaks
- Teamwork with peers
- Positive reinforcement by caring adults



# Our annual impact

- 1,800 First Tracks students
- 11,000 on-snow lessons
- 22,000 hours of mentoring
- 11,000 meals provided



# Our outcomes

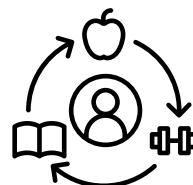
## Short-Term

- 100% progression achievement to ski/snowboard independence
- Increased confidence
- Enhanced sense of belonging
- Strong peer connections



## Long-Term

- Transfer of mountain agency to real life agency
- Improved school attendance
- Better relationships
- Healthier lifestyle choices
- Expanded future goals



# Our team

- **Judie Rullis** – Interim CEO
- **Jessica Shandor** – Chief Administrative Officer
- **Mark Dobrowolski** – Director of Operations
- **Tom Zorn** – Director of Programs
- **Kellie McLaughlin** - Program Administrator
- **Danielle Vallat** – Donor & Community Engagement
- **Kristin Salvatore** – Events & Fundraising
- **Bill Ruhl** – Board President
- **Phill Gross** – Board
- **Stacey Roman** – Board
- **Kristin Shute** – Board
- **Danita Wickwire** - Board



***Before Winter4Kids, I had never snowboarded and didn't think it was something I could do—but with support and encouragement, I built confidence, discipline, and a belief in myself that continues far beyond the slopes.***

- Student, East Side High School, Paterson, NJ



## Why Winter4Kids

- Expands access to enriching experiences and safe, supportive environments
- Builds self-agency by giving youth real opportunities to make choices and grow
- Encourages confidence through skill-building and positive risk-taking
- Counters systemic inequities by widening exposure to new possibilities
- Helps young people see—and pursue—futures beyond their current circumstances

## Organizational Sustainability

Winter4Kids remains committed to long-term organizational sustainability through a thoughtful, mission-driven approach to growth:

- **Financial Sustainability:** We prioritize an efficient, program-driven budget while expanding and diversifying revenue streams across individual donors, board support, institutional grants, school partnerships, and earned income.
- **Programmatic Sustainability:** By offering a full spectrum of coaching—from first-time participants to competitive racers—we ensure accessibility while deepening engagement and increasing repeat participation among youth and partners.
- **Inclusivity & Community:** We are intentionally cultivating a culture of inclusivity, both within our organization and across the communities we serve. Through transparent, visible leadership, we attract and retain dedicated ambassadors and volunteers who help sustain and amplify our impact.