

# Our Journey So Far

## Impact in Motion

### The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC • 2025–2026 ANNUAL REPORT

## Chapter One

### A Rhino in the Snow

Every movement begins with a question.

For us, it began with a simple item written on a to-do list.

What started as an idea for a ski club gradually became something much bigger. It emerged from a feeling many Black youth and families know all too well - a feeling of being disconnected from spaces that are deeply woven into British Columbia's identity.

Winter sports are part of the culture of this province. The mountains shape our landscape, our economy, and countless childhood memories. Yet for many Black youth, skiing and snowboarding have remained distant. Not because they lacked curiosity or talent, but because barriers such as financial, historical, cultural, and social, often made these spaces feel inaccessible.

There was a visible absence.

A lack of representation.

A feeling of isolation.

And a question that kept resurfacing:

**What would happen if we intentionally created a place where Black youth could see themselves on the mountain?**

The answer became **The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC**.

Making winter sports more accessible to Black youth.



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## 2022 - THE RHINO

A rhinoceros is a safari animal. It doesn't naturally belong in the snow.  
So what happens when you place a rhino in a cold, unfamiliar environment?  
Does it feel lonely?  
Does it feel stared at?  
Does it wonder whether it belongs?  
And perhaps most importantly:  
**What would happen if the rhino was welcomed, equipped, supported, and given everything it needed not simply to survive, but to thrive?**  
That question became our metaphor.



**The Rhino** represents resilience, strength, and perseverance. It is powerful, yet vulnerable. A remarkable creature whose existence itself faces threats. In many ways, the rhino mirrored what many Black youth experience when entering spaces where they have historically been underrepresented. The answer was never assimilation. The answer was belonging. Belonging through access. Belonging through opportunity. Belonging through community. Our logo was intentionally designed to reflect that vision. With its modern aesthetic and unmistakable silhouette, the Snow Rhino became more than a symbol. It became a statement. A declaration that there is room for everyone on the mountain. And that perhaps, with the right support, a rhino in the snow doesn't merely survive. It flourishes.

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# Chapter Two

## 2023 – 2024 Researching a Dream

Building an organization requires far more than passion.

It requires listening.

Long before the ribbon was cut, countless hours were spent researching, emailing, networking, and asking questions.

We connected with ski resorts and organizations across British Columbia, Canada, and the United States. We joined Zoom calls with mountain leaders. We attended community events, funding workshops, and nonprofit gatherings. We reached out to businesses, restaurants, and potential supporters. We searched for volunteers, advisors, and future board members who believed in the vision.

Most importantly, we listened.

Through surveys and conversations with Black youth and families, we sought to understand the barriers that prevented participation in winter sports.

What we discovered confirmed what many already felt.

Cost.

Representation.

Confidence.

Knowledge.

Access.

These were recurring themes.

The need was real.

And the voices of our community became the foundation upon which The Snow Rhinos would be built.

Research was not simply part of the process.

Research became our responsibility.

Because before changing outcomes, we first had to understand the experiences behind them.

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# Chapter Three

## February 21, 2025 - Cutting the Ribbon

After years of conversations, preparation, and relationship-building, The Snow Rhinos Foundation officially stepped onto the mountain.

On February 21, 2025, twenty-two participants gathered at **Grouse Mountain Resort** for our inaugural event.

For many, it was their first time ever skiing or snowboarding.

For others, it was something even more significant.

It was their first time feeling that they belonged.

Together, surrounded by new friendships and endless excitement, our Rhinos experienced the mountains for the very first time.



What had begun as a note on a to-do list had become reality.

The occasion was made possible thanks to incredible community support and partnerships.

## Coast Capital

stood beside us as a founding supporter, while

## CBC News

helped amplify our story to audiences across Canada.

The story resonated far beyond British Columbia.

The CBC feature was broadcast nationally and reached thousands online, introducing Canadians to a movement centered on access, belonging, and possibility.

But perhaps the greatest moment of the day wasn't the media attention.

It was seeing smiles hidden beneath ski goggles.

Because every journey begins with a first run. **And this was ours.**

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## Building the Foundation

In April 2025, after years of careful relationship-building and community engagement, The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC was officially registered under the BC Societies Act.

A volunteer Board of Directors was assembled with individuals united by a shared belief that Black youth deserve equitable access to winter sports and the opportunities that come with them.

Transparency and trust were foundational principles from the beginning.

A corporate account with **Coast Capital Savings** was established to steward donations responsibly and ensure accountability to the community we serve.

As momentum grew, another milestone arrived.

Through a partnership with **Ikon Pass** in the United States, our community gained access to exclusive discounts and opportunities, opening doors to experiences that once felt out of reach.

Step by step, the vision was becoming reality.

And we were only getting started.

## Chapter Four

### ‘Make History With Us’

Summer 2025 became a season of connection.

On Canada Day, thousands of people visited our ‘Make History With Us’ community activation booth.

Thanks to the generosity of our partners at **BrandLive** and the support of **BlastMedia**

**Print**, we had the opportunity to meet families, youth, volunteers, and supporters from across the Lower Mainland.

Conversations turned into relationships.

Relationships turned into community.

Weeks later, we brought that same energy to Caribbean Days in Coquitlam alongside our friends at the **Trinidad and Tobago Cultural Society of BC**.

Over two days, hundreds more stopped by to learn about our mission, share their stories, and join our growing movement.

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Throughout the summer, support continued to grow.

**Vancity** generously contributed to our efforts, reaffirming that community investment has the power to create lasting change. **But perhaps the most important work happening during those months was invisible.**

It happened through research.

Through studying reports from the **BC**

**Human Rights Commissioner** and confronting the realities facing Black youth in our province.

Overrepresentation within the criminal justice system.



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Disproportionate experiences with homelessness.  
Higher rates of school suspensions.  
Barriers that extend far beyond sport.  
Those findings strengthened our resolve and inspired a broader vision.  
Not simply introducing youth to winter sports.  
But building pathways.  
Pathways toward leadership.  
Pathways toward confidence.  
Pathways toward excellence.

And ultimately, pathways toward the **Winter Olympics.**

**Because changing statistics begins with changing opportunities.**

### Voices Around the Table

One of the most pivotal moments in our journey came through meaningful conversations with the **Honourable Wade Grant** and

Canadian track and field **legend Valerie Jerome.**

Together, we discussed historical barriers, systemic racism in education and sport, and the continued underrepresentation of Black athletes in winter sports. Their wisdom, insight, and encouragement helped reinforce what we already knew:

Representation matters.

Access matters.

Community matters.

The Honourable Wade Grant became a steadfast advocate and influential champion for our work, helping amplify our voice and ensuring that grassroots organizations like ours are heard.

These conversations reminded us that lasting change happens when communities, leaders, and institutions come together.

And for The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC, that journey had only just begun.



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## Sharing History, Building Understanding

Throughout the year, our Founder continued leading



**Black history tours** and **school presentations** in the Lower Mainland of BC, connecting residents, visitors, and community supporters with stories that have too often been overlooked or excluded from traditional narratives. These tours not only highlighted the contributions and experiences of Black communities in British Columbia, but also provided important context for the work of The Snow Rhinos Foundation. By understanding the historical barriers and systemic exclusion that have shaped opportunities for Black communities, participants gained a deeper appreciation



today. **Many guests and supporters who joined these tours went on to support our work through donations, volunteering, and advocacy.**

for the importance of creating equitable access and investing in Black youth

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## Strengthening Relationships Through Education

A significant amount of work throughout the year focused on building relationships with **school districts** and **educational leaders** across the Lower Mainland. Through ongoing conversations and collaboration, we expanded awareness of our programs and strengthened pathways for youth participation. These efforts represented countless hours of meetings, outreach, and relationship building. By working alongside educators and school leaders, we continue to ensure that more young people and families are aware of the opportunities available through The Snow Rhinos Foundation and that our programs remain responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.

### Celebrating 100 Years of Grouse Mountain

During the Milano Cortina Winter Olympics, we were honoured to be invited to participate in CBC Radio's celebration of Grouse Mountain's 100th anniversary. Joining Gloria Macarenko and CBC listeners across the province, we reflected on the importance of Grouse Mountain's support from the earliest days of our organization. From hosting our inaugural ribbon cutting event to providing opportunities for youth to experience the mountains for the first time, Grouse Mountain has been an important supporter in our journey. We were grateful for the opportunity to share our story and celebrate a century of memories and



community connection on one of British Columbia's most iconic mountains.



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## Advocacy, Community Leadership and UNIFOR

As part of Black History Month, our Founder was honoured to be invited by UNIFOR National, Canada's largest private sector union, to deliver the keynote address at their annual Black History Month event in British Columbia. In the presence of community leaders, elected officials, labour representatives, and supporters, The Snow Rhinos Foundation hosted an information table and engaged with attendees throughout the evening. Following the keynote presentation, which honoured the Black pioneers who helped build British Columbia and emphasized the importance of investing in future generations, UNIFOR National generously supported our work with a donation. The evening reflected the growing recognition of our mission and the impact that community-based organizations can have when history, advocacy, and action come together.



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# Inclusion in Canadian Sport

In 2026, The Snow Rhinos Foundation was proud to be represented at the 4th Annual National Diversity in Sports Conference hosted by the Inclusion in Canadian Sport Network (ICSN). Through a competitive scholarship funded by Visit Mississauga, Board Member and emerging leader **Jared Andrews-Almack** attended the national conference in Toronto on behalf of the organization. Under the theme "Ubuntu: I Am Because We Are," the conference brought together leaders and organizations from across Canada committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive sport system. Participation in this national gathering provided valuable opportunities to learn, collaborate, and strengthen relationships with organizations working to ensure that sport is accessible and welcoming to all communities.



## Black Excellence Day

We were honoured to participate in Black Excellence Day 2026 through a video presentation shared with more than 25,000 students, educators, and school communities across British Columbia. Joining Black leaders and changemakers from throughout the province, we had the opportunity to share the mission of The Snow Rhinos Foundation and invite young people and families to become part of our growing community. Black Excellence Day celebrates the achievements, resilience, and contributions of Black communities while uplifting future generations. We were proud to contribute to this important celebration and to stand alongside so many individuals working to inspire and empower young people across British Columbia.

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# Chapter Five

## Momentum

### Our First Community Fundraiser

In December 2025, The Snow Rhinos Foundation hosted its first ever community fundraiser. Held in partnership with **Steamworks Mount Pleasant**, the evening brought together more than 140 attendees in support of our mission. The event featured artwork by local artist **Bob Krieger**, works celebrating the legacy of the first Black baseball players, contributions from other local artists, live music, prizes, and a live art auction. Throughout the evening, guests learned about our journey, the barriers facing Black youth in winter sports, and the importance of building spaces where young people feel welcomed and represented.

The fundraiser was made possible through the support of many community partners including **Steamworks Mount Pleasant, Save-On-Foods, Paneficio Studios Gallery, Vancity, Edge Fine Art Studio, Ikon Pass**, and many generous supporters and guest speakers. More than a fundraiser, the evening represented a celebration of community and a reminder that our mission resonates far beyond the mountains.

**STEAMWORKS MOUNT PLEASANT**

**beer & art Community fundraiser**  
for The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC

A special live art auction will headline the evening, featuring work that speaks to legacy, culture and community. Local artist **Bob Krieger** presents a powerful series of portraits honoring the first Black players to integrate Major League Baseball's original teams, capturing the courage and quiet defiance that reshaped the game. Also on display are pieces by Nigerian artist **Pius Onyegbula**, whose vibrant and expressive paintings celebrate Black culture, identity and contemporary life through bold colour and movement.

Please plan a safe ride home at the end of the night. We encourage all guests to enjoy the event responsibly and avoid drinking and driving.

Featuring a live DJ and prize draws including one **\$1,479 25/26 Ikon Base Pass** for donations of \$50 or more, a \$75 Save-On-Foods gift card, and a Steamworks Brewing gift card.

**Monday Dec 1st, 2025**

**2275 Main Street  
Vancouver BC V5T 0K2  
7PM - 10PM**

This is a **free event**. Please reserve your tickets at eventbrite:  
[artandbeerfundraiser.eventbrite.com](http://artandbeerfundraiser.eventbrite.com)

We encourage all guests to spend at least \$20 to support our gracious host, Steamworks Mount Pleasant.

[thesnowrhinos.org](http://thesnowrhinos.org)

The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC | save on foods | IKON PASS

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# Our First Community Fundraiser



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## Returning to the Mountains

On February 22 and March 1, 2026, The Snow Rhinos Foundation returned to the slopes with two community ski and snowboard events. In partnership with the **Canada Ski Council, Mount**

**Seymour Resort, Never Ever Days, and Go Skiing Snowboarding**, a total of 68 participants joined us, with the overwhelming majority experiencing skiing or snowboarding for the very first time.

The excitement and joy of these experiences attracted the attention of **Global News**.

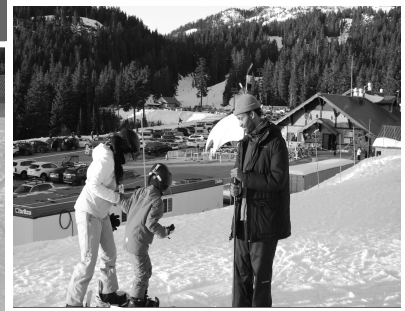
Through a feature on **This is BC with Jay Durant**, viewers across the province were introduced to our mission and the growing community behind it. The story generated tremendous local momentum and led to new partnership opportunities, equipment donations, and private financial support. While our earlier CBC coverage helped share our story nationally, the Global News feature further established our presence within British Columbia and strengthened our ability to reach families and supporters throughout the province where our impact has been most deeply felt.



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# Returning to the Mountains



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# From the Margins to the Mountains

In May 2026, The Snow Rhinos Foundation reached a significant milestone with the presentation of "From the Margins to the Mountains" at the BC Sports Hall of Fame. Supported by the **BC Sports Hall of Fame, the Hero In You Program, and the Rotary Club of Port Moody**, the event welcomed more than 50 attendees, many of whom were youth participants from our programs.

The day featured keynote speaker **Josh Dueck**, guest panelists, and sports professionals from a variety of disciplines who shared their experiences and engaged directly with our youth. Participants asked thoughtful questions about representation, funding, and pathways in sport while exploring the Hall of Fame and learning about the athletes whose achievements helped shape British Columbia's sporting history.

The event created meaningful conversations about the underrepresentation of Black athletes in winter sports and reinforced the importance of continuing to build community and create opportunities for future generations. It also provided an opportunity for families, volunteers, and supporters to reflect on how far the organization had come in just one year and how much work still lies ahead.

We were honoured to welcome the **Honourable Wade Grant**, Member of Parliament, who announced that the federal government would be investing in grassroots organizations like ours that are working directly in communities. His presence and continued support were a powerful



**FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MOUNTAINS.**

**BC Black Youth engage with industry professionals on winter sports representation.**

10:30 AM: Keynote by Paralympian Josh Dueck

11:00 AM: Conversation Panel featuring:

- Agness Friesen - Junior Nationals gold medalist
- Megan Friesen - Board of Directors, Freestyle Whistler
- Gregr Hogaboam - Special Olympics Alpine Team head coach
- Keenan Godden - Former UBC Thunderbirds Football Player
- Justice Osei - Former UBC Thunderbirds Football Player
- Jared Andrews Almack - Former UBC Thunderbirds Rugby Player

12:00 PM: Group Tour of the BC Sports Hall of Fame

12:30 PM: Complimentary Lunch

The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC

HERO IN YOU

BRITISH COLUMBIA SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Rotary Club of Port Moody

[WWW.THESNOWRHINOS.ORG](http://WWW.THESNOWRHINOS.ORG)

**WHEN: SATURDAY MAY 9, 2026**  
**WHERE: BC SPORTS HALL OF FAME**  
**GATE A OF BC PLACE, VANCOUVER, BC V6B 4Y8**  
**DOORS OPEN: 10:00 AM**

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reminder that the work being done by The Snow Rhinos Foundation is being recognized and championed by leaders who understand the importance of investing in young people.

To gather in a place that honours the greatest athletes in British Columbia while watching our youth engage with leaders, mentors, and one another was both humbling and inspiring. The event represented more than a milestone. It reflected a growing community, a growing movement, and a future filled with possibility.



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# From the Margins to the Mountains



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## The Work Continues

## Community Investment and Partnership

In 2026, The Snow Rhinos Foundation was honoured to receive a generous community grant from the **Rotary Club of Port Moody**. Guided by a commitment to fellowship, service, and creating positive change, Rotary Club supports initiatives that invest in youth and strengthen communities. Their values closely align with our own mission, and their support helped move our work forward during an important stage of growth. We are deeply grateful to the Rotary Club of Port Moody for their confidence in our vision and for helping create opportunities for Black youth and families throughout British Columbia.

## Impact Through Access

At the beginning of this journey, we committed ourselves to addressing one of the greatest barriers preventing Black youth and families from participating in winter sports: **cost**.

Thanks to the support of community partners, private donors, volunteers, and the success of our first fundraising efforts, more than 70 young people participated in our programs during our first full year. For the vast majority, it was their first time skiing or snowboarding.

Participants received transportation, equipment rentals, lift tickets, lessons, mentorship, and beginning in our second season, meals and refreshments. We also provided winter essentials including tuques, gloves, hand warmers, and toe warmers to help ensure every participant felt comfortable and prepared.

By removing financial barriers and creating a welcoming environment, we delivered on our promise that access to winter sports should not depend on a family's income.

**Our young people just had to show up.**

## Achieving More With Less

One of the things we are most proud of is how much was accomplished with relatively modest resources.

Most of the funding that made our work possible came from our first community fundraiser, generous community partners, grants, and private donors who believed in our mission. Through countless volunteer hours and a shared commitment to creating opportunities, **we were able to maximize every dollar entrusted to us** and stretch limited resources into meaningful experiences for young people and families.

**Our growth has been driven not by large budgets, but by relationships, trust, and a community that believes every young person deserves the opportunity to belong.**

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## Financial Transparency

Transparency and accountability remain fundamental commitments of The Snow Rhinos Foundation BC. Every dollar donated to our organization during our first year of operation has been used to advance our mission and put as many youth on the mountain as possible. No salaries have been paid, and the countless hours invested by our Board of Directors, volunteers, and community supporters have been contributed in service of the communities we are proud to support.

The impact we have achieved reflects the extraordinary dedication of people who believe deeply in the importance of creating opportunities for Black youth and families.

If you would like to review our detailed first-year financial reporting, please contact us at: [info@thesnowrhinos.org](mailto:info@thesnowrhinos.org)

## Thank You

To our donors, volunteers, ski and snowboard instructors, school district leaders and educators, parents, community partners, elected officials, athletes, speakers, mentors, and supporters, thank you.

Thank you for believing in this vision.

Thank you for helping remove barriers.

Thank you for walking alongside us during our first year.

Most importantly, thank you to our young athletes.

Thank you for showing up.

Thank you for trusting us.

Thank you for encouraging one another and helping build a community where everyone belongs.

This journey exists because of you.

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Thank You to the Community Partners Who Helped Us Carve the Way on the Slopes



## WE CANNOT WAIT FOR THE 2026 / 2027 SEASON

Our first year demonstrated what is possible when a community comes together with a shared vision.

**We are just getting started.**

There are more young people to reach.

**More barriers to remove.**

More first chairlift rides.

**More friendships to build.**

More mountains to explore.

**More history to make.**

And we cannot wait to continue the journey together.

**See you on the mountain.**

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