

Nominated by:
Barbara Bryant

Jimmie Heuga Nomination

Becki Walters



I am pleased to nominate **Becki Walters** for the Far West Ski Association's **Jimmie Heuga Humanitarian Award**. Becki embodies the spirit of Jimmie Heuga. She *"like Jimmie, has demonstrated courage and skill in three arenas – the ski slope, the human body, and the courageous heart."*

Becki Walters was an athlete in 1978 when she lost her left leg to cancer, after which she learned to cycle, jog, swim, ride horses, roller skate, and ski using one leg. *"I got a chance to go skiing and it changed my life and I was like, 'Wow. I want to help other people experience this,'" Walters said. "I think it's exciting and I hope to bring along to the future generations that everything is possible."* In 1986, Becki became a **Certified Adaptive Ski Instructor**, one of the first females to achieve the certification, and she began teaching adaptive skiing.

Boise based since 1998, Becki is now the **Director of Boise Adaptive Snowsport Education** (BASE). She volunteers annually at the **Ski Spectacular** in Breckenridge teaching skiing to participants with disabilities. She has found each skier values having an instructor who has the same challenges and can demonstrate 3-track progression. (*3-track = one ski and two outriggers, leaving 3 tracks in the snow*).

The Boise Adaptive Snowsport Education (BASE) Program offers ski and snowsports lessons to those with physical and developmental disabilities. The organization is entirely self-funded and relies heavily on donations from the community. In 2023 under Becki's leadership, 160 students received 488 adaptive snowsport lessons, a 60% increase from previous seasons.

BASE enjoys tremendous community support. Founded in the late 1970's **BASE** (*then known as Recreation Unlimited*) received a generous donation of ten years worth of season passes from Boise Cascade, enabling the organization to create an adaptive ski school. When the ten years was up, Bogus Basin donated another ten years of season passes for instructors and students.

Another unusual aspect of BASE is that the entire staff is comprised of volunteers. More than 70 instructors offer their free time 10 weeks each season, to teach students some as young as 12 and others well into their 70's.

"There are many people who get left out of some of these fun activities that we have in Idaho because they have a disability or a mental condition such as PTSD that makes it difficult for them to be in a regular group lesson situation," said Becki. BASE has taught adaptive athletes of all ages how to participate in winter sports activities using their specialized equipment for more than 40 years. Walters has been involved for more than 20 years. *"It's surprising the people we can get up on the snow, and they may never be independent skiers, but that they're out there having fun with their family and community,"* she said.

Becki and BASE have encouraged a robust ski instructor certification program that contributes to the high degree of safety in BASE. Two trained instructors always staff a ski lesson.

Under Becki's leadership the costs for an adaptive lesson is \$35 which includes free rentals of boots, skis, snowboards or other equipment such as ski bikes and bi-skis.

BASE has helped introduce countless people to snowsports with life-changing results. Two examples follow: one example is the combat veteran pushing past his injuries to embrace the freedom gravity affords using a bi-ski; another example is the blind skier who participated in the Veterans On The Mountain weekend. "If it were not for all these programs we would not be able to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Again, thank you."

BASE is planning to include year-round programming to expand to summer activities – adaptive hiking and mountain biking- in coordination with community partners.

Because of her inspiring work with the Boise Adaptive Snowsports Education, **Becki Walters** has made a decisive contribution to skiing. It would be appropriate to recognize Becki for her long-term contribution, significant achievements, overcoming adversity and challenges, as well as her leadership in BASE, with the **Jimmie Heuga Far West Service Award**.