

Rental Ski's for Little Mac

Background:

At Mackenzie Community Services (MCS), we identified a community need. We have staff who last winter, wanted to take client(s) skiing as part of their programming at MCS. They wanted to do this for two reasons, i) The staff are fully certified to teach skiing and had years of experiences doing so. And ii) Physical activity is part of MCS's mandate in the Child and Youth Care (CYC) program. We saw this as a perfect match, we had trained staff and it fit our programs mandate. However, we ran into a roadblock. There was an absence of rental equipment in Mackenzie for youth to go skiing, youth needed to have their own equipment. Different solutions were attempted, such as reaching out to Powder King, but it proved to be impossible to find rental equipment for youth.

With this above context, Mackenzie Community Services decided to try and fill this community need. Multiple grants were submitted, and MCS ended up being successful with one and possibly a second. Through Northern Health's IMAGINE grant, MCS was granted \$5000 to purchase skiing equipment. We also have an application with the McLeod Lake Mackenzie Community Forest for an additional \$5000, and are still in the process of sorting through the logistics but are hopeful we will also be successful. On top of this, MCS was also successful in getting a \$5000 grant from TELUS that needs to be used for after school sports programming.

Mackenzie Community Services staff had a historical relationship with the ski company ELAN, and a purchase was made for 16 skis and 19 ski boots and 5 helmets in the Spring of 2023. This purchase included a discount because of the staff's connection, and the possibility to order more should MLMCF funding materialize. This equipment is expected to be in Mackenzie by the time the 2023/2024 ski season commences.

Vision:

Mackenzie Community Services does not want these skis to just be held internally, we want the entire community of Mackenzie to benefit from having this equipment available. As such, Mackenzie Community Services wants to donate this equipment to an organization that would facilitate the renting, maintenance, and storage of these skis. Multiple organizations were contacted, including the Mackenzie Public Library and MORATA. In the end, Recreation Services became the best organization to take possession of these skis. MCS does not want anything in return for these skis, other than a guarantee that our staff will be able to use them with clients at no charge.

Plan:

When the skis arrive, a transfer would take place where possession of the skis would move from Mackenzie Community Services to Recreation Services of the District of Mackenzie. The only condition of this transfer would be the guarantee that Mackenzie Community Services would not be charged for use of this equipment. Other than that one condition the skis would then be Recreation Services to do with that they wish. The skis would be stored and accessed from the Little Mac Chalet.

The money from the MLMCF grant, should MCS be successful, would partially go to procuring a storage system for the skis. The plan is for the skis to be stored in the current medical room in the Little Mac Chalet.

The skis procured are made as rental skis. As such, they are very simple to adjust and fit, and the company ELAN will be providing a webinar that staff doing the fitting must take. The Little Mac staff would provide access to customers to the new 'rental room.' Customers would find the boots that fit themselves, and staffs job would be to adjust the ski bindings to the boots once the correct size is picked. The process would take less than 5 minutes. All the equipment would be numbered, and staff would keep track of who had signed out which equipment, and also check the equipment back in when the customer returns them. In the event somebody accidentally takes the equipment, its is common practice for places to hold collateral (such as a credit card or drivers license) while the equipment is out.

Customers would purchase the rental equipment at the Rec Centre desk, the same way they purchase the seasons pass. Once purchased, the customer would be given something that indicated they had, and once they show the staff on site at Little Mac they would know the rental equipment had been properly purchased.

Above the word 'customers' and 'purchased' were used, but the actual charging of money would be up to the District of Mackenzie. Mackenzie Community Services wants to see this equipment used, so we recommend offering this for free at the beginning, and re-evaluating down the road as the program becomes more well known. But we fully understand we would be giving this equipment away and give the right to the District of Mackenzie to charge what they wish (other than to Mackenzie Community Services directly).

Potential Usage:

Conversations have already been had with Morfee Elementary Principal Hawkins, and the plan is, to utilize this equipment by bringing classes to Little Mac. In years past this was not possible, as there was no equipment for youth who did not have their own skis.

MCS staff also will bring clients individually and in groups to Little Mac, and use skiing as a part of their youth programming. It would also be a group MCS would offer to the wider community. The potential for a parents/tots program is also there.

Conversations with MORATA have also happened, and there is a potential for them to become involved in this project. This project is on their agenda for July 19th Board meeting, and staff from MCS will be present.

Potential Issues:

Mackenzie Community Services understands that these are sporting equipment. Damage and theft are possible. While we hope the District will maintain the equipment, regular wear and tear will happen, and that is understood. MCS will have given up possession of the equipment, as such, we do not hold the District responsible for replacement should skis be damaged beyond repair or stolen. We would hope the District would keep MCS informed should this happen so possible solutions can be sought.

We also can see scenarios where the skis have been given out for use and MCS shows up wanting to use them. To overcome this, MCS staff would reach out to Rec Services to reserve the skis ahead of time. There would be no expectations the skis would just be there sitting waiting for MCS. We want the skis used. We do hope if MCS reaches out to use the skis, staff will hold them for MCS staff.

Another issue is the maintenance of the equipment. Skis require regular waxing/sharpening based on how much they are being used. MCS staff would be willing to help informally, but the skis would be District of Mackenzie property and it would be their responsibility to maintain the skis. With the skis just being given to the District, this maintenance would be the only cost the District of Mackenzie would need to take on as part of the project. This cost could be recouped in future years by charging a small fee for use of the rental skis.

Conclusion:

Mackenzie Community Services sees Little Mac as an amazing resource, and we want to help the District of Mackenzie grow its place in the community. We hope by this donation of equipment, we see more youth using the hill and enjoying all the benefits recreation offers, most importantly to mental health. We see this as jointly beneficial; it will help MCS better serve our clients, utilize our staffs capacity and help increase recreational opportunities in Mackenzie.