

Anderson ensures students ride this winter

By Kathryn Reed

Growing up in a family of eight kids, Jamie Anderson knows outfitting youngsters to ride or ski is expensive. She also knows what it means to be on the slopes when you are young.

Although Anderson is only 23, the Meyers resident is a veteran snowboarder. She's been taking home gold since she was a teenager. On Friday she won the snowboard slopestyle at the Dew Tour in Breckenridge, Colo. She is aiming to be on the Olympic team for the Games in Russia.

But before going after more hardware, Anderson spent time Dec. 16 Skyping with students in Lake Tahoe Unified School District. She is still in Colorado. The students are competing to win a season pass to her home resort, Sierra-at-Tahoe, as well as a full set of gear – mostly from businesses who sponsor her. Without Anderson and Sierra's generosity, these students would not be snowboarding this winter.

To be in the running for this prize, students had to write an essay about why they believe they deserve to be recognized by Anderson.

South Tahoe High School Principal Ivone Larson said, "They wrote a letter describing how it would impact them."

Most were serious in nature, while sophomore Paul Mutz took a more creative comical approach that caught the attention of reviewers.

Sixth-grader Allison Kennedy told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I wrote about how my dad was in prison for four years and that he just got home last year and we haven't had that much money."

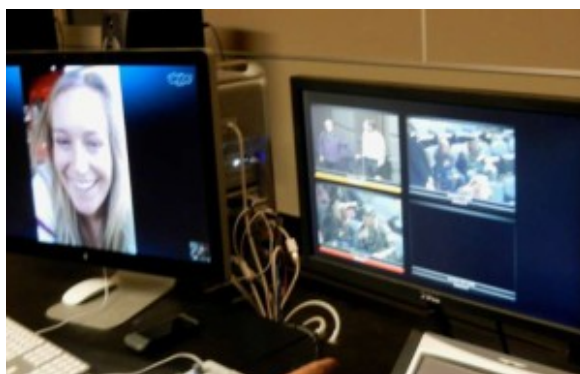
Administrators narrowed the field to the 10 finalists. Essays from the finalists have been emailed to Anderson.

All but the one person who was out of town read part of their essays to Anderson on Monday.

As fifth-grader Monserrat Franco spoke she got choked up and barely could get out how she wants to ride with her cousins, have them teach her to snowboard so then she can teach her younger brothers.

Junior Jorge Luquin spoke of how money from his part-time job goes to pay household bills. There is no money for playing on the mountain.

“You are amazing; all of you,” Anderson told them. “I’m excited to meet you guys in person. All of your letters were heartwarming.”



In the control room of South Tahoe High School’s screening room Jamie Anderson, left, can be seen Skyping with students on Dec. 16. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Anderson didn’t have the normal school life. Mostly, except for a spell at South Tahoe Middle School, she was homeschooled.

She told the kids she knows things can be hard, that people

can be mean. She asked them to try to rise above all the negativity.

"It's more than about boarding. It's about the love. It's more about passing along love," Anderson told them.

On Dec. 28 the youngsters will go to Sierra and ride with Anderson. That is when they find out who receives what.

This is the third year Anderson has partnered with Sierra and LTUSD to give students an opportunity to ride. The first year it was two students, last year four and this year it will be eight.

"Jamie is a world champion in so many ways, but a real class individual," John Rice, general manager of Sierra-at-Tahoe, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It is a great program. She wanted to expand it this year. It's really showing that she is maturing as a human being and using her celebrity status to share with the world."