

Athletes receive grants to assist in injury recovery

The High Fives Foundation – Winter Empowerment program is helping two area winter action sports athletes transition to adaptive sports. The nonprofit board awarded a grant to Steven Jacobo of Gardnerville for \$2,100 and Jeff Andrews of Truckee for \$4,250.

In February 2013 Jacobo, a Gardnerville native, was snowboarding at Sierra-at-Tahoe when he hit an unfamiliar jump that threw him out of control off of a 25-foot drop off. He landed directly on his back, resulting in a burst fracture of his T9 and T10 vertebrae spinal cord injury.

Andrews, a resident of Truckee, was snowboarding at Sugar Bowl Resort in March 2014 when he over shot a jump in the terrain park. The resulting crash burst fractured his C-5 vertebrae into his spinal cord at the C-5/C-7 level.

This is where the High Fives Foundation comes in. Since the foundation's inception in January 2009, the Winter Empowerment program service has assisted 61 athletes from 18 states in nine funding categories which include: living expenses, insurance, travel, health, healing network, adaptive equipment, winter equipment, programs and stoke (positive energy, outlook and attitude).

Since his 2013 injury, Jacobo has been working tirelessly in the gym to ensure that his life post-injury is the easiest that it can be. Along with spending countless hours on his fitness, he has been searching for an adaptive action-sport where he can experience the positive thrills found from snowboarding. In July, after discovering the sport of "chairskating," Jacobo received a board-approved grant for \$2,100 from the High Fives Foundation to be used toward the

purchase of a Box Wheelchairs WCMX freestyle chair.

The August grant awarded to Andrews will be used for six months of spinal cord injury specific personal training at the Sacramento SCI-Fit facility.