



Races are a significant part of the Barriers USA Summit event.

Bar none

No Barriers USA

The 2019 No Barriers USA Summit will be held at Lake Tahoe June 13-15.

Attendance is limited to 750 people. Registration is \$100 per person and spots are still available on the nonprofit's website, nobarriersusa.org.

The three-day Squaw Creek event is designed to inspire people to overcome adversity. It will include speakers such as Erik Weißenmayer, No Barriers co-founder and the first blind man to summit Mount Everest; as well as Whitney Way Thore, who starred on TLC's *My Big Fat Fabulous Life*. Musical performances will include the band Magic Giant, as well as deaf jazz singer Mandy Harvey. Attendees can also participate in various workshops and activities and watch performances and two documentaries—*Charged: The Eduardo Garcia Story* and *The Weight of Water*.

"This is a really inspirational event to be in the region and helps people overcome whatever is holding them back," said Amber Burke at North Lake Tahoe Resort Association. "It brings such an impressive line-up and is really great for [Tahoe's] economic vitality that we are able to bring events like this."

This year's summit will also offer a special series of workshops and activities called Warriors Track. They're designed to build a sense of community among former or active military members. This Track will include mentor-led talks and teamwork to take on challenges like rock climbing, summiting a peak and other challenging mountain activities.

No Barriers started in 2003 and originally was focused on working with children and adults with disabilities. In 2004, the first No Barriers festival was held in Cortina, Italy, after raising \$100,000 and was

called No Barriers Dolomiti 2004. Later, these annual festivals were called summits and brought to the United States.

Around the same time No Barriers launched, another nonprofit was getting started. Global Explorers aimed to help middle and high school students through educational travel. By 2011, No Barriers was still a small nonprofit with only one full time employee, but Global Explorers was a mid-sized nonprofit with programs on several continents. The two organizations decided to merge in 2011 and become No Barriers USA. This way, both organizations could reach a wider audience and help people through their shared goal of taking people out of their comfort zones to change how they see life in a positive way.

Based out of Fort Collins, Colorado, No Barriers USA offers a variety of programs and events. One of its biggest programs, No Barriers Youth, offers a variety of expeditions for middle and high school students, including group trips with partnering schools to other countries, as well as providing a scholarship program that ensures every child has the opportunity to participate in group trips regardless of their family's financial situation. No Barriers also offers a summer camp in the Fort Collins area. For military veterans, or "warriors," as No Barriers puts it, expeditions are also available, including backpacking trips.

Aside from the summit, No Barriers also hosts events such as the Outdoor Classic annual fundraiser and the What's Your Everest fundraiser. More recently, the organization has also started a podcast hosted by the co-founders and partners, as well as a virtual education course. □

Learn more about the summit here: bit.ly/2SdMvf3.

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