



Kit DesLauriers will talk about her efforts to reach the top of seven summits on seven continents, all as part of this season's Alpenglowsports Winter Speakers Series.
COURTESY/KIT DESLAURIERS

Snow stories

Alpenglow Sports Winter Speakers Series

The more interested you get in snow sports, the more likely it is you'll want to hear stories about travels up and down a mountain. That's part of the impetus behind the Alpenglowsports Winter Speakers Series, an event that gives snow enthusiasts an inside look at the experiences of pros.

"The mission of the series is to motivate, inspire and educate," said Brendan Madigan, owner of Alpenglowsports in Tahoe City. He also organizes the speakers for the series. "It's kind of a two-fold goal, the first of which is to inspire those in the audience to take chances and live out their own dreams on the mountain, whether that's something like going snowshoeing or climbing a big peak in the High Sierra."

The second goal is to raise funds for local non-profit groups. Admission is free to the series, but there are raffles during the event, and bar and pizza sales proceeds at the Olympic Village Lodge venue also go toward the local groups. There is also an anonymous donor group that raises funds for these beneficiaries as part of the series.

This year, funds are being raised for Sierra Community House, Adventure Risk Challenge, Achieve Tahoe, The Tahoe Fund and Truckee-Donner Land Trust.

The Winter Speakers Series is in its 14th year, and Madigan said it's established its own, well-oiled process to get interesting presenters for Tahoe ski and snow enthusiasts. One way Madigan gets the series filled is by asking for suggestions from people at companies like Patagonia and North Face.

"I also have a bunch of friends who are pro athletes and also very good speakers,"

Madigan said. "Some of them make a living doing corporate speaking gigs."

The two speakers scheduled for January each have distinctive stories to tell, with the common denominator being some remarkable achievements in snow sports.

For Jan. 2, it's Kit DesLauriers, a Colorado pro ski mountaineer. She'll discuss trying to complete "skiing the seven summits," the highest mountains on each continent. She was the first person to summit to Mt. Everest and ski back down, which she completed in 2006.

"Kit's an iconic athletic that truly transcends gender with her accomplishments," Madigan said. "She's been at the forefront of ski mountaineers for several decades. She's going to talk about her progress with the seven summits and what skiing at elevation feels like on these giant peaks, and her lessons learned about the whole process."

The speaker on Jan. 23 is a Tahoe resident, Adrian Ballinger. He's the owner and founder of Alpenglowsports Expeditions and his presentation is titled, "K2 No. 02: The One That Should Have Gotten Away." Ballinger will talk about climbing the famous K2 mountain without using supplemental oxygen. K2 is the second highest mountain in the world, located on the borders of Pakistan and China. Ballinger's talk will include not only details on the climb, but also how he and his team worked hard to spirits high during the treacherous journey.

"There have definitely been people who have been killed trying to climb it," Madigan said. "It's one of the more dangerous because there's more technical rock climbing and ice climbing than somewhere like Everest." □

The Alpenglowsports Winter Speakers Series features Kit DesLauriers on Jan. 2 and Adrian Ballinger on Jan. 23. Both take place at 6 p.m. at Olympic Village Lodge, Chamonix Place, Squaw Valley, California. Get details at alpenglowsports.com

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