



Amelia Chew stands by the Downtown Ice Rink.

PHOTO BY MAXFIELD MORRIS

Downtown on ice

If you're looking for a socially acceptable locale to strap blades to your feet, the Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink is as good a place as any. From November to January, **Amelia Chew** works as the **general manager** of the seasonal rink, in addition to year-round event coordination work with the Downtown Sacramento Partnership.

Chew got started on the ice in 2016, after working as event staff at Concerts in the Park. Throughout the year, Chew coordinates the farmers market, Concerts in the Park, the State of Downtown breakfast, Old Sacramento events and more. SN&R chatted with Chew about life on the ice, and what it's like seeing so many Sacramentans get skating.

What's your history with the ice rink?

So I started as a skateguard—which is basically like a lifeguard on ice, monitoring the safety and mobility of the ice skaters.

Had you ice skated much before?

I had ice skated a few times as a kid ... but then working at the ice rink as just the event staff skateguard, I got a lot of ice time. And so my skills on the ice definitely flourished, and I definitely have a love of ice because of that one season as a skateguard.

What's your typical day like?

My typical day is, I take on a manager shift. So that basically means opening with staff, scheduling them for breaks, making sure that everyone is in the correct position.

Is this a seasonal role for you?

So I'm mainly in the office here with Downtown Partnership full-time—but in the winter I transition

to the general manager position for ice rink only. It's unique because someone has to be there at all times, so it takes someone who's known the ice rink and worked the ice rink before to be able to manage staff and on-site logistics.

Do you get to run the Zamboni ever?

I do, yes.

Oh, man. Just talk about that.

It's pretty intense. It's a big piece of machinery, and it doesn't operate the way you would expect it to—it's not just a car. And it's a lot of levers, I mean, you have this big blade, first of all, that just cleans the ice, but you're also in charge of rotating these augers that cut up the snow once it's cut. You have some water that you have to lay down for the ice to be nice and smooth. It's a lot.

Have you seen a lot of people fall?

Fall? I mean, it's definitely common. You get the occasional slip or so, but nothing too bad, and we're all trained in first aid and CPR and everything. ... You can recognize a bad fall from a good fall just hearing it.

How do you like the ice skating time of year?

I love it. Especially with this event in particular, I've grown to love it both as a staff member and as a manager as well, and be able to see it create itself from the month of October, being there November, December, January, kind of serving the public as a fun family getaway. And then closing it down at the end of January, you get to know the ice rink from the ins, the outs, the good, the bad. For me, I take it on kind of like my own little baby. I want to be able to have it grow and be here for a long, long time. □

Take a few turns around the Downtown Ice Rink at 7th and K Streets before the final session on Jan. 20. Tickets are \$6-\$15, visit godowntownsac.com/icerink for more info.

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