



**2016-2019 Strategic Plan**

**Created September 2016**

**Approved November 2016**

**Updated July 2017**

## Ignite Adaptive Sports at Eldora Mountain Resort

### Introduction

Since 1975, Ignite Adaptive Sports (Ignite), primarily a volunteer-run organization, has been providing safe, fun and affordable Alpine and Nordic skiing and snowboarding instruction to children and adults with cognitive and/or physical disabilities. Each season, trained volunteers donate more than 15,000 hours to provide over 1,000 individual lessons to more than 200 people with disabilities. Ignite's progressive and thorough training program includes skills-based adaptive winter sports instruction techniques and education regarding how to support students with specific disabilities and varying degrees of need. Administrators are trained on Ignite's computer system to assist with tracking lessons, scheduling instructor days and handling student check-in. Equipment technicians are trained and certified in the maintenance and adjustment of ski and snowboard gear. Ignite offers ongoing volunteer training throughout the season to improve personal skiing/riding skills, teaching methods and technical knowledge. While always aspiring to improve, Ignite's management is confident in the quality of its program delivery.

Ignite has enjoyed a generous collaboration with its host, Eldora Mountain Resort (EMR), for over forty years. During that time EMR made in-kind contributions and offered discounted lift tickets to Ignite. In 2014, under new management, EMR reduced its contributions. At that point, EMR started charging Ignite rent for the trailers at the resort and moved from donating all lift tickets to donating a limited number of passes, lift tickets and selling the remainder that Ignite needs at the going group rate. This change increased program expenses by \$18,500 in 2015 and over \$42,000 in 2016.

The Ignite Board of Directors (Board) had been discussing the value of a hiring a full-time Executive Director for some time to strengthen Board development, improve marketing and increase fund raising. In response to program expense increases in 2015, the Board decided it was time and hired a full-time Executive Director to serve as the organizational leader and to oversee fund development. This full-time hire added an additional expense of approximately \$65,000 yearly to the budget.

Also of note, during this planning process, there was a significant change at EMR. In 2016, it was sold to Powdr, a private company that owns other winter resorts including Copper Mountain. While the long-term impact of this change on Ignite was not known when this strategic plan was finalized, we are optimistic that Powdr support for Ignite will hold steady or improve.

### Strategic Priorities

From 2014-2016, there were significant changes at Ignite. Reduction of host mountain in-kind contributions and hiring of a full time Executive Director increased the budget by 60%. To maintain program excellence and raise the funds necessary to cover the increased budget, the Board identified the following three strategic priorities for the next three years:

#### **Strategic Priority 1: Maintaining strong program delivery while increasing organizational capacity.**

In addition to quality program delivery and leadership, Ignite promotes its organization with concentrated efforts forming a concentric arc starting at EMR and heading north, east and south along the Front Range communities in Colorado and southern Wyoming. These promotions are delivered through targeted outreach, strong relationships with existing programs and agencies serving disabled populations and through word of mouth. While Ignite's management is confident in the strength of its current program delivery, promotional outreach and organizational metrics, it identified areas for improvement including:

### **Ignite Adaptive Sports at Eldora Mountain Resort**

- To maintain the high standards of its existing program, Ignite will continue to deploy the best practices of the adaptive winter sports industry including encouraging and supporting volunteers to obtain Professional Ski Instructor Association (PSIA) or American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) certification.
- In an attempt to increase access to its program, Ignite will explore filling its fourth day of lessons in the spring when signup softens.
- To incrementally improve the program over time, Ignite will enhance data collection to give staff a clearer picture of the following impacts: Staff will establish baseline instructor metrics - including years of experience and levels of certifications - while continuing program evaluation. By fiscal 2018-2019, Ignite will strengthen this initiative and develop a succession plan for key volunteers, staff and the Board.
- To strengthen its ability to manage and support Ignite, the Board of Directors will recruit strong community leaders for Board placement that align with the organization's strategies, needs and goals.
- Ignite rents two trailers owned by EMR as its base of operations. These trailers are aging and will need maintenance and eventual replacement. To avoid a potentially poorly timed failure, the Ignite Board will develop a capital plan and any other strategies necessary to maintain and improve these and other fixed assets.

### **Strategic Priority 2: Increase annual financial support through strengthening of brand equity.**

Ignite has a stable development program that has supported operational requirements for forty years. While primarily a volunteer-run organization, key staff members are paid a small stipend, and with recent increases in expenses, the organization's fund-raising program needs to be strategically expanded. A full time Executive Director was hired to work with the board on fund-raising and lead a robust development effort. Several donors made a three-year commitment totaling \$50,000 a year, to allow the organization time to increase its fundraising capacity without negatively impacting available funds.

Ignite's exceptional program has significant undiscovered potential for broad community funding support. Based on the data from external stakeholder interviews, it is clear that those who know about Ignite love and embrace it. To raise its visibility in the community, and increase its value to unrealized sponsors and funding sources, Ignite's highest non-program priorities are to develop and execute both a successful Marketing and Development Plan targeted at potential donors, funders and sponsors. To that end, strategies have been identified including:

- Ignite's Board to research marketing firms that either donate pro bono work, charge a nominal rate, or will raise money to pay non-profit rates. Co-create with firm a targeted Marketing Plan for Ignite that has measurable outcomes for 1,3 and 5-year brand identification goals.
- In conjunction with the creation of a Marketing Plan, draft a Development Plan that identifies current and future funding sources: individual (major donors), corporate, endowment, events and foundation giving. Construct a matrix that has measurable outcomes for 1,3 and 5-year funding goals.

### **Ignite Adaptive Sports at Eldora Mountain Resort**

- Organize a development team of volunteers that are skilled, have an interest or aptitude, in fundraising. Assign fundraising goals of team that are achievable and realistic. Hold regular meetings to track success and identify areas of improvement.
- Development team will be educated on how to leverage volunteer's community affiliations. Outreach metrics will be established and modified as needed. Expand affiliations by 10% per year.
- Assign an experienced volunteer to promote online fundraising and networking via social media. Maintain a vibrant FB page with constant updates, photos, event notices and volunteer opportunities. Use peer-to-peer contacts to increase FB visibility.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen long-term partnership with EMR.**

Ignite has enjoyed an excellent long-term relationship with EMR for forty years. Because of Ignite's PR efforts, EMR agreed to allow Ignite to remain, albeit with significantly less support. Ignite's Executive Director has since established a strong working relationship with EMR's General Manager. In 2016, the resort was sold to Powdr. Ignite leadership is optimistic that the relationship - as well as the considerable in-kind support EMR offers - will continue to improve. Ignite's Board identified the strategies to strengthen its partnership with EMR long term including:

- Ignite's Board of Directors will approach EMR's new management to discuss inclusion in Powdr's long term strategic plans including the possibility of building a new facility that complements Powdr's plans for EMR.
- As Ignite develops a marketing plan, it will offer to coordinate with EMR's marketing staff to leverage opportunities to showcase the partnership.
- Ignite will approach EMR management to offer to make introductions to other non-profits and Ignite supporters to help EMR with any community issues that are impacting the ski area.

### **Conclusion:**

In closing, while strategy is important, execution is key. This plan is intended to provide a clear view of future goals and strategies necessary to fulfill Ignite's mission: Continuing quality program delivery, increasing organizational capacity, enhancing brand recognition to allow for more diverse and robust funding support and strengthening partnership ties with EMR. Within forty-five days of Board approval Ignite's Executive Director will create an Operational Plan that includes the objectives outlined in Ignite's Strategic Plan. These measureable objectives, including timelines and milestones, will provide Ignite's Board with the ability to monitor implementation and prioritize efforts.

**Ignite Adaptive Sports at Eldora Mountain Resort**  
**Strategic Plan 2016-2019**

**Vision:** All people with disabilities from the Front Range have access to sports.

**Mission:** To provide winter sports at Eldora Mountain Resort for people with disabilities that foster independence through the acquisition of lifetime skills. *\* draft, Ignite's mission statement currently being refined.*

**Strategic Priority 1: Maintaining strong program delivery while increasing organizational capacity.**

**Goal 1:** Continue to develop and enhance Ignite's program to meet the disabled community's needs.

Objective 1: Provide 1,000 individual lessons to 200 students annually

Objective 2: Develop by June 2017 and implement the next season a quality of lesson experience metric

Objective 3: Support and train 200 volunteers annually

Objective 4: Retain 70% of volunteers annually

Objective 5: 30% of instructors are PSIA or AASI certified by 2017 (to be updated by Dec 2017)

Objective 6: Develop by June 2017 and implement the next season volunteer satisfaction metric

Objective 7: Increase Board of Directors to 10 active members by December 2017

Objective 8: Establish metrics for Board effectiveness by September 2017 and meet annually thereafter

Objective 9: Establish a plan by June 2017 to ensure a functional and sustainable facility for Ignite's program

**Strategic Priority 2: Increase annual financial support through strengthening of brand equity.**

**Goal 2:** Expand fund-raising to meet the needs of Ignite's increased annual budget.

Objective 10: Increase annual fund raising to make the temporary Heroes Fund unnecessary by the end of fiscal year 2017-18. Ensure annual fund-raising and fee for service revenue support an annual budget of \$250,000 by fiscal year 2017-18.

**Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen long-term partnership with EMR**

**Goal 3:** Secure long-term agreement with EMR.

Objective 11: Establish a long-term agreement with EMR by the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2017 (Revised: October 2017)