

ANNUAL REPORT '24/25



TETON ROCK GYM

Fostering personal and community growth through the challenge of rock climbing

10 Years Running

It has been almost 11 years since I first swung a hammer as one of the many volunteers on the construction of Teton Rock Gym. As a gym rat, my motivation was simple – pull on some plastic as fast as possible. It was exciting to help open the doors as the operations manager and to be a part of getting the gym and its programs up and running.

Over the past decade, we have faced plenty of challenges. Running an independent, full-service gym in such a small populace is not an easy task. Our model has been slow, organic community growth, and despite the many challenges, we have continued to expand every year, adding amenities and programs consistently.

We are always listening to our members and looking at what we can improve. We continuously added to our adult and youth programs, with partnership expansions with ABC this summer, to consistent adaptive climbing with Valley Adaptive Sports, to regular high school physical education class groups. This year we have seen a substantial increase in the demand for programming for young children, and are now consistently running 30+ weeks of weekly Little's Climb. In the 24/25 school year, we expanded our open hours on Fridays to allow for more open gym time, doubled the participant capacity of our Mini and Monkeys programs, and expanded our climbing teams to 4 programs.

The global pandemic forced everyone to evaluate their operations and focus first on surviving, and then on sustainability. These times of uncertainty and turmoil in the non-profit space provide an opportunity for that again. As a small organization in a small town, we are excited to refocus on continuing to build community and balance the diverse needs of our program participants, day users, and membership base.

We're proud to be among the small percentage of gyms in the country offering 24-hour access for our membership, of the sustainability and demand for our youth programs, and of the regularly running affinity groups and adult classes. We're proud of everything we've accomplished in our 10+ years, and of the growth we've experienced this past year as well. It's ok to be small, and focus on what you do best. In a post-COVID era of indoor climbing, where conglomeration and chains have become the norm, we're proud to be running a small, community-based climbing gym in Driggs, Idaho.

We thank you all for your patronage and support as we look forward to the next decade of challenges and successes.

Sincerely,

Jacob Yufa



Who is the TRG community these days?

Lots of different kinds of people make up the Teton Rock Gym community nowadays. There are teens who need somewhere safe to hang out with friends away from their parents. Caretakers who enjoy a breather while their children climb at Little's climb. Adults working through injuries who use our space to rehab, and emerging adults who find freedom and empowerment in using their 24/hr access memberships.

The gym community consists of diverse folks with myriad interests and needs. Some come to socialize and meet new people. Others intentionally choose our facility because there are still quiet times when they can be alone. Our small space engenders connection and learning, which makes it an ideal place for people who are interested in having an educational experience as well as building relationships. Our community includes groups of LDS singles and LGBTQIA+ climbers, as well as visitors and residents who come train with us before climbing the Grand. We regularly work with public school classes, therapeutic and independent schools who visit Teton Rock Gym as part of their annual curriculum, and individuals seeking private instruction. There are members of our community who only MoonBoard or exclusively climb on autobelays. Others use the fitness area and don't identify as climbers at all and hundreds of people each year participate in our afterschool, camps, family climb, and recreational programs.



Our membership ranges from people 6 to 69 years old and consists of complete novices, dedicated team kids, Himalayan mountaineers, weekend warriors, busy parents, power-lifters, and ex climbing pros. In order to serve such different people to the best of our ability, we have to make decisions about how the facility is used, the number of programs to run, the classes and events we offer depending on the season and our capacity as a staff. We do our best to foster personal and community growth through rock climbing, while making careful considerations and decisions around the constraints of our space, and the varied and sometimes conflicting needs of our user groups.

Many of our stakeholders understand this constant effort to maximize the benefit of the space while making choices that ensure the longevity and stability of the project. As Teton Valley continues to grow, we will inevitably see the demographics of gym users and their needs evolve. Jacob and I are entrusted to listen, observe, and make informed choices based on our experience as gym managers and climbing educators to serve our gym's diverse community to the best of our ability. We appreciate all of your kindness and support, and we look forward to more beautiful climbing experiences to come in 2025/2026!

- Jen Piperno



2024 in numbers:

274

Gym Members

10,468

Gym Visits

54

**Free Events for
Families and Littles!**

33

Climbing and Aerial Events for Adults

200

Youth in TRG Climbing Programs

Winter Sports Participants

84

90

Summer Camp Participants

26

Adult Climbing and Aerial Classes

Our People

Former team climbers Axel Restuccia and Seamus O'Connor joined our coaching team in 2024. Their support enabled us to launch two new team programs and double our capacity at the youngest team levels.

As new coaches, they had the opportunity to learn about functional setting, lesson planning, and program reflection. After practices, they assessed what worked well, which group management tools were effective, and how to introduce movement concepts to children of different ages. Together, they led games and icebreakers. They facilitated setting sessions with young children, and introduced conversations about group norms and expectations.

Axel and Seamus built invaluable relationships with our gym's youngest team climbers, and inspired them to learn new skills while having fun and being creative on the wall. There is always more to learn about being a good coach and mentor to children, and we are grateful to collaborate with, teach, and grow alongside these young educators.

Jacob Yufa



Jen Piperno



Axel Restuccia



Seamus O'Connor



Board of Directors 2024

Abbi Sarthou: Board Chair
Chris Trudeau: Treasurer
Sarah Kaiser: Secretary

Youth Programs '24

2024 brought with it lots of changes to our youth programs! The shift to a 4-day school week shook up our program schedule, leading us to create four 1-day-a-week programs at the lower levels and significantly increasing the number of younger climbers we get to work with in a given season.

Additionally, we added two new recreational teams, Marmosets and Spider Monkeys, doubling the number of team kids at the rock gym to 40 climbers.

Winter of 2024 was our last year of Winter Sports, as District 401 terminated the long standing program for winter 2025. In spite of losing this important feeder program, we had no trouble filling our 2024/25 Winter and Spring youth programs.

Our teen climbing community is bigger than ever, with a consistent group of teens registering for Teen Club and a large group of local teenagers maintaining annual memberships, many of which were young climbers in TRG's early years who have re-connected with the gym. Some kids who grew up climbing at the gym have recently become adults and joined our 24/hr member community!

Our Little's Climb program was hugely popular in 2024, averaging 20 kids under the age of 5 climbing weekly in the facility throughout the year and bringing in many new climbers and families to the gym.

Summer Camp ran full for 8 weeks of outdoor climbing with lots of team kids joining us for fun days in the sun bouldering and on ropes at local crags.



Youth Setting at TRG

Setting at TRG is fairly unique. Many boulders around the gym are set by participants or former participants of our youth programs. Kids learn to set at Teton Rock Gym as young as six years old and they regularly set or tape-set as part of our educational program. We involve kids in setting because it empowers them to explore and learn movement, connects them to peers and adults, and teaches invaluable and transferable life skills such as communication, collaboration, and empathy.

As a creative exercise, setting teaches kids how to take something abstract, such as a difficulty grade, or something specific like a hold type, and to compose something from nothing around an idea, movement concept, or object. Setters learn how to “force” a move as their peers test their skill by trying to “break” or find alternative ways up a boulder than the setter intended. Engaging in this process of trying to force and break moves builds setters who deeply understand climbing movement, and climbers who are wildly creative and comfortable with exploring new ways of being on the wall.

From a team-building perspective, setting allows for kids to build empathy when co-creating a climb with climbers of different sizes, abilities, and experience levels. We love helping kids generate a vision, communicate that vision to a group, delegate tasks, respectfully receive and give feedback, and have a willingness to edit and change a climb to enhance someone else’s experience.



Other Youth Programs

ABC Camp:

TRG partnered with ABC, Above and Beyond the Classroom to host a 7 week indoor climbing camp that served over 40 kids. A number of those students had their first experience climbing at the gym and had such a positive experience that they signed up for fall programs!



Family Climb:

Every first Saturday of the month, families climb at the gym for free. Hundreds of adults and kids utilize the gym during this time every year.

Adaptive Climbing:

With the support of Teton Valley Adaptive, Teton Rock Gym offered 8 weeks of programming for adaptive climbers in the summer of 2024. This was a time slot reserved for kids with special needs and their families to experience the rock gym at no cost to them.



Little's Climb:

For four seasons throughout the year, kids 5 and under can climb on Wednesday mornings with their parents and caretakers for free. In 2024, this program brought over 150 new people into the gym, and 88 new climbers under the age of 5.



Adult Programs & Events

In '24 Teton Rock Gym offered 59 classes and events to our adult community. These included beginner and intermediate-level climbing education courses, beginner-level aerial silks classes, affinity group meet ups, the Reel Rock Film Tour, and our gym's first-ever boulder competition series.

We provided the following classes and events:

Climbing Classes:

Top Rope 101

Lead 101

Intro to Bouldering

Basic Climbing Movement

Intermediate Climbing Movement

How to Project A Boulder

Self Rescue

Anchor Building

AERIAL CLASSES & EVENTS:

Intro to Aerial Silks

Aerial: Beginner 1

Open Aerial Silks

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Queer Climb Night

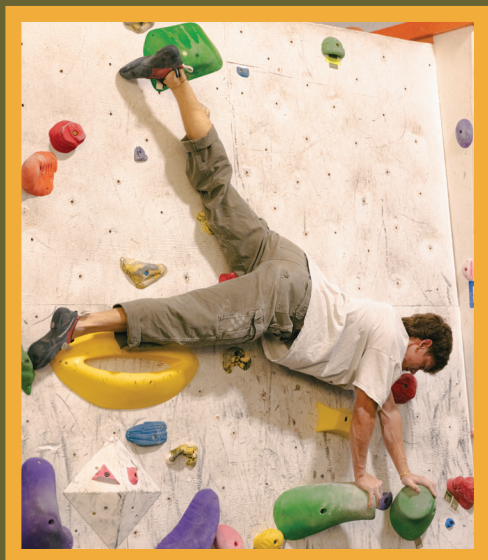
Women's and Nonbinary Climb Night

Reel Rock Film Festival

Pass Collapse Boulder Series

Pass Collapse Boulder Series

In case you missed it, Teton Pass collapsed during the Summer of 2024, and TRG put on it's first ever Boulder Competition series. The free competition ran for 6 weeks, with gym staff and volunteers setting upwards of 20+ boulders each week. The gym had over 63 participants and 20 teams who came from Teton Valley and Rexburg. It was a blast!



Grants & Fundraising

CFTV Competitive Grant: Youth Movement Training

Thanks to the movement training tools we purchased with the CFTV grant, we increased and diversified the movement types kids are exposed to and the opportunities they have to explore and develop new movement skills. We integrated locomotor, non-locomotor, manipulative, and complex movement learning into TRG's 2024 curriculum at every level of programming with learning sequences that progressed and spanned multiple sessions. The inclusion of movement tools along with the expansion of kids' movement vocabulary and intentional exploration of movement literacy, led to powerful conversations and lessons around our body's anatomy, its limitations, how to prevent and navigate injuries, and ways to improve our climbing by improving our mobility off the wall.

Tin Cup Challenge

Thanks to the generosity of many members, parents, and other patrons, Teton Rock Gym had its most successful year at Tin Cup in the organization's history. We are immeasurably grateful to the individuals who donated to the rock gym and we are thrilled to continue our work in the community with the help of these funds.



A note from our new BoD

Dear Members of the Teton Rock Gym Community,

We're honored to serve as the Board of the Teton Rock Gym and to represent Teton Valley's passionate and growing climbing community. TRG is a vibrant hub for climbers of all ages and abilities, and we're excited to support its continued growth and success.

Our shared goal is to ensure the gym continues to meet the evolving needs of our diverse community while staying rooted in its core mission and values by soliciting feedback (please fill out the form included in the July 2025 newsletter); creating a strategic plan to align our efforts with mission and vision; and board development to ensure we have the right mix of perspectives and experience.

We're grateful for your continued support and involvement, and we're committed to sharing our efforts with you moving forward. Thank you for being part of the TRG community. We look forward to seeing you at the gym!

Warm regards,

Patrick Hertz
Chris Mientjes
Evan Flach



Patrick Hertz, President



Chris Mientjes, Secretary



Evan Flach, Treasurer

Some kind words for TRG:

"Teton Rock Gym embraces nontraditional sports and meets each climber where they're at. They offer great after-school and summer programs that support kids' passion for climbing, encourages them to grow strong, and fosters an inclusive environment for all. Not just for kids, Teton Rock Gym also features thoughtfully set routes that challenge and inspire adult climbers of all levels. As a true asset to our community, the gym aligns with our shared recreation values promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting us to the natural beauty that surrounds us."

Jennie Beach | Gym Member and Spider Monkey Parent

"Littles Climb has been such a gift for my daughter. At just three years old, she's building confidence, coordination, and a real love for climbing in a space that feels safe and welcoming. Teton Rock Gym isn't just a place to climb—it's a place to connect and build community."

Rosie DeLise | Gym Member and Little's Climb Parent

"I enjoy meeting the fun, ever-changing people at Women's and Nonbinary Climb Night. The rock gym is a great place to release your inner daredevil in a welcoming place, no matter your skill level or decade with knowledgeable staff, safety instruction & tips before every class!"

Mary Kamstra | Gym Member



"From first working at the front desk 5 years ago, to setting boulders, and now as a seasonal member, I've come to value TRG immensely as a place for building both community and relationships with other climbers in the area, in addition to providing a space for training and personal progression. I've met many of my best friends, climbing partners, and mentors through TRG, and many of my hard sends in the canyon would not have been possible without another TRG member out to support and hold my rope."

Luke Leasure | Former TRG Employee, Gym Member

"Teton Rock Gym is an environment I will always be grateful for. It's uplifting, accepting, and positive. There isn't a better community for climbing I could ask for."

Fiona Gaffney | Teen Club Climber

"TRG is one of the first places that I went to when I'd moved to Driggs. Since that time, it has become a place I could go to before or after work to clear my mind. TRG provides a great environment to work on oneself, see a familiar face, and even make a new connection with someone to talk about your next adventure outside."

Joe Weller | Gym member

"Hayden's interest with rock climbing was piqued when she has the opportunity to attend through ABC's summer programming. From there, she wanted to join the afterschool climbing program, which than transitioned to summer camp. While she has gained the obvious benefits of doing rock climbing (strenth, coordination, and problem solving,) the most transformational has been seeing her confidence blossom in all areas of life."

Erica Stitgen | Marmost Parent

"Working as a guest coach with the climbing team at Teton Rock Gym is such a privilege. The kids are interested and supportive of one another and in climbing as a community. We worked on strength, conditioning, flexibility and agility and played a little bit with other methods of movement. They ALWAYS rose to the challenge. I had a front row seat as these amazing young people applied our cross training and deepened their already exceptional skills and excelled at something they'd been hung up on. In just a few hours a week to witness such raw human potential blossom into strength and skill and confidence and joy! Wow!"

Heidi Christine | Movement Coach, Little's Parent

"To me, the rock gym is a place where I can be for hours on end with nonstop activities and workouts. It is a special rock gym that stands out from the rest because of the friendly environment. People will help and the person behind the desk is always a warm and welcoming. Overall the rock gym is an awesome, safe space to climb and hang out."

Will Kaiser | Advanced Team Climber

"Climbing at Teton Rock Gym has created a deep sense of trust and respect among those climbing around me. The challenging route setting in the climbing gym mirrors the ruggedness and difficulty of the Teton rock that surrounds us outdoors. Community is vital here, and the opportunity to participate in Women's and BIPOC climbing groups is the greatest reward—making me feel safe, at home, and deply connected to the values of this place."

Aisulu Omar | Gym Member

"The gym feels like a sanctuary. Late nights in the summer or a warm place to move in the winter. I always find positive energy and amazing connections when I'm having a session."

Kris Von Ow | Gym Member

