Thank you for an outstanding journey - Kitty Calhoun

When Kim Reynolds started Chicks with Picks twenty one years ago, she never dreamed that her vision of changing the paradigm of womens’ ice climbing would go so much further than that. In the first year, in Ouray CO, she hired some of the best ice climbers and guides in the US - including Angela Hawse and Kitty Calhoun. The ice courses in Ouray filled at 16-20 participants per clinic. Typically we would be teaching someone how to put on a harness, and she would become a frequent flyer, and continue taking courses until she was a competent leader. Courses were composed of roughly 80% alumni. They graduated with an increased sense of self-confidence and a growing circle of friends and climbing partners.

For the guides, Chicks was a unique opportunity to work with women who were curious and not afraid to be vulnerable or to push their comfort zone. Personally, I had never had the chance to climb so much with other women and I appreciate being able to get to know so many, and to help them achieve their climbing goals.

Additionally, Kim partnered with sponsors, who helped subsidize the business and provided demo gear and clothing. She also valued giving back and held annual fundraisers, and donated several thousand dollars each year to the womens’ shelter in Montrose.

Later, Kim added ice climbing courses in N. Conway and Cody, WY. About ten years after starting Chicks with Picks, at about the time rock gyms became popular, Kim saw the cross-over between rock and ice climbing skills and started Chicks Rock programs in Red Rocks and Devils Lake and partnered with Emily Drinkwater in Keene NY and Elaina Arenz in of New River Mtn Guides in the New River Gorge. Elaina was also struck by the Chicks special sauce. Kim was also looking for local qualified guides and added Karen Bockel and Dawn Glanc to the Chicks guides. At that time, Kim also started a monthly newsletter and social media to keep the Chicks community informed.

By year 15, Kim was ready to become a full-time leadership and life coach. She sold the business to the Pentagon of Power - Angela Hawse, Dawn Glanc, Elaina Arenz, and Karen Bockel, and Kitty Calhoun. Together, we expanded our course areas to
include Joshua Tree, City of Rocks, Indian Creek, Rifle, and Maple Canyon. We also added Chicks with Stix and in partnership with the Silverton Avalanche School, we provided avalanche education and back country ski programs - with ski trips in the San Juans, the Alps, and Japan. We added ice climbing programs to Iceland and started mountaineering programs on Mt Baker and in Chamonix. We expanded the sponsorship partnerships and continued the fundraising events, with money most recently being donated to the Ouray Ice Park.

Through these last six years as owners, we are most grateful for the times shared with our community of participants. It is the inspiration of seeing women - no matter what level of experience, fitness level, size, age, or level of fear - trust and commit to the unknown with heart and soul, that has motivated us on our own journey of learning.

We have been observing and adapting to the rapidly changing times during the pandemic and believe that eventually the world will be a better place as we work together to address the challenges before us. Meanwhile, we feel that many of the values that are essential to the Chicks experience - such as working together and sharing physically and mentally demanding experiences with others while climbing and skiing - could not be a part of a responsible business model for the foreseeable future. Thus we have decided to dissolve Chicks as of August 15, 2020. We will forever carry with us the memories and support that we have received. See you down the road.

~ Kitty Calhoun

**BonVoyage and Gratitude Dear Chicks! - Angela Hawse**

All good things come to be and pass. This is the way of the universe and certainly true of my experience. The joy we find in each adventure launches us to new discoveries and experiences, building on our foundation - then letting us soar on wings of new found liberation from limitations we set for ourselves. For myself and many of you this rings true with Chicks.

Chicks hatched from our inspiring founder, Kim Reynolds, many moons ago and we’ve shared our love of the mountains, of climbing and skiing with so many of you for twenty one trips around the sun now. We have laughed, cried, shouted cheers of support and held the space for us all as women to learn, grow and find our power together, beit on a shared rope, a skin track or a good heart to heart. Many of us have climbed and skied together outside of Chicks and surely will into the future.
For myself, letting Chicks go is bittersweet. Chicks will always remain a treasured part of my life. Many of you have become dear friends. I will always cherish our time with each of you, seeing you try hard and get on and up climbs you never thought possible. Witnessing you find your inner sass and grit with the self-confidence to soar has provided me with countless inspiring days of guiding. It has been such a profound joy seeing you on your own out at the crags “kicking your axe”! You have humbled me and made me proud beyond words.

What a wondrous opportunity it was in the beginning to work with the best women guides in the U.S. in sharing Kim’s vision with so many of you who came back to climb and learn from us again and again. My memories of guiding with Kitty, Kim Csizmasia, Carolyn Parker, Kathy Cosley, Karen McNeill, Amy Bullard, Jen Stewart, Mattie Sheafor and Anna Keeling are precious. We were a force and all looked so forward to working together every winter in Ouray. Since those days, top women guides around the country have worked with Chicks in this space that we’ve held sacred since the beginning.

The opportunity to grow the business with Kitty, Elaina, Karen and Dawn was an tremendously positive experience that enabled me to push myself, learn a ton and work in new ways with these exceptionally talented women. We became family. Yet another bonus of Chicks and a gift that will keep on giving.

I have immensely valued our partnerships in the outdoor industry. The enthusiastic and generous support for our women’s programs has been remarkable, heartfelt and validating. These relationships are also timeless. Our work together and the support of our community helped us build Chick’s legacy of empowering women and giving back. Together, we have raised over 300K for local women’s shelters and the Ouray Ice Park.

Our program, the first of it’s kind has inspired and influenced many more. We are excited to pass the baton and cheer on other women’s programs into the future with this important work. Our precious, endearing logo, created by Chicks co-founder Kellie Day will remain etched our memory as a reminder of the potential we all have to try hard and strive to do our best. And, the eternal spirit of Chicks will always shine bright. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to have shared it with you. Onward and upward!

With Love ~ Angela
Good-bye - Karen Bockel

Good-bye my friends, it’s hard to die. Chicks, LLC the company, is coming to an end. But Chicks as we know it will never die. The community and the spirit we have created together will live on strong. I want to thank you, my partners, my colleagues, my Chicks climbers and skiers, our partners, sponsors and longtime alumnae for all you have given to Chicks over the years to make us what we have become:

The world's longest running, most experienced team of women-led instruction in ice-climbing, rock climbing, alpine climbing, and backcountry skiing.

What a run it’s been. Since my start guiding for Chicks with Picks in 2011 in the Ouray Ice Park under the tutelage of Kim Reynolds and alongside Kitty Calhoun and Dawn Glanc, this community we call Chicks has been a rock in my life. Working with Angela Hawse, Elaina Arenz and Kitty in the ownership team has been an incredible experience of teamwork.

Chicks has been a source of inspiration, of growth, and of friendship. Together, we have laughed and shed tears, we've overcome hurdles, learned an incredible amount, pushed our limits and grown stronger and closer together.

Let’s carry the mission on. It’s so worth it.

Karen Bockel

Goodbye - Elaina Arenz

All good things must come to an end and so it is with Chicks. The pandemic has put an incalculable strain on our business and after much reflection, we’ve made the tough decision that it’s time to move on. Although we are closing down our operations, what will carry on are the knowledge, the memories, and the friendships that we all formed in a shared experience.

I've enjoyed working and getting to know each and every one of you over the years. We've bonded over our love of the rock and the rope, shared laughs, tears and fears along the way and we've become stronger for it. It's been immensely gratifying to watch each of you learn and grow, spread your wings and fly onward.
To all of the guides and my business partners; it’s been an honor to work alongside each of you. Thank you for sharing your friendships, sharing your knowledge and for inspiring me to be a positive role model like you’ve been for me.

Thanks to all of the sponsors who have supported Chicks over the years. We couldn’t have done our work without you and we appreciate you supporting not only our organization but women from all stages and walks of life who share a love for climbing and skiing.

Lastly and most important of all, thanks to all of the participants. It’s been a pleasure getting to know all of you. Continue to share your knowledge with others and pass it on, so others are able to be more independent and confident climbers as well. You are the legacy and we are counting on you to keep that legacy alive.

We hope you all continue to adventure out there with one another and know that we will always be just a message away should you ever need advice or support.

Keep on flying.
Elaina

August 05, 2020