

MODERN LUXURY

# Silicon Valley

## BIG Hearts

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Bay Area resident & Olympic gold medalist  
Kristi Yamaguchi at the Park James

Falling into a manufacturing business isn't usually how artists become entrepreneurs. But don't tell Nicole Frelier Andrews, the woman behind NFA Boards (nfaboards.com), whose mission is to transform the lives of youth, including underserved and underrepresented communities, through skateboarding. NFA also builds confidence, encourages physical activity and helps break stereotypes.

Two years ago, Frelier Andrews' son asked her to buy

# ON BOARD

Artist, entrepreneur and philanthropist Nicole Frelier Andrews helps children find their groove via skateboards.

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY

him a blank skate deck and spray paint it for his 10th birthday. She had an epiphany: Why wasn't she putting her artwork on skateboards? From there, the idea—and the business—took off.

Frelier Andrews, who grew up skateboarding and was even a professional roller derby player for Peninsula Roller Girls (derby name: Tricky Nikki 6), says she was a product of the 1970s and 1980s. "I lived outdoors. I was either on a skateboard or roller skating and

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Los Altos resident Nicole Frelier Andrews launched NFA Boards during the pandemic.



be fun and therapeutic.”

Proceeds from NFA Boards fund skate-empowered and after-school programs, including Skate Like a Girl ([skatelikeagirl.com](http://skatelikeagirl.com)). The artist also has expanded her philanthropic magic to Montana, where her family has a second home. “It’s exciting to announce my partnership with Big Sky Youth Empowerment ([byep.org](http://byep.org)), a Bozeman nonprofit, as well as the Skateboarding Alliance of Montana ([skateboardallianceofmontana.org](http://skateboardallianceofmontana.org)),” says Frelier Andrews, who has

funded youth snowboarding scholarships the past two years and is launching a skateboarding pilot program in Bozeman this summer.

In the months and years ahead, Frelier Andrews wants to build her brand as she partners with more nonprofits, which can help NFA Boards expand nationally while providing more scholarships and programming. “I’m hoping to later branch out into creating snowboards, but one deck at a time,” she says. ◦



Clockwise from top left: Frelier Andrews in her studio; swag from NFA Boards; Frelier Andrews creates custom art for skateboard decks and hopes to branch into snowboards soon.

PHOTOS BY MICHAELA JOY PHOTOGRAPHY

...CONTINUED would stay out until I heard my father’s whistle to come home,” she says. “I loved the freedom of skating and practicing skateboarding tricks.”

During the pandemic, Frelier Andrew watched her two children become detached and immersed in online activities. “They were no longer interested in playing outdoors,” she says. “Their relationships were through a device, not the normal interaction they would have through school and sports. My

children have always enjoyed being active outdoors and enjoyed skating. My business idea reconnected them with reality.”

The entrepreneur also gives back. “Philanthropy is a huge part of who I am,” says Frelier Andrews. “Since I left the technology industry here in Silicon Valley a decade ago, I’ve supported multiple arts- and history-related boards and committees. But I wanted to do something more for our youth. Something that would

