



AbilityPLUS Inc.

Tracks

The Newsletter of AbilityPLUS Inc.
A Nonprofit Adaptive Skiing & Recreation Organization

Summer 2005

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Executive Director

Gregory T. Cutler
Development Director

Joan Sweeney
Administrative Assistant

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Attitash/Bear Peak

Cris Criswell
Bretton Woods

Nancy Ripley
Gunstock

Silke Fockenbrock
Waterville Valley

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Mount Snow

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Waterville Valley Adaptive Welcomes Wounded Warriors

During the weekend of March 19th, 2005, nine soldiers with permanent physical disabilities resulting from the conflict in Iraq and the Global War on Terrorism joined us for three days of skiing at Waterville Valley at no cost due to the wonderful generosity of the Waterville Valley community and many sponsors. All of this was made possible through the efforts of Kirk Bauer and his team at Disabled Sports USA (of which AbilityPLUS is a Chapter), Walter Reed Hospital and the Wounded Warrior Project.

Bauer, who visits returning wounded soldiers undergoing treatment weekly at Walter Reed Hospital, is adamant about the program and knows that a successful rehabilitation program that includes adaptive sport like learning to ski, helps these wounded soldiers transition back into society as quickly as possible with many



Continued inside

AbilityPLUS Summer Programs 2005

With the support of the Connor Foundation, The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and many individuals, we have a full schedule of programs for the community of disabled individuals visiting and residing in and around Waterville Valley. There are two programs, one day camp for children and one running for all ages on specific weekends.

The Waterville Valley Adaptive Summer Day Camp for children will run Monday through Friday for eight weeks, from July 5th through August 26th and will work in

concert with, and utilize the facilities of the Waterville Valley Recreation Department's summer program. Whenever possible the activities will be integrated with children in the Recreation Department's Summer Day camp and activities will include swimming, golf, tennis, cycling, in-line skating, horseback riding, active games, arts and crafts, daily living skills and much more.

Reservations are required. Call (603) 236-4758 or email silke@abilityplus.org for more information.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Another ski season is behind us and we are reminiscing about the successes of all the AbilityPLUS programs as the flowers are starting to come up. Spring means it's time to gear up for some first ever, full summer adaptive programs here in Waterville Valley and believe it or not planning for next winter.

All of the Program Directors at our partner mountains have formed a network and get together each fall and spring to collaborate and plan for their next season. They are a committed group of leaders in this field who are passionate about their programs and the people with disabilities who they serve. Kudos to them all for a great adaptive ski season and I look forward to working with them in the coming months.

Following our pilot program for children with disabilities last summer, this year will mark the start of our first full summer programs in Waterville Valley. This will be a huge expansion for us including a day camp program for kids with disabilities and weekend programs for all ages. Silke Fockenbrock from Germany who was hired last year as Director of our Adaptive Skiing program at Waterville Valley, (see article) will coordinate and operate the summer programs. We are looking forward to the same growth, energy, interest and success from our participants, their families, friends and volunteers that the winter programs enjoy. Join us this summer either as a sponsor, volunteer or student. I promise you it will be fun.

I have to thank all of the people who have supported the AbilityPLUS throughout this year. We certainly could not have been as successful without your support. Some of the partner programs have been busy running special events to raise funds for their programs. They include, (but are not limited to) the Fund Dash Dual and the BodeFest at Bretton Woods; The Winter Festival at Mount Snow; Stowe hosted their first-ever fundraiser and Gunstock did a lot of smaller events to support their program and the WMUR Winter Rodeo at Waterville Valley. These events have brought so many people into the AbilityPLUS family and we heartily welcome them all.

I extend my heartiest thanks to our Program Directors for a job exceedingly well done, and to our faithful supporters that continue to help us achieve our mission. We look forward to more success stories, more growth and more opportunities to provide excellent adaptive programs for our participants with disabilities in the years to come!

Warmly, *Kathy Chandler*

Director Profile

Silke Fockenbrock has come to the Waterville Valley Adaptive Program as the new Program Manager from Cologne, Germany. She arrived in November after a harried visa application process to a new country and a new position in an established program. Four years ago, she had spent three months as an intern at the Adaptive Sports Foundation at Ski Windham in New York, but this was different, as she has found out. The challenges she has faced are many! Finding a place to live, getting a license and buying a car in the US because, you can not work in Waterville Valley without a car.

Silke's been meeting many new people, learning names, getting to know the strengths of the volunteers, understanding the program systems, being the leader in a

well established program and through it all, facing the challenge of speaking a new language! You wouldn't know it was a challenge for her to speak with you. Her English is perfect! She quickly mastered it all and we had the biggest year, teaching more students than ever before.

Silke is here for three years to help us to operate and build the Waterville Valley Skiing Program and to develop the summer programs for AbilityPLUS. We met briefly when she was here on her internship and after going back to Germany to complete her degree in therapeutic recreation, she wanted to come back and get some more experience. "They just do not have opportunities like this in Germany", she told me in one of our many telephone interviews. Arriving in November, she

New Summer Program

With a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Connor Foundation the Waterville Valley Adaptive Program has initiated a new summer program. True to the AbilityPLUS mission it is totally integrated into the Waterville Valley Recreation Department Summer Program. With one-to-one supervision our students will participate alongside the other campers, go with the on field trips that are appropriate and accessible. In addition to the regular daily activities, our students will receive specialized instruction time for swimming, riding, individualized active games and daily living skills.

Campers will register by the day or week and the camp will run Monday through Friday from July 5th through August 26th.

If you are interested in attending the Summer Day Camp at The Waterville Valley Recreation Department, please contact Silke Fockenbrock at (603) 236-4758 or email silke@abilityplus.org.

jumped right into the fire. We were well under way with instructor/volunteer training, sorting out parkas, lockers, space, taking reservations and in the mad dash to be ready for the influx of students. Through the first winter, she kept saying, "I can't wait for next winter" when she will have all those first year challenges under her belt. Now we are experiencing the same for the summer programs. Please help me in welcoming Silke to this country and Waterville Valley.

Wish List:

- Digital Camera
- Video Camera
- Photo Paper
- Lap Top Computer(s)

For more information about AbilityPLUS, please contact Kathy

Wounded Soldiers Came to Waterville Valley Continued from cover

unseen benefits that will last well past the days on the slopes. Once these men and women face the challenges of learning to ski with a disability, they can face many, if not all of life's other hurdles with renewed confidence. Needless to say, it was a very moving weekend for all.

Air transportation from Washington to Manchester NH was provided by Southwest Airlines and the soldiers were met and welcomed by the Manchester Fire Department. After a full dinner provided for us by Next Step Orthotics and Prosthetics, everyone climbed into the complimentary shuttle from Shuttle Connection of Lincoln NH and then, the Waterville Valley police department provided an escort all the way back to the Valley where the soldiers were introduced to their host families for the weekend. We can't thank the host families enough for opening their homes to these special guests and making their stay in the Valley so very special. What a warm welcome to New Hampshire by so many caring people. And our heartfelt

thanks goes out to all of the other sponsors who donated items and services during the weekend for the troops.

We welcomed:

- Army LT Jeffery Adams;
- Marine LCPL James Crosby and his brother Jarrett;
- Army SSG Norberto Lara and his wife/fellow soldier Starlyn;
- Army SSg Jeremy Feldbusch and his mother Charlene;
- Marine LCPL Alex Nicoll & his father Larry;
- Army Capt. Anthony Ordierno and friend Amy;
- Army 1st LT Stephen Rice;
- Marine LCPL Jordan Roman and his brother Jason;
- 1st LT National Guard, Ed Salau and his wife Teresa and children Kelli & Ethan;
- Marine LCPL Chase Savage;
- Capt. Jacqueline Coley.

Our new friends skied for three days with their families and friends beside them. Some had never skied before, some since their injury, and some had come to improve their skills. Valley resident Judy Brady coordinated a community effort to make these brave men welcome with a community dinner, where they were introduced by rank and met many people young and old.

On the final night, everyone involved gathered and enjoyed a farewell dinner provided by the Diamond Edge Restaurant in Waterville Valley and again, the soldiers were introduced to a thunderous standing ovation followed by an impromptu, rousing and emotional rendition of the Star Spangled Banner which was sung by everyone in attendance.

We were sad to see them climb back on the shuttle and leave the Valley. It was a weekend we won't soon forget and hope that these men or others will come back for more!



News from AbilityPLUS.org

Do it all at the AbilityPLUS website!

- Learn about all of our programs!
- Find out about contributing or becoming a volunteer!
- Join the forums and talk with other participants, volunteers and staff.
- Check out the latest news from us and other organizations using the links that will take you to a world of information about adaptive sports and recreation.
- Contact us with questions, or update your contact information.
- See the videos and find out what typical day on the slopes is like!
- Support AbilityPLUS while shopping in the store for clothes, gifts and more!

Visit www.abilityplus.org today.
We look forward to hearing from you!

Letter of thanks

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kayla St. Pierre and I am 16 years old. I have been lucky enough to find an Adaptive Ski Program at Attitash, where they have taught me to mono ski and snowboard. All of the employees are kind and really want to teach you. I have seen the other students and when they come in from a day of skiing they look so excited. Having the Adaptive Ski Program at Attitash means that I can be more independent than I ever thought I would be. I am a double amputee and when I lost my legs, I didn't think I would ever participate in any sports ever again. There is only one word to describe the program and the people who take part in it: Excellent!

Sincerely,

Kayla St. Pierre

Summer Programs

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Our Special Weekend Activities are for all abilities and ages to give them an opportunity to try different sports with a group of friends and families. Reservations are required for all. Call (603)236-4758 or email adaptive.wv@boothcreek.com

July 16 - 17 — Paddling Weekend

learn the strokes and get acquainted on Saturday on Newfound Lake, then try your skills on Sunday on the Pemigewasset River or Squam Lake, depending on the skills of the group. This trip is for 18 and over. *Cost: \$150*

July 30 - 31 — Tennis/Golf Weekend

Join us in beautiful Waterville Valley for a weekend of tennis and/or golf. You can learn each sport or come to improve your skills. We will have trained instructors and volunteers in both sports here for the weekend. *Cost: \$100*

August 12 - 13 — Watersports Weekend

This fun filled weekend we will be water-skiing with Northeast Passage on Newfound Lake or just floating on the lake, swimming and picnicking on the beach. Register with Northeast Passage (603) 862-0070 or www.nepassage.org.

September 24 - 25 — Cycling Weekend

Come try your hand at cycling on the roads through and around Waterville Valley or onto the trails in the White Mountain National Forest. We will have different cycles to try through the generosity of Northeast Passage and volunteers to assist you. *Cost: \$100*

Join us for one or all of the summer programs. We will need volunteers to assist in all programs and training will be included.

MOUNTAIN PARTNERS:

Attitash/Bear Peak, NH

603 374 2368 x2688

Bretton Woods, NH

603 278 3398

Gunstock, NH

603 293 4341 x165

Waterville Valley, NH

603 236 8311 x3175

Stowe Resort

802 253 8769

Mount Snow

802 464 1100 x4699

Wachusett Mountain

978 464 2300 x3308

Nashoba Valley

978 692 0649

OUR MISSION:

To offer increased access to athletic and recreational opportunities for persons with physical and mental disabilities that will create freedom, promote independence, support inclusion and help those individuals and their families discover their full social, mental and athletic potential.

Watch for the fall and early winter pre-season training program for volunteers and ski instructors. It will be posted on the website by September 15, 2005. Go to Abilityplus.org.



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