



Reaching Out

Reaching out to all, all disabilities, all sports, all seasons!

Summer, Fall Newsletter 2013

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Chris Devlin-Young Becomes ASPNC Official Ski Ambassador



Chris Devlin-Young holds the record for the longest winning streak in US Adaptive Alpine history. Winning the World Cup finals last season in the Sochi, Russia Pre-Paralympics and this season's World Cup Opener in New Zealand sets him up as the leading contender for the 2014 Paralympic gold. Recently Chris and his wife Donna Devlin-Young moved to Bethlehem, NH. Both have been highly committed to supporting skiers with disabilities and have been involved in numerous adaptive ski and race programs throughout the country. This fall Chris offered to

become the ASPNC Official Ski Ambassador and Donna joined ASPNC as a volunteer and was recently elected to serve on the Board of Directors for ASPNC. They believe that we at ASPNC are unique in our focus on community and our commitment to inclusion exemplified, by our willingness to work with all disabilities, including those who are most challenged. Chris will be with us at Cannon on December 28th. Come and ski with the "winningest" US skier in alpine history – 156 wins and counting.

In October ASPNC sponsored a showing of the highly acclaimed film, *The Movement*. This film, narrated by Robert Redford and Warren Miller, tells of the overcoming of the obstacles of disability through adaptive skiing and the freedom of movement it provides. Before the showing of the film Chris Devlin-Young shared his own experiences in becoming a world renowned adaptive skier. To learn more about Chris and his recent accomplishments go to www.gocdy.com.

The Little Grille Hosts ASPNC Gathering

ASPNC extends a special thanks to Scott and Camilla Rutherford, owners of *The Little Grille Restaurant* on Cottage Street in Littleton, for hosting a Volunteer Gathering and Appreciation on Sunday October 20th. Volunteers and participants enjoyed a delightful buffet dinner as they celebrated our summer and fall seasons and applauded this year's participants in the *Any Which Way You Can Triathlon Challenge*. The Little Grille also provided lunches this summer to volunteers in our Thursday bicycle program.



Participant Spotlight: Seth Boulanger

This year Seth Boulanger became our youngest volunteer “helper.” Seth and his family found out about ASPNC when they stopped at the Littleton Bike and Fitness Shop to inquire about bicycle possibilities that would meet Seth’s special needs. They were soon meeting with Sandy Olney, our executive director. Seth remembers, “trying out lots of different bikes while riding around the Franconia skating rink.” A combination of disabilities contribute to Seth’s problems with balance and endurance, making it difficult for him to ride a traditional bicycle independently. Seth was born with HLHS (Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome), a congenital birth defect that causes abnormal blood flow through the heart. Additionally Seth suffered a stroke as a young infant which resulted in mild CP (Cerebral Palsy).



In the summer of 2012 nine year old Seth participated in the ASPNC biking program and was soon riding the Terra Trike bicycle on his own. He remembers that the best part of the program was having “fun” and also riding with the volunteers and with other people his age. Biking was such a positive experience for him, his family invested in a Terra Trike for him the following Christmas. Now Seth is able to ride his own bike with his family and more importantly with his neighborhood friends.

This summer Seth happened to go by the ASPNC tent set up along the rail trail off River Street in Littleton. “They’re there!” he cried, excited to see his friends and fellow bike riders. He wanted to know if he could be a volunteer and help us out. For the rest of the season Seth became a seasoned “helper” and enthusiastic role model for others in the program. When asked what he would tell people who were thinking about joining ASPNC activities he said, “It’s really fun, you should try it for yourself.”

Being able to ride a bike opened up doors for Seth giving him a new sense of freedom and the ability to engage in an outdoor activity with his peers. Now his friends think he has “the coolest bike in town.” ASPNC helped change Seth’s life for the better. Now he wants to “give back” to that program that has made such difference in his life.

Kathleen Boulanger – Seth’s mother

Golfing with Friends

There is nothing quite like being out on the golf course at the top of Sunset Hill looking out at the Presidential Mountains on one side and Vermont on the other. View aside, it is the sport itself that our participants enjoy the most. This year 8 young men and women joined us at the Sunset Hill golf course. For some it was their second year playing the sport with us, for others it was new. Dick Farrell and the other volunteer instructors set up practice activities for each session, and then everyone went out to play as many holes as time would allow. Two participants went on to compete in the Special Olympic Golf Tournament at Bethlehem Country Club.



Yikes Bikes

If you happen to be out on the rail trail in Littleton on any given Tuesday or Thursday during the summer you will most likely encounter ASPNC enthusiastic bikers. Biking is one of our most popular activities second only to alpine skiing. Biking participants meet at the ASPNC tent off River Street along the rail trail. Three biking sessions run throughout the day. Lunch break provides an overlap time when participants as well as volunteers, care providers and family members can sit and chat and eat lunch together. Socialization is an important part of the program which makes everyone feel a part of the ASPNC family.



Before joining the biking group, a participant meets with Sandy, our executive director, or other volunteers to determine which bicycle suits his or her particular needs. The goal is to find the bike that provides needed support while allowing opportunity for the most independence. Sometimes participants move on to less restrictive equipment as they gain skills as well as strength and endurance. Volunteer instructors in the ski program notice significant improvements on the slopes in those participants who biked over the summer.

Measuring Outcomes for ASPNC

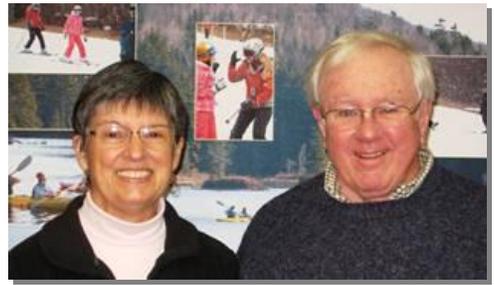
A year ago a small committee was formed to begin to find ways to evaluate the outcomes of ASPNC so that it can be the best program possible for our participants, our volunteers, our partners and for the community at large. Members of the committee recently attended a conference offered by the N.H. Center for Nonprofits entitled *Embracing the Power of your Outcomes*. Outcome measures demonstrate the impact of programs and activities, and are critical for fundraising as well as internal management and ongoing improvements. Countless success stories from our participants demonstrate that we are on the right track, but documenting this success in a meaningful way is a challenge. The committee looked at instruments used by other recreational programs and drew on their ideas to develop a small pilot study survey which was given to 20 participants at the end of our 2012-13 winter activity sessions. Over 96% agreed that participation in the ASPNC activity was a positive influence in their quality of life, it allowed them to feel more competent, it improved their skills, and gave them a feeling of accomplishment. These results are similar to those found in a Brigham and Young University study on the benefits of adaptive sports.

In order to help us look at outcomes from an additional perspective the committee sought the help and expertise of Dr. Rebecca Busanich from the Center for Active Living at Plymouth University. She has agreed to help us in this endeavor and has applied for a faculty research grant entitled “A Narrative Exploration of Adaptive Sports, Physical Activity Participation and Disability in New Hampshire’s North Country.” We look forward to working with her and sharing our stories in the coming years.



ASPNC Thanks Jim and Susan Moore

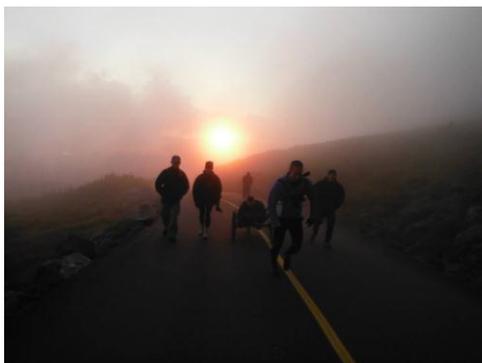
All of us at ASPNC extend our heartfelt gratitude to Jim Moore for his years of service as President of our Board of Directors. He is stepping down this year from his position on the Board, but will hopefully continue to contribute his wisdom and expertise as an active volunteer. Jim and his wife, Susan, were the founding members of our organization. They asked Sandy Olney if she would be willing to be the director for this new program and they began recruiting volunteers. Around the Moore's kitchen table, a group of original volunteers began the work of defining a new adaptive organization that would come to be called Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country. It was their vision to start a new adaptive program in the North Country that would be unique in several ways including being "non-mountain based" and would offer year round recreational experiences for people with all levels of disabilities. Early fundraising allowed us to hire Sandy as our full time executive director. Since that time Jim and Susan have dedicated thousands of hours developing ASPNC to where it is today. In only four plus years since our founding, we have served about 243 people with disabilities, and we have over 40 partners, a critical component initiated by the Moores. We have established multiple venues in the North Country, we now have 107 active volunteers, and we have developed a comprehensive training program to assure safe and effective programs. Recently we have been able to add two part time office staff to ease the load carried almost singlehandedly by Susan over the past years.



We cannot thank Jim and Susan enough for all that they have done to make our organization such a success and important contribution to the health and wellbeing of our community.

Ray Burton Will Be Missed By Many Including ASPNC

Ray Burton, a NH political icon and relentless advocate for the North Country, passed away this November. ASPNC owes a debt of gratitude to Ray for helping our fledgling organization start a pilot program for adaptive alpine skiing at Cannon Mountain. It is this "behind the scenes" type advocacy that endeared Ray to so many citizens in our area who benefited in countless ways from his dedication and commitment.



Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country

461 Main Street, PO Box 304, Franconia, NH 03580

info@adaptivesportspartners.org 603-823-5232 www.adaptivesportspartners.org