



ASPNC Joins in the Special Olympics NH Summer Games



Special Olympics
New Hampshire



On June 11th a group of athletes and coaches from ASPNC headed south to Durham for the 41st Special Olympics New Hampshire (SONH) Summer Games. The Summer Games are the largest competition event offered by SONH, including 1,000 athletes competing in seven sports. Over 1,000 volunteers participated, including 500 coaches and chaperones and 750 event volunteers.

Starting in May, a group of energetic volunteers headed by Gary Biadasz worked furiously to put in a regulation Bocce court on ASPNC's Headquarters property so that our participants could practice for the Games. Then through early June, our certified coaches worked with our athletes to prepare for the games. Our team, North Country United, along with the North Country Knights, joined 87 teams from all over NH. ASPNC competed in Bocce and running. It was a day for determination, inspiration, skill, and teamwork, but perhaps more importantly, it was a day for meeting new friends, hanging out together and having fun.

Tom Norcott was one of the coaches and won a gold medal with his Unified Partner Christian Keach. When asked what was the best part of the Games for him, Tom said, *"There are so many things it is hard to say, but I think it was seeing the kids so psyched and being social and having a great experience together. Also the look on Christian's mom's face when we won the gold was priceless!"* Tom also said that they had a dance for all of the participants when the games were over. *"The kids were hilarious,"* he said. *"They were having a ball."* What a great experience for all involved!



ASPNC Participant Spotlight: Christian Keach

Christian won a gold medal at the Summer NH Special Olympics in Durham. That accomplishment is remarkable, but what is even more remarkable is what this picture captured. Look at his confidence; look at his smug little smile; look at how pleased he is with himself. Christian is 16 years old, and he has autism. Relaxing, focusing, and enjoying a little attention aren't easy tasks for a person with autism, but Christian feels comfortable around his friends from ASPNC. When he participates in ASPNC activities, he is able to put aside his relentless anxiety and have fun, normal everyday fun that we sometimes take for granted.



Christian also has a serious digestive disorder; his weight and nutrition are maintained via a gastric feeding button. Additionally Christian has seizures, some fleeting and some that last much longer. Because of his combination of serious problems it was hard for Christian to take the risks involved in outdoor sports activities; that is, until Christian found our adaptive program. Our volunteers are trained to deal with seizures and medical problems like Christian's. Through ASPNC Christian is able to ski, play bocce, swim, hike, kayak and bike. These outdoor activities help him relax, they help him sleep better, and they allow him to be himself and not worry about being judged or doing things wrong. Christian's mother Shiela wrote ASPNC this note, *"Because of you, our kids are able to experience things we never thought possible. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!!"*

The Turtle Ridge Foundation Helps to Insure the Success of ASPNC



On Saturday April 3rd several of our ASPNC participants joined four hundred other skiers and riders at Cannon Mountain to participate in the Bodefest Ski Challenge sponsored by the Turtle Ridge Foundation. Imagine the thrill of Christian Keach, who just returned to skiing this year, and Sandy White, who raced in a piece of adaptive equipment called the Tandemski, to have an opportunity to be on the slopes with Olympic Gold medalist, Bode Miller, and participate in this spectacular event.

Bodefest was an exciting collaborative opportunity for ASPNC. Our volunteers helped Turtle Ridge to run their silent auction. ASPNC had an "Awareness Tent" on hand to familiarize people with our programs and our sponsors. This event raised nearly \$30,000 to benefit the Turtle Ridge Foundation, a non-profit started by Bode and his family. The Turtle Ridge Foundation and ASPNC share common goals of "enriching the lives of others" and bringing sports programs that benefit youth and people with disabilities to our community. Turtle Ridge has been instrumental as we chart a new course in offering adaptive programs. They are looking into the possibility of tapping the resources and expertise of some of Bode's sponsors to make the equipment used by adaptive sports programs light weight, durable, affordable, and of the best quality possible.

The Turtle Ridge Foundation has been a generous supporter of ASPNC and has awarded us two grants. As Kyla Miller, Operations Manager, put it so nicely, the grants are "to help to insure the success and secure a bright future for the Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country."

Cool News - Looking Back on Our First Winter Season at Cannon

Cannon Mountain was the site of ASPNC's first Cold Weather Season including alpine skiing, riding activities, Nordic and snowshoe sessions. Thirty-two participants, ages 6 to 55, enjoyed 170 activity sessions at Cannon Mountain and its surrounding grounds. They have been diagnosed with a wide range of physical and/or developmental disabilities, including autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, paraplegia, traumatic brain injury, seizure disorder, Fragile X syndrome and Spina Bifida.



Cannon's General Manager John DeVivo (known as JD) set the tone beginning with our orientation, making us feel welcome and appreciated. The lift operators were friendly, encouraging, and quick to learn and then anticipate, the special needs of the participants. The rental shop employees greeted participants by name and were as engaging as they were accommodating. When it was time for hot chocolate runs, staff in the cafeteria bantered with participants, helping whenever necessary. Cannon provided a space for us to meet participants, prepare for the slopes, and work on paperwork and other organizational details. Bill O'Connor, manager of the lodge, even anticipated our need for some storage, and magically, one day our area featured a cabinet and lots of "cubbies."

The Tuckerbrook Family Area proved to be an ideal venue. The terrain enabled participants to move from easier slopes to more challenging ones as soon as they were ready. Our alpine and Nordic participants as well as our volunteers had very rewarding experiences this past winter.

Appalachian Trail Thru-Hike and 14 State Team Challenge



ASPNC's largest fundraiser so far coincides with **Dave Smith's 2010 Thru-Hike of the Appalachian Trail**. Ponytail Dave raised \$6,000 from his friends and family before he started his hike. The proceeds go to ASPNC. Dave is making this extraordinary hike in memory of his brother Mike.

Joining in the spirit of Dave's hike, volunteers of Adaptive Sports Partners have formed teams representing each of the states Dave will hike through. Team leaders try to get as many people as possible to join their team and make donations.

Teams are also helping support Dave by providing "Trail Magic" surprises, sending him cards and care-packages, supporting Dave's wife, Pam, hiking in his honor, and joining him for part of his trek. We will be having a celebration when Dave completes his hike. Teams are collecting prize bags with items from their states, with prizes to be awarded at the celebration.

Dorothy Corey created her own 4-State Challenge to help Team Massachusetts raise funds. She not only hiked the AT in those four states in June, but she also raised over \$2,500 for Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country.

Words from Our President, Jim Moore



Nancy Henderson and Jim Moore

Summer is upon us in full force. While the sustained heat may strike some as a bit beyond normal for the North Country, day after day of nearly perfect sunlight is proving to be ideal for the summer sports of Adaptive Sports Partners.

It seems our Executive Director, Sandy Olney, is constantly on the phone, matching volunteers to our activity sessions with adaptive participants. Our kayaking and swimming outings at Moore Reservoir (no relation) are among our most popular offerings. Equally requested are bike rides on the path through Franconia Notch State Park and hikes on trails in the White Mountain National Forest. We're busy with tennis, golf and gardening too.

From all reports our adaptive participants are thoroughly enjoying themselves. Our volunteers are valuing these experiences with friends. Adaptive Sports Partners is gratified to be able to make these experiences available to persons with disabilities.

Sunset Hill House & ASPNC - Partners in Fun!

The Sunset Hill House has opened its inn, golf course, pool, and extensive grounds to ASPNC volunteers and participants. Innkeepers Lon and Nancy Henderson have opened more than their facilities; they have opened their hearts to our organization. Since our partnership began in October of last year, the Inn has been waiving all fees for golf to participants and coaches. Over the winter we delighted in using the Inn for cross country skiing as well as snowshoeing.



This spring the Sunset Hill House hosted a new ASPNC program called "Garden Buddies." This is an opportunity for participants to enjoy a morning of socializing and supportive teamwork in creating a kitchen garden on the Inn property. Each week the Inn provides a gourmet breakfast to the gardeners before they begin their work. When the work for the day is completed, everyone is invited for a dip in the pool and some time to relax. Gardening should always be this delightful! All of the expenses for the garden, including organic fertilizers, seed, mulch, and gardening supplies, are provided by the Inn. Gardener and Landscaper Audrey Crowe volunteers her time and expertise to teach participants gardening skills and to help make this a successful as well as an educational experience for everyone involved. Fresh produce will be used by the Inn in their acclaimed restaurant. The season will culminate in the fall with the Inn providing a harvest feast as a thank you to all the "Garden Buddies."

Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country

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