



# Reaching Out

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

Winter Newsletter 2012

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## ASPNC Fundraising Receives a Lift

ASPNC acquired a lift both figuratively and literally from Dave and Pam Smith. Instead of restoring the old chairlift they had stored for themselves they decided to donate it to their favorite charity, ASPNC, to raffle off as a fundraiser. This is the second time that Dave and Pam have spearheaded a fundraiser for our program. In 2010 **Dave's Thru-Hike of the Appalachian Trail** was our first large fundraiser. Dave made this extraordinary hike in memory of his brother Mike. All of the money raised went to ASPNC.



Les, Marty, Fred and Allen from Littleton Auto

The first job in the restoration of the chairlift was to strip down the old metal. Friends at Littleton Auto Body helped sandblast all the metal parts to achieve a professional finish. It means so much to everyone at ASPNC to have support like this from the community. Next Dave purchased the white oak wood and bolts. He personally cut, sanded and used natural urethane to coat the wood. The result was stunning.



Dave and Pam and raffle winner Anne Davidowicz

The raffle for the chairlift began in November and on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012 the winning ticket was drawn. The winner was Anne Davidowicz from Haverhill, MA. The raffle raised \$1,560.

The raffle enabled ASPNC to purchase our much needed radios. Communication is crucial for the program to assure the safety of our clients and to move volunteers around the mountain as needed. Participants tumble, they get frightened and immobilized, they get tired, or sometimes our equipment fails. Thanks to Pam and Dave we can now get the assistance we need quickly and efficiently.

## ASPNC Participant Spotlight:

### Marie Hennessy Tells of Her First Downhill Skiing Experience

As I was traveling up to NH on the evening of February 3, Executive Director of ASPNC, Sandy Olney called to check in about the coming weekend's activities. During our conversation Sandy asked me whether I wanted to try downhill skiing. Her enthusiasm and excitement over the phone made any hesitation disappear and I became excited about trying an outdoor activity which I had been reluctant to try for many, many years.



On Saturday, before I knew it, I was at Cannon Mountain putting on ski boots and getting the feel of downhill skiing equipment. My helmet was fitted and I walked from the lodge to the slope with assistance from guides Kerry and Andrea. Once outside, I felt the snow under my feet and the bamboo pole along side of me and later behind and in front of me to provide me the support I needed in order to become more and more comfortable with learning the technique.

I started taking directions right and left and feeling myself going down small hills; I was receiving excellent guiding instruction a little bit at a time, giving me only as much as I could handle. I was introduced to how to bend my legs into the boots and put my legs apart so that I could start to learn how to slow down and how to stop. A bar was placed between my boots and tip clips on the tips of my skis to help me feel correct positioning while skiing.



Then it was on to the lift. Never being on the lift or seeing how the lift actually operates I didn't know what it would feel like, but because of the detailed explanation I received I was ready for my first lift ride. As the lift started slowing down and my feet plunged in the snow I jumped off and worked hard to stabilize myself and with support from the guides moved forward and was ready to start down the hills again.

After a relaxing lunch I was ready to go out again and with the support and encouragement from Sandy and Kerry and Emily, a junior volunteer who knew exactly the right things to say, I continued working on my technique and had lots of fun doing it. Using muscles I do not usually use and having to acclimate to the boots was something very difficult to get used to, but because I was learning so much from those teaching, guiding and encouraging me I focused on my skiing and didn't think about the boots and those muscles. The day was all that it could have been and even so much more than I expected it could have been.

On Sunday morning even though the weather was much colder than the day before, I was eager to try again and continue progressing from what I learned the day before from Sandy's and the other guides' instruction and teaching. I was sad to leave Cannon as I usually am when I leave NH after being with everyone from ASPNC. I look forward to downhill skiing in the future, of course with guides from ASPNC alongside me with the goal of taking away poles, toe clips and introducing me to techniques to allow me to be as independent and safe as possible as a blind downhill skier.

## Angel Assistance in Fundraising

Angels they say are special beings who protect, champion and support a person or a cause. ASPNC has been blessed this year by the benevolence of a host of angel benefactors who are helping us to achieve our mission of bringing outdoor experiences to people with disabilities. Their heartfelt contributions will hopefully inspire all of us to be creative in our financial support of ASPNC. We are extremely grateful to all of these people who came forward and offered to help us achieve our goals.



**Embroidery by Everything Personal**, located at 42 Cottage Street in Littleton, chose Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country as its October **Partner of the Month**. A percentage of sales for the month totaling over \$500 was presented to ASPNC by owners Pat and Andrew Beck.

**The Vintage Rose** sponsored a **Veteran's Day Concert** at the Littleton Opera House. It featured local musicians Katie Rose, Allen Pihl, Randy Messineo, James Barnes, Ashley Miles, and Kay Woods. A special thanks goes to Allen Pihl, father of one of our participants, for arranging the concert for the benefit of ASPNC. It raised \$1,200.



We received an \$800 donation from the **O'Neill Council # 1835 Knights of Columbus** for our work with people with intellectual disabilities. This is the second year in a row that they have sent us a donation for this work. They raised the money through their Tootsie Roll Drive.

**Friends and family of Martin Wallem**, a participant in ASPNC hiking and skiing activities, sponsored a Snow Tubing Event at McIntyre Ski Area and raised \$124.

**Sam Marquis**, a junior volunteer, raised \$295 for us from his 9<sup>th</sup> birthday request. He followed the example of his big sister, **Emily** who requested ASPNC donations in lieu of birthday presents for her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday last April. She raised \$265.

**Ski Haus** (ATP Ski Associates) sponsored a Premier Movie Night in their Burlington, MA store for the benefit of ASPNC raising \$1,000.



One junior volunteer and his family collect their loose change in a bucket, they sent ASPNC a check for \$100 from what they'd collected.

**Patricia Lovely** of **And Beads for All** contributed \$5 from every wreath she sold at Christmas totaling a donation to ASPNC of \$120.

**Crosstown Motors of Littleton** made a generous donation to ASPNC as part of their monthly giving program. A check for \$7,500 was presented to our Executive Director, Sandy Olney by Crosstown Motors Sales Manager Brian Harbaugh. The check represented a percentage of sales for the month of December. Crosstown Motors is part of the eight store **Autosaver Group**, which has locations throughout the North Country.



## Training for Success

A successful adaptive recreational experience begins long before the participant hits the slopes or the trail or the pool. It begins in the training sessions that every volunteer commits to attend so that he or she will be as prepared as possible to understand the abilities and disabilities of the participants. Through trainings volunteers learn how to adapt the environment or provide appropriate equipment to meet participant's particular challenges in order to make the experience safe and fun. Every volunteer is required to participate in orientation sessions and diversity training. Volunteers take safety trainings very seriously and are encouraged to take as many activity specific trainings as possible.



Junior volunteer Emily Marquis practices tethering.

Training sessions are most intensive in the late fall and early winter but they continue throughout the year in preparation for various venues. Some trainings focus on the use of specialized equipment like the bi-ski, mono-ski, or tandemski. Others are geared toward learning skills like tethering or teaching the first time skier. Sessions also include information on a particular disability like Multiple Sclerosis or Autism. One especially valuable training teaches volunteers to recognize and to deal with seizures. Leaders of these trainings include many of our own volunteers with expertise in different areas but they often include guest speakers.

Volunteers are also encouraged to take advanced certification courses to increase their level of knowledge and qualifications for instructing and leading the sports and recreational activities we offer to our participants. Many of our volunteers are certified as coaches for the Special Olympics and others have certifications in the Red Cross Safety and First Aid, CPR, or as Wilderness First Responders. We also have many volunteers with PSIA (Professional Ski Association of America) certifications at Levels I, II and III.

## Once Again Pirates Capture Treasure at Cannon

The Pirates of the High Skis Fundraiser enjoyed another year of success as costumed pirates and wenches, some sporting bodacious shoulder parrots and Jolly Roger Flags, combed the slopes of Cannon in an orienting-style treasure hunt. The stakes were high as there were two treasures, each full of pirate booty worth over \$ 1,250. We are extremely grateful for all of our patrons and sponsors in the community who contributed to the treasures and the raffle prizes and helped to make this event such a success.



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