



ADAPTIVE SPORTS CENTER



2021 SPRING UPDATE

EXCEPTIONAL OUTDOOR ADVENTURES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CRESTED BUTTE, COLORADO



Harvey, a U.S. Air Force veteran, participated in Operation Rise and Conquer, our program serving veterans and first responders.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It has obviously been a challenging year for all of us. The pandemic has taken its toll on our populace and our psyche. Being able to hold on to some of the normal aspects of our lives throughout this, such as outdoor recreation, has been important, if not critical. It is great that we were able to connect with our participants this winter and that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

I am incredibly thankful for the many people who came together in the last year to ensure that the Adaptive Sports Center was able to execute its mission and maintain some normalcy in our participants' lives. It was inspiring to see how the ASC staff, board of directors, participants and supporters all worked really hard to ensure that we not only had our doors open, but that this year was a success. Isolation and anxiety was felt by most during these times, but, I would contend, even more so by people with disabilities. Less options to get out amongst it and a real potential for greater consequences from getting the disease made the last year extremely difficult for many people with disabilities. We were not only able to provide our services throughout the pandemic; we were able to do so safely. The policies and procedures that were put in place worked, and we did not see any transmission of COVID within our program since we started back up last summer. We received countless notes of thanks, so all combined I would say that we had a very successful year.

“From a mental health perspective, we all took a significant hit this year. This week has been a spark of light in the darkness. It lit our world like the sun, you knocked it out of the park.”

—Kimery Dudas, Founder of the Expedition School who visited in December 2020 with four young adults with visual impairments

I am heartened to see that the light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter. We are currently gearing up for a much more normal summer. Early indications from our groups are that we are going to be busy. Our entire staff is now fully vaccinated and it looks like the majority of our participants will be as well. We are continually evaluating our COVID policies and procedures, and are expecting to lift many of them in the coming months. This is especially the case in vaccinated scenarios, i.e. when participants arrive fully vaccinated. We are highly recommending that participants arrive at the Adaptive Sports Center fully vaccinated. This will not only ensure their experience is as back to normal as possible, this will also protect others at the ASC and within our community that do not have the ability to get vaccinated, such as those with underlying medical conditions.

We are looking forward to a great summer filled with many activities, and yes, getting back to some semblance of normal. I hope to see you out here.



Christopher K. Hensley
Executive Director
Adaptive Sports Center

WINTER 2020-2021 REWIND

LOCALS PROGRAM

This year, our community was more important than ever, and through skiing and snowboarding, we experienced some much needed comradere and joy! Here are some community members who accomplished personal milestones.



HAILEY GRIFFIN

Since moving to Crested Butte this year to pursue a new passion, Hailey progressed at lightning speed from a never-ever to an independent mono-skier.



GARRETT DIMON

After switching from snowboarding to mono-skiing last year, Garrett ended this season with a run on International, one of the mountain's classic steep runs.



DAVE WILCOVE

Dave set a goal this year—to ski the North Face, Crested Butte's infamous extreme terrain. Along with his instructor, Kirsten, and a growing fan club, it happened!

After quite a few lessons with Adaptive Sports Center, I had my first days fully independent (sans instructor) this season. Sit-skiing has truly been a game changer for me. **All fun. No pain.**

“ No more stopping every few hundred yards or being desperate to take my leg off –when I get home. And no more being the one in the group constantly asking everyone to stop or avoid lifts without foot rests. I'm able to go to parts of the mountain I'd never even considered trying on a snowboard, and it's been a complete joy. Next step is getting to the point where Lauren has to ask *me* to slow down for a change. ”

—Garrett Dimon

COMMUNITY KIDS



EMERI DRYER

Emeri started skiing with us when she was five. Now 11, she tackled two milestones—off tethers on a bi-ski and mono-skiing for the first time. She also skied 33 days!



FLINT HOYT

This year, Flint accepted a new challenge: learning to snowboard! He quickly embraced it, making him a triple threat—he also alpine and nordic skis.

SCHOLARSHIPS

All of our programs are offered at a reduced cost, thanks to our donors and grants. For those needing additional assistance, we have an amazing scholarship program.

VISITING GROUPS 2020-2021

DECEMBER

Fort Carson

Veterans with disabilities

JANUARY

Expedition School

Young adults with visual impairments

Servicemembers Undertaking Disabled Sports

Veterans with physical disabilities

Texas Shredders

Adults with spinal cord injuries and neurological disabilities

Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana

Veterans with physical disabilities

FEBRUARY

Mountain Mobility

Youth with visual impairments

Craig Hospital

Adults with spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries

Wounded Warrior Project

Veterans with disabilities

MARCH

Operation BASH

Veterans with visual impairments

International Neurorehabilitation Institute

Adults with multiple sclerosis and other neurologic conditions

“
Snow is
what I know.
”



PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

PIERRE BERGMAN

“Before my accident, I never thought about doors opening with a disability. But that’s what has happened. There’s a community I’ve found that is so helpful and fostering to people with a new disability and I’m privileged to be a part of it.” Pierre Bergman shares his outlook after a week of skiing with a group from Craig Hospital, a renowned neurorehabilitation hospital located in Denver, Colorado. Looking out at Mt. Crested Butte from the Adaptive Sports Center’s rooftop deck, Pierre continues, “Of course you think of all the things you can’t do post-injury, but the world of opportunity that has been opened to me has been a revelation.”

Pierre admits he started to think of skiing again the day after his mountain biking accident on Teton Pass near Jackson, Wyoming. But he was pretty certain it would be at least a year before he could start pursuing that goal. However, by New Year’s Day 2021, 6 months after

his accident, he was learning to mono-ski. And a couple months later, he was mono-skiing independently at Mt. Crested Butte. “Being able to ski every day consecutively for a week has been incredible. It lets you take everything you learn and apply it the next day, so your improvement is exponential.” Pierre was joined by other Craig Hospital alums, including Kailyn Forsberg (a former slopestyle competitor) and Hailey Griffin (who just moved to Crested Butte this year to be closer to her new passion of mono-skiing). “The vibe is incredible,” says Bergman. “We’re all so close now and stoked to watch each other improve.”



But his number one cheerleader is his dad, Philippe (shown above skiing with Pierre and his instructor, Gabe). “My dad’s a real champion. He was stoked when he got the call that I wanted him to join me on this trip. No hesitation. He even volunteered one day, just taking it all in.” Phillippe lives in San Diego, where Pierre grew up. Despite growing up so near to the water, Pierre claims, “Snow is what I know.” His sports are snowboarding and mountain biking.

“It will be different in a wheelchair, but I am still doing what I love, going down hills and jumping jumps. There’s a sense of freedom with adaptive sports that I didn’t think I’d find. We’re all just going downhill, no matter how we are doing it.”

Of the goals he set for himself, he says he “surpassed them all.” He hoped to independently ski green (beginner) runs at the end of his trip. By early week, he was way past that goal and ended each day with new skills to take back home to Jackson Hole. “My friends and community are there. This trip gave me the confidence that I can ski with them.” Pierre has been living in Denver to be closer to resources like Craig Hospital in the eight months since his accident. He will be returning to Jackson Hole next month with his fiancé, May. “I see what is possible and am ready to return home.”

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

One of our ultimate goals is to teach participants the skills they need to gain increasing levels of independence. In many cases, like Pierre’s, the ultimate result is that they no longer need us.

That may seem counterintuitive, since it’s common for adventure programs to emphasize building repeat clientele, whereas our focus is on offering services for building independence. In fact, we’re delighted when we have a former participant visit us while on a trip to Crested Butte. “Having them pop in to say hi, then go ski or bike with their family and friends independently, is a highlight of our season,” says Program Director, Chris Read.



INSTRUCTORS OF THE SEASON

Congrats to Amy Cirbo (shown below), Regina Meckes, Maggie Connelly, and Trey Peden!

This peer-vote is based on mission-focused, team player, and professionalism.



Photos (top left to right): Deccard learned to ski so he could rip with his mom; Kenzi, a participant of 11 years, loves to go fast; Harvey, a U.S. Air Force veteran, participated in Operation Rise and Conquer with other veterans; Trish joined us from New York to practice snowboarding skills; Texas Shredders, a group of adults with spinal cord and neurological injuries, gives us air high fives; college student Miranda took a break from her studies and visited with her sister; a young participant considers his future as an ASC instructor; Julie skied on her very own bi-ski this winter; Special Olympic competitors, John and Jeffery, practice their balance with some sweet ballet moves.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

JANET FARMER

Walking into Janet Farmer's home, you immediately learn a lot about her. The walls are covered from floor to ceiling with her art collection, including well-known masters such as Picasso and Miro, but also lesser-known artists from the Op Art movement. Her wine collection, dominated by her favorite Italian barolos, fills any areas left bare. But the pièce de resistance is a large window framing a view of Mt. Crested Butte.



“
My heart cares about
what you do.
”

Janet expresses her love for Mt Crested Butte in many ways. She is on the board of the Crested Butte Friends of the Library and served on the Wildflower Festival board for 12 years. Currently, she is Mayor of the Town of Mt. Crested Butte. As she speaks about the work the Town Council does, her fondness for people is obvious as is her pride in helping others grow in their roles and have a voice in the issues that affect the town.

Encouraging council members to engage, do their homework and speak up has lengthened meetings, Farmer admits, but has also created the kind of dialogue necessary to make thoughtful compromises and decisions. “The meetings have become much longer, but it’s not a bad thing because of the outcomes.” However, in July of 2019, the council had its shortest meeting to date—only eight minutes—due to attending the Adaptive Sport Center’s grand opening of the Kelsey Wright Building.

Janet’s unwavering support for the Adaptive Sports Center dates back to 1998, when she built a house in Mt. Crested Butte with her ex-husband. “He brought me out here on a ski trip in 1973. Once we built the house, we’d take trips here more often. That quickly extended to me spending half the year here. I always knew Crested Butte was home and where I wanted to live, and my husband didn’t want that.” In 2010, after divorcing, Janet moved from Galveston, Texas into a condo in the Mountaineer Square at the base of the ski resort. She recalled, “I had the best view of the Kelsey Wright Building being built.”

When asked why she is a supporter of the Adaptive Sports Center, Janet says, “My heart cares about what you do.” In 1980, she was in a car accident that left her hospitalized for 110 days, with multiple injuries to the majority of her right side. After months in traction followed by a body cast, she was able to start swimming which aided in her recovery, both physically and mentally. Decades later, she still experiences chronic pain and surgeries. “It’s so important; what you do gives people hope and energy.”

One of many ways Janet has contributed to the

Adaptive Sports Center is by donating wine and artwork to our auctions. Laughing, she recalled one auction when her daughter, Meredith, met President Jimmy Carter. First Lady Rosalynn Carter joined the ASC Board of Directors in 1988, our second year in operation, after she and President Carter visited Crested Butte on a ski vacation. Farmer’s daughter was so excited and asked if she could take a picture with President Carter. He paused and questioned, “That depends.” Nervously, she responded, “On what?” President Carter replied, “Do you have a camera?”

Looking into the future, Janet wants to pursue her sommelier certification, a highly sought-after and competitive feat for wine education. She also plans to return to Israel to visit her favorite artist, Yaacov Agam, whom she met once before. Agam, age 93, is best known for his contributions to optical and kinetic art. On a local level, she admits a year of isolation due to COVID and a knee surgery, resulting in some lung complications, has led to a fear of being in crowds and social interaction. However, she looks forward to gradually getting back to her mah-jongg, poker, and book clubs where she can once again be around the people who help make Crested Butte home.

“All my adult life I’ve volunteered to give back. It’s an important part of my life.”

You’ll be able to bid on artwork and wine from Janet’s collection at the Crested Butte Open’s Silent Auction (AdaptiveSports.org/CBO). You can also view art that she gifted to the new Gunnison library, which opens in October 2022.




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