

MOVE UNITED

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ADAPTIVE SPORTS CENTER'S JAKE O'CONNOR EMBRACES INDEPENDENCE CRESTED BUTTE, COLORADO

Prior to his spinal cord injury in 2001, Jake O'Connor had never skied. Five years later he was boarding a plane for a ski trip to Argentina with a small group from the Adaptive Sports Center. He had never been out of the country before.

"It was the coolest thing I've ever done in my life," says O'Connor. They visited Bariloche and San Martin, and while the skiing was epic, the trip was about so much more than skiing. "Two weeks in a foreign land took me out of my comfort zone, experiencing travel with less-than-ideal conditions for wheelchair accessibility. The trip made me more independent, and I was already pretty independent."

Independence is a topic that comes up a lot when talking with Jake. In fact, his journey into handcycling was born out of a fierce desire to be able to do things on his own and take the road less traveled. He began as a road handcyclist and had been training for the Paralympics when he turned his attention to a relatively new adaptive sport, off-road handcycling.

Of all the adaptive sports, Jake says mountain biking provides the most independence. "I don't have to rely on anyone else. Unlike skiing where you rely on a chairlift, with biking you don't need anyone's help." It also allows him to experience more solitude on trails and really get out there.

44 YEARS OF WINTER ADAPTIVE ADVENTURES WITH BOEC SUMMIT COUNTY, COLORADO

Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC) is now in its 44th winter of outdoor adaptive adventures in Summit County, Colorado ... right in the heart of the Colorado Rockies! As always, the safety of all those involved in our program continues to be our top priority. In preparation for this adaptive ski and snowboard season, BOEC worked closely with healthcare professionals and industry leaders in order to develop the protocols and policies needed to offer our participants safe access to all of our adaptive programming. With these necessary changes, however, still comes a high quality adaptive ski experience.

BOEC offers daily PSIA-certified, one-on-one, customized downhill skiing and riding experiences for those with disabilities or impairments at the world-renowned Breckenridge, Keystone, and Copper Ski Resorts, along with cross-country and snowshoeing instruction. This year, we



Jake eventually started making his own bikes and in 2008 he founded ReActive Adaptations. Today his company manufactures six bike models with a new release coming soon called the Expedition, which allows him to carry 30 pounds of gear and his two-year-old daughter on multi-day camping trips, seeing where old, abandoned roads will take him.

The Adaptive Sports Center enhances the quality of life of people with disabilities through exceptional outdoor adventure activities. Based in Mt. Crested Butte, Colorado, our programs are inclusive to families and friends, empower our participants in their daily lives and have a positive enduring effect on self-efficacy, health, independence and overall well-being.

For more information, visit adaptivesports.org



are also offering a host of online classes such as adaptive yoga, available for those who choose not to join in person this season. The online calendar is evolving and we plan to add more options as the season goes on.

Here are some things you can expect to see from us this winter: daily health screenings, required use of face coverings, physically-distanced instruction, continuous cleaning and sanitation of the office and gear, and an evolving set of policies and procedures. We appreciate your patience as we navigate how best to offer our services in a safe and effective manner. This year all ski and ride lessons will require an advance reservation.

Start the process at our website, boec.org, or by calling our ski office directly, 970-453-5633.