

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

NWABA's Inaugural Camp Abilities: Believe You Can Achieve!



Over a year's worth of planning could not prepare us for the multitude of awe-inspiring moments that took place at Camp Abilities Oregon July 23rd-30th in Salem, OR. In January, camper registration opened up, and with it we had an influx of stories that paved the way for our inaugural sports camp. With each parent phone call, reality set in. Our campers were being left out of physical education, battling bullies in school, struggling with low self-esteem and fighting depression. It was clear; Camp Abilities now, more than ever, was needed in their life. With a new sense of urgency, we set forth concentrating all of our efforts to make camp the most life-changing experience possible for campers.

With the help of an extraordinary team of counselors, specialists and volunteers, campers participated in a program-packed week full of opportunities including goalball, judo, paddle boarding, tandem cycling, golfing and countless others.

Camp Abilities aims to break the cycle of sitting on the sidelines. In every sport, assessments were recorded at the beginning and end of each skill. These comprehensive assessments were sent home to families and provided to schools and districts to support inclusion of campers within their physical education classroom. They equip students to advocate for themselves because they show their progress after just one week of inclusions. If PE teachers can see their progress and learn the simple but necessary adaptations, campers stand a fighting chance at being included. One camper articulated the grave statistics on students with visual impairments in PE with this simple statement: "I wish Coach Kyle was my PE teacher, so that I could actually participate in PE, rather than being left out from my peers." Additionally, Camp Abilities also focused on building daily living skills, promoting independence, enhancing self-advocacy, and increasing socialization with peers.

In the end, what did our camper's get out of Camp Abilities? In every parent phone call we asked what their wish was for their child at camp. These wishes included: I would like my camper to have a friend; I would like my camper to be happy; I would like my camper to learn to ride a bike; I would like my camper to be more independent; or I would like my camper to know someone else who is visually impaired. The list goes on and on, but by the end of camp, each parent had their wish fulfilled!



BILLY HENRY

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the children, youth, adults and military veterans we are honored to serve, I am excited to share highlights from another incredible, program-packed summer with you. With support from hundreds of volunteers, dedicated families and fabulous program partners, we delivered 40 program events and impacted more than 422 participants

through our life-changing programs and services this summer alone.

Each day this summer has been filled with new programs and opportunities for our athletes, but as with all experiences, some stand out from the pack. Northwest Association for Blind Athletes delivered our first Camp Abilities (more information on page one) in July. This truly transformational program provided more than a week of camp. It provided a week of friendships. A week of independence. A week of kids just being kids regardless of their visual impairment. And, so much more! Thank you to all of our campers, specialists and counselors for making this inaugural program a life-changing experience that everyone will remember for years to come!

As we wrap up the summer season and look forward to Fall programming, NWABA is working tirelessly to expand current programs, create new program innovations, and deliver services on a more consistent basis across the region. We are looking forward to another year of growth and transformation for all of the individuals we serve.

Thank you so much for always believing in our mission and helping us change lives. We are only able to make a difference because of you! I would love to hear your experiences, thoughts and suggestions about our programs and services. Please feel free contact me directly anytime by calling 360-718-2826 or emailing bhenry@nwaba.org.

Sincerely,

Billy Henry

Founder & Executive Director

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Erik Selden, Board President

Vice President, First Citizens Bank

Scott McCallum, Board Vice-President

Superintendent, Washington State School for the Blind

Teresa Lawwill, Board Secretary

Community Relations Director, Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce

**Ben Campbell, Board Member/
Ambassador Board Chair**

Digital Strategist, The Columbian

Jason Reid

President/CEO, Reid Business Services

Scott Miller

Senior Vice President, Marketing, Riverview Community Bank

Dean Watanabe

Vice President, Oregon Region, Washington Trust Bank

Courtney Barker

Owner, Veraison Wine Events

Tracy Wasden

COO, The Gibney Family Foundation

Jonathan Nelson

Communications Specialist, KMR Group Foundation

Joe Yoder

Director, Clinical & Support Services, Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center

Don Rhoads

President, The Convenience Group

Scott Campbell

Governmental & Community Affairs Manager, Waste Connections

Rod Cook

Community Volunteer

Billy Henry

Founder/Executive Director

AMBASSADOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ben Campbell,

Board Member/Ambassador Board Chair
Digital Strategist, The Columbian

Harrison Lynch

Community Volunteer

Tina Vlachos

Agent/Owner, American Family Insurance

Rob Thomas

Senior Manager, Legal Management Consulting
Duff & Phelps

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes provides year-round programming to individuals through five-specialized programs. Below are a few highlights from recent program events.



Summer Kayaking & SUP Events

Throughout the summer, individuals of all ages and abilities with visual impairments have participated in kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding (SUP) as part of our expanded summer programs.

Fencing Clinic

Students participating in our summer programs were provided the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of fencing and dueling at this new event.



Tandem Cycling Events

Since purchasing our first four bikes in 2011, tandem cycling has become one of our most popular sports throughout the region.





P.O. Box 65265
Vancouver, WA 98665-0009

Presented by:



vision for
OPPORTUNITIES
FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST

SEPT
29

7:30am
Multnomah Athletic Club

