

## PROFILE OF A YOUNG ATHLETE

### The Unstoppable Humoody Smith Wins in Multiple Sports

Imagine you are ten years old, naturally athletic with lots of athletic friends, and you are blind. Humoody Smith is that person. In spite of the fact that he has no eyesight, he is taking on the challenges and joys of competition one sport at a time. And he is winning just about every time.

Humoody's story started in Iraq and nearly ended there. While riding in his uncle's car, two-year-old Humoody was shot in the face, leaving him completely blind, and with other devastating head injuries.

Back in the U.S., Julie Robinett-Smith and Randy Smith read in the Everett Herald about a little boy from Iraq who needed a home while he had surgery in their area. They stepped forward and seven years and multiple surgeries later, Humoody is a lively family member and fourth grader in Snohomish, Washington.

#### Sports are a big part of Humoody's life

NWABA connected him with Goalball, which he learned to play at a NWABA event when he was eight years old. "It's fun," he says. "It takes a lot of teamwork. You've got to really be up for it. You can't just sit back and let the ball go past you. You really have to be out there because if you don't, you won't help your team."

Humoody now participates in wrestling and has never been pinned. He competes in track annually at the Washington State School for the Blind in the 50, 100 and 200 meter races, the standing long jump and shot put. "I've never lost any track meet," he proudly reports. He also participates in Jujitsu and plays tennis.

"Since he is really athletic naturally and his buddies now play football, basketball and soccer, this gives him something athletic to do. He is doing wrestling and Goalball," says Julie. "He gets a lots of confidence from sports."



ABOVE: Humoody participates in Goalball at an NWABA event.

RIGHT: Randy, Humoody & Julie pose for a picture.



#### The thrill of competition

What does Humoody like about sports? "It's the thrill of the competition," he says. And he does compete. "He always comes in first in everything," Julie reports.

More than an athlete, Humoody is in the top of his class each year. "I want to be a scientist," he says. "I was thinking propulsion."

Humoody is facing more surgeries, but continues to reach out to others. "I want people to know that there is always somebody out there with worse conditions than you. You have to treat them like your best friend," he says. "It's not fair if you treat one person in society one way and another person in a completely different way."

We're with you, Humoody. We'll watch for you at your next competition.

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### Thank You!

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Gazette, Pam Boespflug, Billy  
Henry, Randy & Julie Smith,  
Sonja Steinbach

## Executive Director's Report

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to report that at their November board meeting, our Board of Directors adopted a strategic plan to drive the organization's programs to new heights. This plan was developed after seven months of conversations with partner agencies, participants, volunteers and community members. The plan sets out specific goals and strategies to expand current programs and develop new, exciting initiatives to improve the quality of life for people with visual impairments across the region. With the strategic plan in place, our board, staff and volunteers are ready to "Take it to the Next Level." We are already implementing many of the items in the plan to drastically expand programs in 2013. The plan includes goals to expand our Sports Outreach and Sports Teams Programs, increase partnerships with other blindness agencies and hire additional employees to help expand all programs and services.

As we near the end of the year, I want to thank everyone who helped make 2012 our best year yet. In May, we celebrated our five-year anniversary of providing programs to individuals with visual impairments. It's hard to believe that in 2007 we served six students, and now we are serving over 1,000 individuals of all ages and ability levels! That would not be possible without you. Thank you for believing in our mission and helping us change lives every day.

Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season,



Billy Henry  
Executive Director  
*Northwest Association for Blind Athletes*





**Billy Henry**

## LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

### Contact:

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# Program Highlights

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes provides year-round programming to individuals through five specialized programs. Below are a few highlights from recent program events. Please contact NWABA if you would like to learn more about participating in, sponsoring or volunteering at events.

## SOUTH SOUND THROW DOWN GOALBALL TOURNAMENT



The South Sound Throw Down Goalball Tournament held earlier this year in Tacoma, WA provided an opportunity for men's and women's Goalball teams from Vancouver, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, Spokane and British Columbia to compete against each other for the title.

Participants and families experience sport during NWABA's first Paralympic Experience Event in Billings, MT.

## PARALYMPIC EXPERIENCE BILLINGS



## PARALYMPIC EXPERIENCE OREGON

A record 68 students of all ages attended this year's Paralympic Experience Oregon.



**“ I volunteer because it is rewarding to see youth with disabilities overcoming their obstacles.”**

**-Alanna, Sport Outreach Program Volunteer**

## NWABA Reaches Montana with a New Partnership

No organization succeeds alone. NWABA is all about partnerships. Through partnerships with teachers, schools districts and other agencies serving people who are blind or visually impaired, NWABA is expanding throughout the region. NWABA recently adopted a strategic plan which includes the goal of increasing partnerships.

"With partnerships, we have been able to dramatically increase the number of children served," reports Billy Henry, NWABA Executive Director. This is particularly important for the approximately 70 percent of blind and visually impaired youth across the country who do not participate in physical education.



Students experience Judo at Paralympic Experience Billings

NWABA recently formed a formal partnership with the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB) to launch a program to provide life-changing sports opportunities to youth with visual impairments across the state. The program started with a clinic in October in Billings where eight youth and their parents, teachers

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### Will you consider joining the E.Y.E Give Program in 2013 with a monthly gift?

By making a reoccurring donation to support our programs, you are providing life-changing opportunities for people who are blind and visually impaired. Each month, because of generous community support, our programs provide the opportunity for individuals of all ages and ability levels to build confidence, self-esteem, physical fitness, and the inspiration to succeed in other areas of life. Your support will provide a sustainable source of revenue, enabling NWABA to continue enhancing and expanding our critical programs for people with visual impairments. Generosity like yours will make a difference for a lifetime Please consider joining the E.Y.E. Give Program today.

## E.Y.E GIVE

### Envision Your Experience Monthly Giving Program

#### YOUR GIFTS CHANGE LIVES:

\$10 per month = \$120 per year

*Provides a scholarship to allow an athlete to achieve his or her dream.*

\$25 per month = \$300 per year

*Provides a school visit to allow a student to experience sport and physical activity.*

\$50 per month = \$600 per year

*Provides adaptive equipment to allow three students to experience sport for the first time.*

\$100 per month = \$1,200 per year

*Allows eight athletes to attend a local or regional competition.*

\$250 per month = \$3,000 per year

*Supports one outreach clinic to help 10-15 blind students experience sport.*

\$500 per month = \$6,000 per year

*Supports one outreach clinic to help 15-30 blind students experience sport.*

#### WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

- ☐ **Invoice me.** We will invoice you the first of every month.
- ☐ **Sign-up online** at [www.nwaba.org](http://www.nwaba.org).
- ☐ **Return the enclosed envelope.**
- ☐ **Sign-up by phone.** Call 360-448-7254.



# Sonja Steinbach's Passion for Goalball

"I didn't realize I could be in sports!" This is a common refrain from people with visual impairments. That is what Sonja Steinbach thought until she had her first sports experience as a little girl. "I fell in love with Goalball," she says. "It's a great outlet for your athletic abilities."

Goalball is a fast-paced team sport for people who are blind or visually impaired. It was developed in 1946 for rehabilitation of World War II veterans and was introduced as a competitive sport at the 1976 Paralympics in Toronto. Teams of three compete by tossing a ball with bells in it toward the other team's goal. All team members are blindfolded to ensure that, regardless of the level of sight, all participants are on equal footing. Gym floors have tactile markings to define the court.

Sonja was a student in public school in Stanwood, Washington when she was introduced to Goalball during a trip to the Washington State School for the Blind. She started playing the sport during high school and has played for 11 years.

## The impact of Goalball

Sonja sees the impact of Goalball firsthand when she teaches the sport. "When people start they are like, 'What?!' You are blindfolded and you have to learn all these things," she says. "The biggest challenge is spatial awareness. They learn how they can coordinate with what vision they have."

"At first it is imposing. Who

wants to dive in front of a ball?" she asks. "Players develop self-confidence and they think I CAN be involved in some kind of activity. They think 'Wow, I can be in sports and I can do well in them.' That's great!"

## Coordinating an Avalanche

NWABA has helped pave the way for Goalball teams. Sonja has traveled the country with Goalball teams and won gold medals at matches. "NWABA is making a difference because they offer funding and a stable foundation from which to work," Sonja says. This helps the players "grow as teammates, athletes, people and citizens." Sonja is now coordinating the award-winning NWABA Goalball team Portland Avalanche. "Avalanches are unstoppable!" she laughs.

She also works with a youth team in Oregon and is helping set up the National Goalball Championship tournament, which NWABA will be hosting in June 2013 in Vancouver. NWABA will host the best teams from around the country, usually 12 men's teams and 8 women's teams.

## Tackling Academia

Her volunteer work with youth Goalball is in addition to her



Portland Avalanche takes 1st place at 2012 South Sound Throw Down.

academic schedule at Portland State University where she is pursuing two graduate degrees, an M.S. in Teaching of Mathematics and M.S. in Teaching Visually Impaired. She holds a B.S. in Mathematics with a minor in philosophy from PSU.

"As a visually impaired person you are often told that you can't do things. It's so frustrating. And then you do well, you develop teamwork and do all these things that carry over into the rest of your life, like working with people," Sonja says.

"With Goalball, I got to be a part of a team and have a social outlet. And it's a lot of fun. It makes me think and strategize. It's fast paced and it's a challenge. And I'm all about a challenge!"

# Recent Grants Strengthen Programs and Expand Services



The Poznanski Foundation awards NWABA a \$5,000 grant.

## THANK YOU!

*We would like to thank all of the foundation funders who awarded generous grants to support NWABA's programs!*

**\$7,500**

### RANDALL CHARITABLE TRUST

We were honored to receive a \$7,500 grant in October from the **Robert D. & Marcia H. Randall Charitable Trust** to partially support the purchase of the organization's first van, which we hope to purchase in May or June 2013.



**\$5,000**

### POZNANSKI FOUNDATION

We received a surprise visit from Kelly Carr at our November Board Meeting. She delivered a \$5,000 check on behalf of the **Poznanski Foundation** to support our programs.

**\$5,000**

### BEACHES SUMMERTIME CRUISIN'

**Beaches Summertime Cruisin'** made a \$5,000 gift to support our programs at their Cruisin' event in July.

**BEACHES**  
RESTAURANT • BAR • CATERING

**\$5,000**

### OCF NIKE EMPLOYEE GRANT FUND

In November, we received a \$5,000 grant from the **OCF Nike Employee Grant Fund** to support the purchase of adaptive sports equipment for the organization's programs.

 **THE OREGON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
*Here for Oregon. Here for Good.*



**\$4,500**

### VANCOUVER ROTARY FOUNDATION

In September, the **Vancouver Rotary Foundation** granted \$4,500 to partially fund the organization's first server and screen reading software for staff and volunteers with visual impairments.



**VANCOUVER ROTARY  
FOUNDATION**

# THANK YOU DONORS

This list reflects donations made from July 1, 2012 through November 19, 2012.

## **VISION (\$5,000+)**

OCF Nike Employee  
Grant Fund  
Poznanski Foundation  
Robert D. and Marcia H.  
Randall Charitable  
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## **OPPORTUNITY**

(\$2,500 - 4,999)  
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We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of names on this list. Please contact us at 1-(360)-448-7254 if there are any errors.

“

I really enjoyed the experience because everyone is in the same situation as you are. The activities were super fun! It is nice being able to play a sport without people asking, ‘What is wrong with your eyes?’ or ‘Why aren’t you participating?’”

- Jen, Sports Outreach Program Participant

## NWABA Reaches Montana with a New Partnership

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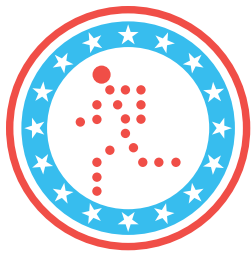
and volunteers participated in a Paralympic Experience including tandem biking, judo and Goalball. The Paralympic Experience was a pilot for future events across Montana. More events are being scheduled including a March 22-23 Paralympic Experience in Great Falls.

“At MSDB, we believe that physical fitness and social confidence are necessary for our youth to become competent and independent adults,” says Steve Gettel, MSDB Superintendent. “The partnership with the Northwest Association for Blind Athletes supports MSDB’s strategic plan to expand regional opportunities for low vision and blind students and their families served in the local school districts, while providing them with tremendous opportunities to develop an appreciation for sports, become more physically fit and increase their social competence and confidence.”

NWABA’s work will now expand across Montana. “We are extremely excited to be helping students who live in smaller towns who can’t make the larger events, but can have the same opportunities as their sighted peers,” says Billy Henry. “We had extremely good response from both participants and families. In Billings, families were excited and asked how they could get more involved.”

Getting people with vision impairments, along with their families, friends and schools, involved with sports – that is what NWABA is all about.





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# GOING THE DISTANCE



## ANNUAL DINNER & AUCTION

February 2, 2013 | 6PM at Pearson Air Museum

FEATURING

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER MARLA RUNYAN**  
OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC TRACK ATHLETE



**CALL OR CLICK: NWABA.ORG // 360.448.7254**

**INDIVIDUAL \$50 | PATRON (INCL TWO TICKETS + NAME IN PROGRAM) \$250 | V.I.P. TABLE OF EIGHT \$500**

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