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NWABA.ORG

HELP CHANGE LIVES BY MAKING A MONTHLY GIFT TODAY! Envision Your Experience Monthly Giving Program



E.Y.E. GIVE

By making a monthly gift, you are providing life-changing opportunities to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Your support provides a sustainable source of revenue, enabling NWABA to continue enhancing and expanding critical programs for a better quality of life.



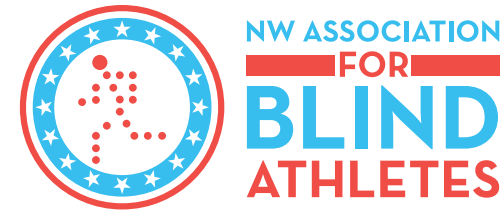
\$250/month
 Supports outreach clinics for 10-15 students



\$100/month
 Allows eight athletes to attend local competitions



\$25/month
 Adds equipment to our Lending Library like a beeping ball



GRATITUDE REPORT

SPRING 2019

Enriching Lives. Providing Opportunities.



FIRST-EVER WINTER CAMP-S!

Sounds of camp songs filled the NWABA van as youth anxiously awaited their final destination. Instead of packing gym shorts and tennis shoes, campers bundled up in down jackets and snow boots for NWABA's inaugural Winter Camps! For some campers it was their first overnight trip away from home, and for many campers it was their first time experiencing snow.

The first weekend in Washington included skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing, and even broomball, which is played similar to hockey. The second weekend in Oregon included cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, tubing, and even riding on a Snowcat through 10 feet of snow. In addition to these sports, campers warmed up in the cabin while bonding over cooperative games, shared experiences, and singing songs with Nancy Stevens, a competitive Paralympic skier and NWABA volunteer. An Orientation & Mobility Specialist also showed up to help youth navigate through the snow. Unlike gliding a cane across a bumpy sidewalk, campers learned to adapt to powder through tapping motions or modified canes.

Weekends like these remind us our programs are so much more than sports and physical activities. "I feel empowered because a lot of kids with visual impairments don't get the same opportunities that a lot of other kids will, and this camp has really given us these opportunities," says Jaya, one of five girls who attended NWABA's Winter Camp. She was thrilled to reunite with friends whom she met at prior NWABA camps. With our generous community of supporters, individuals who are visually impaired develop their physical health, improve self-confidence and independence, and build a supportive, inclusive community through adaptive sports programming and physical activities for a richer, fuller life.

Thank you!

SPOTLIGHT

Eric Merrill & Jeanne Caswell



Eric Merrill, NWABA Board Member, & Jeanne Caswell, NWABA Supporter

"Jeanne and I once sat down and thought about how we could use the little resources we had to make an impact in the community," reflects Eric. Through mutual friends, Eric and Jeanne found their way to NWABA. As they continue to stay involved, they have come to appreciate that you get way more than you give.

Jeanne, growing up in a household of nine, started playing sports early in life such as softball, whiffle ball, and hockey. Eventually, she became a coach for girls' soccer, softball, and basketball. Coaching became much more than simply teaching the rules of the game though. Decades later, Jeanne still receives letters from girls who are now adults and coaches, thanking her for changing their lives for the better.

Sports are important to Jeanne and Eric because they offer lessons that aren't always in school, like team work, physical health, and self-confidence. Eric states, "We both grew up playing sports and we appreciate how much doing sports, being on a team, helps people grow...We want everyone, whether they have a disability or not, to have those kinds of experiences and those kinds of opportunities."

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

This spring NWABA will be busy with getting outside with athletes all across the region! Please visit nwaba.org/events to learn more about the upcoming program events in your area.

WASHINGTON:

Seattle Paralympic Experience- **Sunday, April 28**

PDX/Vancouver Salmon Creek, WA Bike Challenge- **Saturday, May 4**

OREGON:

Southern Willamette Valley Hike Experience- **Friday, April 12**

PDX/Vancouver Latourell Falls, OR Hike Experience- **Sunday, May 5**

Southern Willamette Valley Hike Experience- **Saturday, May 18**

Southern Willamette Valley Tandem Bike Experience- **Sunday, May 19**

IDAHO:

Gooding Goalball and Tandem Cycling- **Wednesday, May 8**

Moscow Goalball Clinic- **Thursday, May 9**

Moscow-Competitive Goalball Team- **Year-round**

MONTANA:

Bozeman Paralympic Experience- **Saturday, April 27**

Missoula Paralympic Experience- **Sunday, April 28**

SPLASHING INTO SUMMER

Making Kayaking and Paddling Boarding Accessible



Bridget Dawn, NWABA Athlete, learning to Stand Up Paddle Board on Vancouver Lake with Program Specialist, Mary Holms

As rain clouds disperse, you can find Northwest Association for Blind Athletes gearing up for a summer packed with all your favorite outdoor activities. Some of our favorites and most popular experiences for our athletes are kayaking and paddle boarding. From Lake Padden in Bellingham, WA to the Fern Ridge Reservoir in Eugene, OR, we strive to make water sports fun and accessible across the Pacific Northwest.

Kayaking is made more accessible through individualized modifications and adaptations for each athlete whether in the paddle, the type of kayaks, and/or the instructions. For example, some paddles have a bump for paddlers to put under their first set of knuckles. When the paddler is holding the paddle correctly, the bump aligns with the blades of the paddle to promote effective strokes. This tactile modification is called indexing the paddle. Another way we make water sports accessible is through tandem kayaks. Opposite of tandem biking, the athlete sits in the front seat to set the pace while an individual with more vision will sit in the back seat to match the athlete's stroke. Another benefit of using a tandem kayak with beginners is the proximity for easier communication and more

effective instruction. However, in support of continued independence, more experienced paddlers are encouraged to use our single kayaks. When the athletes use a single kayak, communication greatly increases and more specific directions are given by our volunteers.

Communication is critical when paddle boarding and is our most commonly used adaptation. From describing the paddle board, where to stand, how to hold the paddle, and how to navigate from a sitting to standing position, it is important that both volunteers and staff effectively communicate using clear and concise language. Although verbal communication is important, our methods of communication stretch further than speaking by using many tactile and physical cues for our athletes.

As an organization, we are always looking to improve our programs and provide new opportunities for our athletes. Last summer we kayaked the Willamette River with our Portland/Vancouver athletes and we scouted a few new areas in the Southern Willamette Valley. If you have suggestions for other places or activities, please feel free to share with us at any time.

WE RELY ON VOLUNTEERS (NEW AND SEASONED) FOR SPORTS OUTREACH PROGRAMS!

If you are interested in making a splash with us this summer, give us a call at **360.448.7254** or visit our events page at nwaba.org/events/ to see what life-changing programs we will be hosting in your area.