

Empowering News

THE BOEC NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2008

Inaugural Adaptive Event Brings Disabled Vets to Keystone Resort

The inaugural Adaptive Ski and Ride Camp at SnoFest was held January 23–26th at the Keystone Adaptive Center. In a partnership with the U.S. Air Force in Colorado Springs and Adaptive Adventures, the BOEC brought twelve recently wounded soldiers to Keystone for adaptive skiing and riding. Thanks to generous sponsorships, we were able to provide airfare, lodging, meals, ski and ride lessons, lift tickets, equipment and transportation for the soldiers and guests. Kevin Krogh, a camp attendee, enjoyed mono-skiing for the three days and was interviewed for the following article.

SnoFest Sponsors: Keystone Resort, Disabled Sports USA Wounded Warrior Project, Edmondson Foundation, Frontier Airlines, Colorado Mountain Express, Boeing, Carol Kresge and Amy Carlson Phelps - Meadow House at Keystone Ranch, City Market, Keystone Sports, Janet and Jim Ulrey, Dewey and Gigi Corley and Randy Ford.

Injured Airman overcomes disabilities on slopes

By Senior Airman Stephen Collier

1/29/2008 - KEYSTONE, Colo. (AFPN) For the average person, losing a limb while serving one's country might seem like the sacrifice of sacrifices. For Airman 1st Class Kevin Krogh, it's just another one of life's challenges.

Airman Krogh, an F-22 weapons loader assigned to the 1st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Langley Air Force Base, Va., was one of several injured service members taking advantage of free ski lessons offered by Keystone Adaptive Center and Adaptive Adventures during the military's annual SnoFest community event.

"I never expected to do these things again," said Airman Krogh. "After snowboarding in the past, I never thought I would be back on the hill again."

An avid snowboarder prior to a March 2007 auto accident, Kevin first returned to the slopes of Breckenridge, Colo., in early December, just nine months after surgery, rehabilitation and physical therapy. And like many who try something for the first time, Airman Krogh admitted he was a little scared.

"It was something new," he said with a grin. "Going without falling was even better. It was something new, and you have to get used to it."

That grin comes from the spirited 22-year old, who only after two years in the Air Force, was the victim of a car crash near his Virginia base. He was admitted to a civilian hospital in March 2007 in a coma with two broken legs, a broken right arm, a broken nose, and a shattered wrist. Authorities later moved him to a Naval hospital in Portsmouth, Va. When he awoke from his coma, he was transported to his home state of Minnesota to be near his family, and admitted to a Veteran's Affairs hospital.

"(Recovery) was difficult, but I couldn't give up," said Airman Krogh.

In September 2007, he was notified by the VA he was being transferred to a hospital in Texas that specializes in getting injured service members back on their feet. Today, he goes through regular physical therapy.

"It's going good," he said about this therapy. "I can walk around with a cane and sometimes without. I'm still not good at getting up because of my wrist."

Part of his therapy also comes from the close bond Airman Krogh said is formed between disabled veterans.

"(We're) all here for each other," he said. "There's a lot of support out there, but it's most important to not give up on yourself."



Airman 1st Class Kevin Krogh mono-skis during January's SnoFest military community event in Keystone, CO.

But where this active Airman may lack in some lingering physical disabilities, he more than makes up with determination. After facing two mountains in the span of only two months, Airman Krogh is preparing to tackle scuba diving Jan. 28 to Feb. 1.

"He's looking forward to his future, said his mother, Sonya Krogh. "He never looks back."

After rebounding from a near-fatal accident, if he could go back to that day his life changed forever, Airman Krogh said he wouldn't give up his experiences.

"I do act differently since the accident," he pointed out. "If I could go back to having my legs I probably wouldn't, because I've gotten to meet the San Antonio Spurs, I've shaken the President's hand and I'm going scuba diving. These are experiences I'll never forget."

News from the Executive Director

Greetings from Breckenridge. We are buried in snow this winter—one of the heaviest snow years in a decade! The plows are barely keeping up and the streets are canyons of snow. It has been great skiing for those who have been able to make it up here.

Here is a rundown of BOEC happenings since our last Newsletter.

The summer season was a banner one for the Wilderness Program. The Wilderness Program achieved a total of 3,582 programming days, exceeding the previous year's numbers. New clients included Tennyson Center, Horizons Academy and Jefferson Center for Mental Health. We continued our long time partnerships with the Brain Injury Association of Colorado and four departments of The Children's Hospital, amongst others. The majority of our clients were return visitors. Bob Bond, Claire DiCola, Emily Lawrence, field staff and interns were at maximum capacity delivering great courses. Many thanks to them!

We have launched the new Alcon Foundation program for the visually impaired (VI) this year, reaching out to VI organizations throughout the country and looking to run two camps, one summer and one later this winter. We are upgrading our facilities and equipment for VI programming as well.

The Intern Program has been at full steam all year. The twelve summer interns were a great lot, working long hours to learn the trade and deliver quality programs. Ten winter interns started in November and are hard at it—their up spirits and hard work are a mainstay of the winter program. Our thanks to all of them.

The ski season started with slim snow conditions but things caught up in a hurry. February is turning out to be a record month both for snow and for ski lessons. Many thanks to Gene Gamber and the entire Adaptive Ski Program staff (admin, instructors, interns, volunteers) for delivering what looks to be another successful season.

The third season for the Keystone Adaptive Center is going very well and we look forward to doing over 350 lessons this season. Thanks to Joe Kusumoto for his continued great efforts there. The first annual SnoFest Adaptive Camp at Keystone went very well in January. The BOEC partnered with Adaptive Adventures to bring an adaptive ski component to the military's annual ski event. We will look to expand the camp for next year.

Take a look at our website in March. It has a new look and will now feature a "Community" section that will allow for a greater connection amongst the BOEC community through forums and blogs.

Many thanks to all of our students, staff, volunteers, interns, board and supporters—you are the heart of the BOEC!

Stop by if you are in the neighborhood.



Bruce Fitch

BOEC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center is to expand the potential of people with disabilities and special needs through meaningful, educational and inspiring outdoor experiences.

WWW.BOEC.ORG • 970-453-6422



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Summer Interns 2007

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Stories: Stephen Collier, Lisa Gamber, Sandy Lahmann, Jen Schappert
Photos: Stephen Collier, Joe Kusumoto, Jen Sall
Graphic Design: Knightley Design
Printing: Sir Speedy Printing



All or part of the BOEC's programs are conducted on public lands under special permits from the United States Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service.



This issue of Empowering News is made possible by the Town of Breckenridge.

Staff Update

Erin Baird was hired as the BOEC's Internship Coordinator in October 2007 to replace Brook Yates. Erin was a BOEC intern in the summer of 2006, then moved on to become a Course Director for winter and summer of 2007. She is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, having graduated with a degree in Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Eastern Michigan. Originally from Chelsea, MI, she also received a BS in Marine Geochemistry and Geology from the University of Michigan. Erin is a water girl; she swam competitively through most of her schooling through high school, and did club competitions when she got to college. She scuba dives, water-skis, wakeboards, and last summer received her river guide certification.

Tamara Marks left the BOEC in October 2007 after three years as our Marketing and Development Director. During her time here, Tamara oversaw some of the most successful fundraising efforts in history for the BOEC and was responsible for updating the BOEC's image in our marketing materials. She was also the resident dog-sitter! We wish Tamara best of luck in her future travels. We hope to have a new Development Director on board by the end of March. We have spoken to some very fine candidates.

We are sorry to say farewell to Brian Waldes, the BOEC's Finance Director. Brian has accomplished major improvements to our accounting and finance systems in the six months he has been with us. Brian leaves us for a position with the Town of Breckenridge.

Donor Profile

Reliable Tent and Awning Company

The BOEC was fortunate to have Raule Nemer join our Board of Directors in June 2006. However, Raule and her family have been BOEC supporters for over a decade. Reliable Tent and Awning, Company, based out of Billings, MT, has been under the ownership of the Nemer family since 1945. They manufacture a variety of high quality fabric products, including wall tents, range tents and Indian Tipis. Starting many years ago with a wall tent that served as the BOEC's first meeting place, the family has continued with generous donations of tipis that have become an integral part of the unique BOEC experience. Over the years, the tipis have been used on countless courses as a meeting place for drum circles, campfires and sleepouts. Clients of all abilities have had the unique experience of communing in a real tipi, designed in the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian tradition. The BOEC's newest tipi was donated by the company this past year.

The Nemer family's philanthropic endeavors go even farther than the BOEC. In March 2006, they built 15 tents for the Camp Darfur Project. This effort gave shelter to many refugees suffering from the effects of



war in this greatly troubled part of the world. The company is also involved with the Tents of Hope Project, donating hundreds of tent panels that will be painted by children in the US as well as Darfur refugees. These unique works of art will become focal points and symbols of hope within communities in Sudan.

We thank Raule, the Nemer family and staff of Reliable Tent and Awning Company for their support of the BOEC and their efforts to make the world a better place. For more information, log onto reliabtent.com.



Volunteer Profile

As an Airforce C-130 pilot, Kristina Guerrero has the flexibility to volunteer for the Keystone Adaptive Center frequently. So often in fact, she has decided to pursue a career in working with special needs populations! Kristina, born in Cleveland and raised in Long Island, feels that volunteering with the BOEC adaptive ski program is "good for the soul." She especially enjoyed skiing with a woman who had been unable to get on the mountain for sometime. After one run, the skier had a "smile that went to the moon and back."

When not volunteering or flying, Kristina enjoys hiking, running, fishing, biking, climbing and hanging out with her dog. She has applied to grad school and will work towards a master's degree in transpersonal psychology. Thank you Kristina!

Kristina Guerrero works her magic with student Neal Cashion at Keystone.

Alcon Foundation Partners With BOEC To Increase Programming For Visually Impaired

In June 2007, the BOEC was thrilled to receive a three-year, \$90,000 grant from the Alcon Foundation. The Alcon Foundation, a U.S. based non-profit organization, is the charitable giving arm of the Alcon Corporation, the world-renowned provider of eye care products and services.

Alcon

The intent of the Alcon/BOEC partnership is to:

1. Create new programs to serve visually impaired persons nationwide;
2. Provide tuition assistance for visually impaired persons to attend our programs and tie in with Alcon's effort to improve public recognition of its caring culture, good works and social responsibility;
3. Provide increased training for staff and volunteers to conduct wilderness programming and ski and snowboard lessons for persons with visual impairments;
4. Increase the accessibility of the Scott Griffith Lodge for visually impaired populations; and
5. Support outreach efforts to visually impaired groups, agencies, schools and individuals.

The BOEC has historically provided programming for the visually impaired. Most agree that the beginning of the BOEC was when Olav Pedersen, who was instrumental in introducing visually impaired Nordic skiing to the United States, brought the "Ski for Light" program to Frisco, Colorado, in 1975.

Since the Alcon grant was received, the BOEC has provided outreach to a solid list of national groups serving persons with visual impairments. The response has been extremely positive, and resulted in probable programming partnerships with Colorado and national organizations including the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind and the American Council for the Blind.

The BOEC has an existing client list of many visually impaired groups and individuals who are programming with us this year. Alcon Funding will allow us to extend financial assistance to those participants as well as provide outreach to new clients who would not be able to attend our Adaptive Ski and Wilderness Programs otherwise.

For years, the BOEC has run mobile programs in Utah for people with special needs. A new program in the works, envisioned by Bob Bond, long-time BOEC Wilderness Program Director, will develop and deliver a curriculum that exposes adults with visual impairments to the wonder and beauty of southeast Utah. Intellectual



BOEC Instructor Dunbar Lyles skis with Lainey Hawshead, from the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired.

elements such as the human cultural history, geology and archaeology will be combined with a river trip into Canyonlands National Park. This exciting opportunity will bring together major players such as the National Park Service and the Canyonlands Natural History Association to create a cutting-edge program to give blind persons amazing new experiences.

Another opportunity being pursued is a mentoring program that would bring together successful visually impaired adults with struggling visually impaired youngsters to work on their living skills and improve their independence. This program would enlist the BOEC as the vehicle to bring together mentors and mentees and provide the activities to meet their goals.

Currently in the works are accessibility upgrades for the Scott Griffith Lodge such as a tactile layout of the Lodge, standardized, permanent Braille signage and specialty products to improve our visually impaired visitors' experience. Tactile layouts are being produced for ski runs at Breckenridge and Keystone Ski Areas.

Training is being expanded for BOEC staff to better serve our visually impaired clients. An Orientation Mobility Specialist will be brought in to train BOEC staff on how blind persons achieve independent navigation, use their canes and perform daily activities of living with no assistance. Staff and interns will receive PSIA (Professional Ski Instructors of America) training to test for certifications in blind guiding. The BOEC recently taught two blind guiding clinics to our interns, volunteers and paid staff. This summer, staff will receive training from a Trek for Light guide on hiking with the blind.

The BOEC will keep our reading public updated on this exciting partnership and our progress towards improving the life of persons with visual impairments through this generous grant.

BOEC is my Healer By Sandy Lahmann, BOEC Participant

I'm pretty sure that you guys realize how much what you do for me means to me emotionally. But do you realize that you are also physically healing me?

When I first started skiing with BOEC almost two years ago, I was in a bi-ski on a tether, couldn't get off Silverthorne, and had to stop and rest twice on each run. Now I'm mono-skiing on blacks and bumps. When I started handicycling two summers ago, Joe had to push me up small hills. Now I zip up Vail Pass like it's nothing.

But let's look at these achievements more closely. I remember when I first started handicycling, full of fear that I would just go splat on the bike path. At that point, every time I exercised at all, my left leg would go totally paralyzed. Sometimes my left hand and wrist would go totally paralyzed, or at least wouldn't work very well. I got dizzy. With just a little exercise I fell into a fatigue and fog that would totally floor me and leave me unable to function until the next day.

I decided I trusted Joe out on that bike path. I figured that if I went splat out there, he would know what to do. I trusted him to keep me safe. And after all, who needs a functioning left leg on a handcycle? What did it matter if I was dizzy while riding that handcycle when it

was so low to the ground anyway? I had done some reading about how exercise actually helps improve multiple sclerosis symptoms. I talked with Joe about it and he described how he's seen new pathways being formed in the brains of brain injury clients. I figured MS is nothing but brain injury in the form of small lesions. I bet it would work for me.

I slowly began to see some improvement. I could go a little further each time. I had a little less fatigue, a little less dizziness each time. Last ski season was my first season mono-skiing. That brought new fears. I remember tearfully asking Quintin how you could tell if you have frostbite if you can't feel your body parts. He was calmly reassuring and tutored me on the proper placement of heat packs. At the end of last ski season I made an amazing discovery. Even though I was skiing more and more and doing harder stuff, when I was done with my afternoon of skiing I could wiggle the toes on my left foot. After a year of exercise, my left leg was no longer going paralyzed. I still couldn't walk all that great but I wasn't dealing with paralysis any more.

With another summer of handicycling and well into this new season of mono-skiing, I am discovering that I have more and more movement in my left leg and left hand. I never get dizzy anymore. The fatigue is



Sandy Lahmann rips through the powder at Breckenridge Ski Resort.

substantially reduced. In fact, I am now at the point that I can plan on doing something in the evening after I mono-ski.

You guys are healing me. With every mono-ski lesson and every handicycling opportunity, I get better and better. Sure I have some minor setbacks now and then. But all in all, I am so much healthier than I was when I started with BOEC. How can I ever begin to thank you for helping me to heal?

2008 Calendar of Events



March 29
Breckeiner Nordic Ski-a-Thon Fundraiser
- Breckenridge Nordic Center

March 29-April 1
April Fool's Ski Trip (*adults, traumatic brain injuries*) - A long weekend of adaptive ski/riding, activities at the Scott Griffith Lodge.

April 5-7
Spring Fling (*ages 16-25, developmental disabilities*) - Winter fun with a day and a half of spring skiing.

April 10-13
Visually Impaired Ski & Ride Camp - A long weekend of adaptive skiing/riding for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Made possible by the Alcon Foundation.

May 5
24th Annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration and Fundraiser
- Mi Casa Restaurant and Cantina in Breckenridge.

July 8-12
Camp Big Tree (*ages 12-16, sensory processing disorder*) - A camp based in Buena Vista, Colorado, featuring rock climbing, camping and river rafting on the Arkansas River.

July 29-August 2
Wilderness Camp (*ages 16-25, developmental disabilities*) - An exciting river trip down Ruby and Horsethief Canyons in western Colorado.

August 9-11
Jr. Adventurer's Camp (*ages 8-14*) - Designed to boost self-esteem and have fun in a safe setting. Features, rafting, structured lodge activities and nature skills.

September 20-26
Visually Impaired Wilderness Camp (*ages 13-17*) - An exciting river trip down Ruby and Horsethief Canyons in western Colorado. For individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Made possible by the Alcon Foundation.

September 21-27
Boundary Waters Canoe Trip - A week of canoeing and camping on the pristine lakes of Boundary Waters Wilderness in northern Minnesota. Begins and ends in our private lodge.

October 1-7
Labyrinth Canyon Green River Trip (*adults with traumatic brain injuries*) - A week in the majestic canyons and gentle waters of southeast Utah.

Thanks to all our contributors from May 16, 2007 to February 15, 2008. Please notify us of any errors or omissions.

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In 2007, the BOEC served 2,180 individuals for a total of 9,787 programming days in the Adaptive Skiing, Wilderness, Intern and Professional Challenge Programs. Participants were from 36 states and 9 foreign countries.