



JH Grant Enables Adaptive Skiers To "Dream It, Live It, Teach It"

The Grant

Jeremy's Heroes proudly partnered with the Adaptive Sports Foundation this winter at Windham Mountain, and sponsored its Children's Ski Team. Adaptive Sports

Foundation is an organization that teaches both winter and summer sports to children with physical and cognitive disabilities. JH provided the skiers with new racing uniforms, as well as season NASTAR (National Standard Race) passes. JH also sponsored a Parents Weekend where the children could showcase their newfound racing skills and celebrate their achievements for their families and friends.

The Ski Team's Community Service

Because JH's philosophy is that all children, if given the opportunity, can improve themselves and their com-

munities through organized sports and character education, the children of the Ski Team were asked to give back to their community through an afternoon of peer coaching. The goal was to build self confidence by putting the skiers in a leadership role, and to encourage other disabled skiers to participate on this team in the future.

Despite the worst blizzard of the entire winter, the JH Peer Coaching Clinic was a complete success! The children happily layered up to face the below zero conditions. The ski team took very quickly to their roles as instructors and their friends were keen students. Most surprising was the heart-warming reaction of the parents who were not accustomed to seeing their children in leadership roles.

We are thrilled to see that our philosophy is a reality for everyone! *jh*



Adaptive Sports Foundation Children "Teach It" And Fulfill Their Community Service Requirement

Excerpts from the ASF thank you letter

Paul is a young man who has been coming to the ASF program for years. He mostly speaks in monosyllables or makes sounds in response to someone talking to him... He always followed his coaches, mimicking exactly what they did, following precisely in their tracks. We decided to see if Paul could go through a race course without anyone to follow; it would be a big step if he could! The week before Jeremy's Heroes [coaching day], one of the coaches led Paul through our race course. The second run would be the "big test". We got Paul into the start shack, asked him if he was ready to go and much to our surprise, he began the 3-2-1- Go countdown by himself! Out of the start he went, navigating the entire course going the right direction; even stopping in the finish area with a flourish (we were a little worried about the stopping thing without a leader in front of him... We decided that Paul would be a course leader on Jeremy's Heroes Day and would lead kids who'd never skied gates before down the course to the finish.

I'd love to say that Jeremy's Heroes Day dawned bright, sunny and warm. NOT! The temperature gauge on my car said minus 18 on the way to work that morning. The biggest snowstorm of the winter was forecast to begin at noon. Bummer! I figured nobody would show up for our coaching day and all of the kid's hard work would be for naught. Then the team members started arriving; bundled in so many layers I couldn't tell who was who. Our new uniforms arrived the previous day. The racers eagerly put on their new duds and boy did they look good! A nice uniform does so much for a teams' self esteem. They were really psyched to go out and show off for their parents and families. That morning the parents walked up to the bottom of the course to see what the team has been working on since the beginning of the season. Then in the afternoon, team members assumed their coaching positions. ASF instructors brought their students to the course and team members gave them tips for running gates. The New Jersey Special Olympics had brought a large group of skiers that day. It was Paul's first test as a leader. He positioned himself at the start with a Special Olympian behind him. On go, down they came with Paul in the lead, showing his student the way through the course. Paul skied the course slowly and in perfect control; a great model for the student behind him. Paul's father was standing behind me and I heard him saying he never dreamed he'd see something like what was happening. Later that afternoon at the pizza party, Paul watched himself on the big screen (the slide presentation we'd put together for our Jeremy's Heroes Foundation visitors and the families). He sat proudly in his new uniform and in fact wouldn't take it off for all the money in the world.

I really can't express to you the positive outcomes our team members had as a result of their participation in our Jeremy's Heroes Day. The confidence they gained in themselves cannot be measured; the pride they took in doing their individual job that day was unbelievable....

Sincerely,

Kim Seevers

Kim Seevers

ASF Ski Team: Head Coach