

NO BARRIERS

A Publication of the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association



Special points of interest:

- Recreation Inclusion Program
- SportsAbility 2009

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Miracle League	1	It has been two and a half years since FDOA President David Jones attended the Miracle League dedication in St. Petersburg, sparking his drive to bring the same opportunity for children with disabilities to the Leon County area. With the help of The City of Tallahassee, Jim Wylie and local Kiwanis Clubs, City of Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and
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It couldn't have been a better scenario for the first pitch — crisp blue sky, nice fall weather and a crowd of onlookers excitedly showing support for the new Miracle League Field at Messer Park. The dedication ceremony was a success, with many city and county officials taking part in the event, including Tallahassee Mayor John Marks, Tallahassee City Manager Anita Favors Thompson, state Representative Curtis Richardson and Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge.

Neighborhood Affairs, sponsors and in-kind donations from Genesis Group, Sandco, and C.W. Roberts Asphalt and Paving, more than \$400,000 was raised for the field. In addition to the money, many man hours went into making the Miracle League Field a reality, including the countless hours spent by FDOA Board Member David Lowe as the project coordinator.

"Just seeing that first pitch has made all the hours, hundreds of hours I've put in out there, worth every minute of it," said Lowe. Although the field is now ready, there are still matters of business before players can start loading the bases. The first step, which has begun, is to form leagues. Funding is still needed to purchase equipment and uniforms for the players. Anyone interested in making a donation can send a check

to FDOA. Specify on the check that it is for Miracle League.


FDOA is very thankful to supporters for embracing the Miracle League Field and helping bring it to Tallahassee. As stated by David Jones, "you will not grasp how much it will touch your heart until you see it." Thanks to his hard work and determination, people in the community will soon be cheering along with the players, watching children with disabilities enjoy what most able-bodied children already do, a good, fun game of baseball. For further information, contact FDOA at info@fdoa.org or (850) 201-2944.



SportsAbility Tallahassee 2009!!

The next SportsAbility will be held in Tallahassee. **Venues:**

- **Thursday, April 16, 2009** - Banquet — Ramada Inn— *Celebration of the efforts of those who have contributed to the disability community*
- **Friday, April 17, 2009** — TCC— *Indoor Accessible, Inclusive Recreation Experiences and EXPO*
- **Saturday, April 18, 2009** — Ochlockonee River State Park— *Outdoor Accessible, Inclusive Recreation Experiences*
- **Sunday, April 19, 2009** — Miracle League Field — *Power Soccer Clinic and Baseball Game*

For more information on how to get involved, contact FDOA at (850) 201- 2944, www.fdoa.org, or info@fdoa.org. 



Executive Director's Report



*Laurie LoRe Gussak
Executive Director*

I have now been with FDOA either as a volunteer or as an employee for over eight years. I started out committing to volunteer for my kayak club for an hour. I ended up staying all day and I just kept coming back and getting more involved. I feel extremely fortunate to have a career I love and to work for an organization where I am passionate about their mission.

Over the eight years, I have seen this organization grow

and serve more and more people. We try to reach as many as possible with the message of "Active Leisure for Life."

We are constantly challenged to provide programs throughout the State of Florida. Since we have a very small staff, we need to depend on the assistance of others and technology to do this. We decided that the best way to assist people would be for us to maintain a database of accessible recreation

programs, products, events and destinations. This database is searchable by county and by recreation activity. If you have an interest and want more information, we would be happy to assist. Also, if you know of resources that should be included, please let us know that .

Thank you for the opportunity to work for and with you!

For more information, FDOA at 850-201-2944 or info@fdoa.org.



Recreation Inclusion

Florida Disabled Outdoors Association (FDOA) began developing a training program in October 2007 for recreation professionals on inclusion in active leisure. The program was possible because of a grant through the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. Kristy Carter, a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and long-time supporter of recreation inclusion, was recruited to initiate this program.

This past year, the training program was developed and

delivered to the City of Tallahassee - Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs and the Capital Region YMCA. In addition, many outreach efforts were undertaken to increase the awareness to consumers on the health and wellness benefits of participating in accessible inclusive recreation.

In October 2008, FDOA was awarded a continuation of the grant for a second year. FDOA, in conjunction with the Inclusion Advisory Board, selected Pasco County as an additional host partner.


The committee was seeking a more rural area for the continuation of this pilot. This would help to determine the best way to provide inclusion training in a geographic area where the population is less concentrated. Pasco County has a population of 424,355 and includes the following municipalities: New Port Richey, Zephyrhills, Dade City, and Port Richey and covers over 745 square miles. The committee reviewed many areas before making the final decision ranging from partnerships with disability agencies, infrastructure to support an inclusion program, budget, and the staff's willingness to learn more about inclusion.

The training program will be delivered to Pasco County beginning in 2009. A number of educational formats will be utilized including: hands on activities, reviewing samples of recreation assistive technology, and training



presentations. FDOA will also provide a significant amount of on-going support.

The FDOA will continue to provide support to the City of Tallahassee - Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Affairs and the Capital Region YMCA.

For additional information you may contact Kristy Carter at kcarter@fdoa.org or 850-201-2944 ext. 3. 



Fun and Games: Recreation Assistive Technology


By Saeef Broxton, FFAST Communications Specialist

Adapted sports equipment provides so many ways for sports enthusiasts of all abilities to pursue recreation that it might be harder to find something that *can't* be done with assistive technology than to find something that can. Handbikes that are powered by the user's arms rather than the legs, all-terrain wheelchairs that can withstand the beach or the trail, and skis that glide over slopes or waves while the user sits instead of stands are all a part of the innovative realm of assistive technology. These products transform the outdoors for people who want to experience all the activities life has to offer. When winter weather calls for indoor sports, there is a crop of

creative devices that level the playing field. Using a spring loaded pool cue, players with limited range of motion and dexterity can still put some "english" on a shot. To use the cue, pool players adjust the power on the stick, line up the shot and release a spring loaded trigger, allowing them to hit the pool ball. Versions of this adapted pool cue are available commercially or through the volunteer-driven Tetra Society of North America, an international charitable organization with a chapter in Miami, that recruits skilled technicians to modify sports equipment for accessibility. Pool players aren't the only ones who can use assistive technology to take aim. The

IKAN Bowler, by Tampa – based Manufacturing Genuine Thrills Inc. (MGT, Inc.), mounts directly onto a user's power chair, and can be used while the chair is stationary or in motion, allowing the bowler to control the ball's speed, direction and timing. Non-mechanized devices, such as adjustable ball pushers and ball ramps, make it possible for seated users to bowl from the front of the lane instead of from the side.

Handheld control is also just one click away for gamers, through the use of adapted joysticks, mouses and other computer access devices. Retailers like Tash and Enabling Devices boast extensive online catalogs of

switches and other gear that allows users of all ages with limited arm movement and dexterity to access everything from low-tech adapted toys to a Playstation or a Wii. The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST, Inc) provides a variety of adapted toys, and modified equipment through programs like ATBay, an assistive technology exchange website, and the FFAST Statewide AT Loan Program, which allows users to borrow an item for up to 60 days at no cost. FFAST also offers qualified borrowers financing for some recreational equipment through its financial loan program. For more information visit FFAST online at www.faast.org. 

Membership Application

How can YOU support the efforts of the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association? **Become a member of the FDOA!**

Your assistance is valued and truly appreciated!! When you become a member of the FDOA, you not only support the programs mentioned in this newsletter, but you **ensure their continued success and growth.**

Yes, I want to ensure that FDOA's programs continue! Please accept my support at the following annual dues membership level:

- \$20.00 Individual
- \$50.00 Family
- \$100.00 Not-for-Profit
- \$200.00 Business
- \$1,000.00 Patron
- \$2,500.00 Trustee
- Please accept my additional donation of \$_____.

FDOA is a 501 (c)(3) Not-for-Profit organization and gratefully accepts donations and in-kind gifts. All contributions are tax deductible.

Name _____
 Organization _____
 Address 1 _____
 Address 2 _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____
 Work Phone _____
 Cell Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Please indicate any areas in which you would be willing to help.

- Marketing / Promotion
- Fund Raising
- Event Planning
- Finance / Accounting
- Computer Applications / Web Development
- Musician
- On-site assistance at functions
- Other _____

Please mail your membership application to:

FDOA
 2475 Apalachee Parkway
 Suite 205
 Tallahassee, FL 32301



*SportsAbility Tallahassee Dates Set!
April 16-19, 2009*

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tallahassee FL
Permit #834

Active Leisure for Life!

2475 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 205
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: 850-201-2944
Fax: 850-201-2945
Email: info@fdoa.org

CHECK US OUT AT:

WWW.FDOA.ORG

President's Report



*David Jones
FDOA President*

The "need for change", is something we have heard used many times during the past year. We have heard talk about the need for change in many areas of our lives. One of the big issues of concern is for the health care system. This is a big one for our disability community. The current crisis has taken its toll on rehabilitation efforts by reducing and severely limiting the therapeutic recreation services that are so important for treatment and the successful rehabilitation of patients. We at the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association (FDOA) are working on that with our Brain and Spinal Cord Injury - RASTA programs. We are also providing a community based therapeutic recreation

program with our RAPAD program funded through the Department of Education and Vocational Rehabilitation. But health and wellness promotion for people with disabilities has been neglected by the general healthcare system. Health and wellness promotion for persons with disabilities will help to reduce secondary conditions and improve quality of life while reducing overall treatment costs. A greater emphasis must be put on community based healthcare program initiatives for people with all types of disabilities. We must get the healthcare providers and also persons with disabilities to change their thinking to include the important concept of health maintenance and wellness. This will help individuals begin to manage and to improve their own

health through exercise, therapeutic recreation and physical activity. For this to happen, people with disabilities will need to be motivated, encouraged, informed and educated. The FDOA will continue to enhance lives by working with our present and future partners to promote Active Leisure for Life. We need to change our approach to health care from the current "treat the symptoms" to a more cost effective strategy of providing prevention and wellness programs for people with all types of disabilities. **Active Leisure for Life really does mean ALL.**

