

ADAPTED FITNESS NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME TO OUR SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the fifth installment of the Adapted Fitness newsletter! For those of you who are new to Adapted Fitness, we are a group of clients and students within the Department of Kinesiology, residing at the UW Natatorium on 2000 Observatory Drive. Relationships between students and clients develop as students provide support to help clients progress towards their fitness goals, and clients give students real-life experiences that help them develop professionally.

LEADERSHIP IN ADAPTED FITNESS

What is LAF?

Leadership in Adapted Fitness (LAF) is a student organization dedicated to working closely with Adapted Fitness and its members by organizing events related to adapting fitness for those with disabilities, and advocating for inclusion within our society.

Mission Statement

"We are committed to improving the quality of healthcare for all people by exposing future healthcare professionals to the diverse abilities of members in our community."

Goals

Change the public perception of limitations for those with disabilities, help develop a universally inclusive community, and give students and clients the experience of putting ideas into action.

Contacts

For more information email Co-presidents at leadershipinadaptedfitness@gmail.com

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

We would like to express our sincerest thanks and extreme appreciation to Michael and Virginia “Ginny” Conway for stepping up, once again, to help fund the creation of a Adapted Fitness Gym in the new Natatorium, which is planned to be opened in 2023.

Ginny and Michael are both graduates of UW-Madison, with Ginny graduating with a degree in from the School of Education in Physical Education in ‘78 and Michael graduating with a degree from the School of Education in ‘78.

Because of their generous donation, we are able to provide our clients with state-of-the-art equipment and the space to make even greater gains in their health.

We couldn’t have done this without the support of Conway’s, and we are extremely grateful for the opportunity they have provided to the Adapted Fitness Program and the UW-Madison campus as a whole!

WINTER EVENT RECAP

“Clients and student volunteers had a blast at the adapted winter events this year! Leadership in Adapted Fitness offered three different adapted skiing opportunities: the Badger State Games, Winter Fest, and The Birkebeiner. The clients used a sit-ski, a chair attached to two skis that allows the user to ski in a seated position. The Badger State Games is an adapted ski race that took place on 1/25/20 in Wausau, WI. Winter Fest is a clinic to learn how to use an adapted ski and it took place on 2/2/20 at Elver Park in Madison. Students even had the opportunity to try a sit-ski at Winter Fest! Most students were surprised how much core is involved in sit-skiing! The Adaptive Birkie is an adapted ski race that took place on 2/21/20 in Hayward, WI. For some clients, the Birkie was the first time they had ever skied using a sit-ski, while others had competed in the Birkie for many years! Overall, everyone had a wonderful time and are looking forward to next year!” - Kara Fontana, Winter Events Coordinator



Open House

This year we featured the first ever Virtual Adapted Fitness Open House! We have dedicated this Open House to Mike and Ginny Conway for their continued support of Adapted Fitness. The event kicked off with a keynote message from Tim Gattenby about what motivated him to start the Adapted Fitness program 35 years ago, and who motivates him today. Check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWPAJXdzZ-c>

Another feature of the Open House was the “Highlights of the Year” music video created by Open House Coordinator Taylor Fricker. The video showcases the work of our awesome clients and students. Check it out at https://mediaspace.wisc.edu/media/Adapted+Fitness+%E2%80%9DHighlights+of+the+Year%22+Video+for+the+2020+Virtual+Open+House/0_d5jddsbp

Next in the Open House was a Adapted Fitness Rap Debut, “Think It, Do It!” performed by one of our own clients who goes by the rap name “Less Heavy D”. It was an awesome rap, so make sure you watch it at https://mediaspace.wisc.edu/media/Think+It,+Do+It!!+-+Adapted+Fitness/1_gjqojate

AWARD WINNERS

Once a year, we present the **Kurt Christensen Adapted Fitness Hall of Fame Award** to an individual from the program who personifies the qualities of “living without limitations” and who has a passion for learning, educating, and advocating for others—regardless of ability. We are honored to announce the 2019 winner as **Dustin Palenshus!**

Dustin is always there to lend a hand. Over these past years, he has volunteered to help get TracChairs (off road wheelchairs) out to many users. On many occasions, we’ve seen and experienced how Dustin is constantly listening and finding ways to help others. For those who have been recently injured, Dustin’s guidance has helped them to get on solid foundations more quickly and effectively. He is also extremely inspiring to the university students, and helps them understand that a person’s disability does not define them, nor does it limit them.



Once a year we recognize one individual who exemplifies strength under adversity, courage at working towards higher goals, and inspires us through his or her example. This year for 2019, we are honored to present **David Adams** with the **Jeff Schram Inspiration Award**.

David Adams is one of the hardest working individuals in Adapted Fitness History. He has far surpassed what many ever thought was possible. Every semester, David does more, and at higher levels of quality and fitness, than we can ever describe in one paragraph.

Even before his spinal cord injury, David has always been a person who gave to others. He and his engineering firm, Isthmus Engineering gave time and resources to build adapted sit-skis. The skis are now available across the Midwest, giving people with diverse abilities the opportunity to enjoy winter and snow through cross country skiing.



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Georgia is the first individual to win this award who isn’t actually a client. She is the partner of a long-time client, Phil Van Valkenburg. She has assisted Phil in his recovery and their pursuits of the “outdoor silent sports,” like biking, running, and cross country skiing. Georgia has done much more than assist Phil; she has insisted that no medical person, staff, or therapist do “just therapy.” She sets high expectations for everyone to go beyond therapy to push Phil to the highest levels. By doing so, Georgia and Phil both continue to live an adventurous life. Georgia teaches and encourages students to think creatively and challenges them everyday to reach higher goals. She instills a passion in our students as they move towards their future health and medical professions!



Client Spotlight - Dustin Palenshus

1. Who inspired you to check out the Adapted Fitness program and how long have you been in it?

My friend Monica told me about the class so I came in and just loved it. I have been in AF for 6 semesters and was previously in it from 2009-2011.

2. What has been your biggest accomplishment either within this program specifically or something you have accomplished outside of class that AF helped you with?

I would say losing weight and gaining strength. I lost 35 to 40 lbs with the help of AF.

3. What have been the most memorable experiences thus far with Adapted Fitness?

I would have to say sit skiing las winter with one of my students. She is awesome and we had a blast!

4. If there is any advice you would give to other individuals who may be dealing with the same challenges you have faced, what would you tell them?

Stay positive and just keep pushing to reach your goals and beyond!

5. What goals do you look forward to achieving in the future?

I want to keep losing weight, try sled hockey, and go to the Birkie this next year.

6. Overall, how has being in AF played a part in your life? Is this program what you expected coming in, or have there been a lot more surprises?

Other than the social factor, it has kept me active and in shape so I can be more independent. I would say there has definitely been more surprises as I never thought I would be out hunting, fishing, skiing, biking, or any of the other crazy things I do when I had my accident but this class and the people involved really help open up your mind to the opportunities and the ability to do them.



IN MEMORY

Adapted Fitness has lost some incredible and wonderful participants this past year. Each one of them contributed great amounts to our students and our program. It was an honor to work with each of them, and they will be greatly missed.

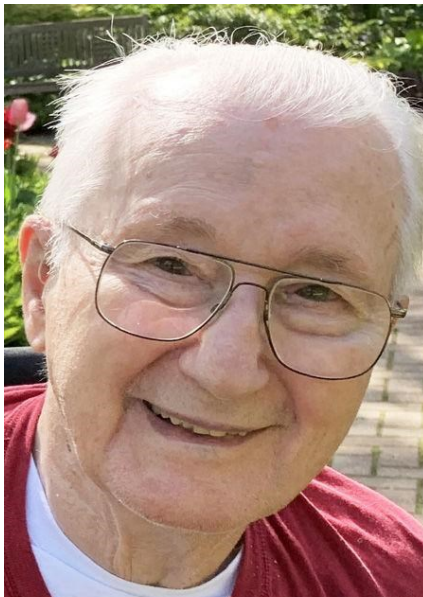
Anne Nahn



Bob Jackson



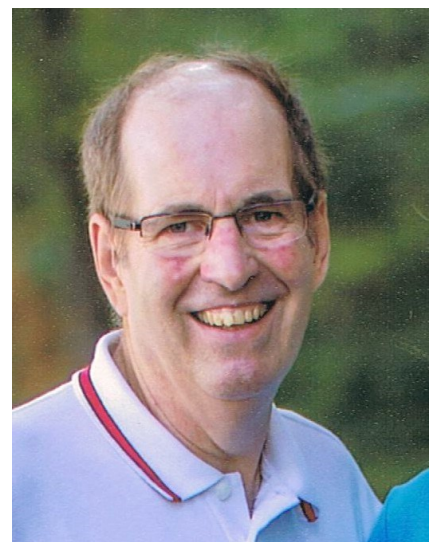
Walter Grengg



Kent Fitch



Richard "Rick" Lane



Student Perspective - Kecia Doyle

Inspired by Our Ability to Stay Connected, Fit & Hopeful

Certainly, for many, the spring of 2020 will be remembered largely for the COVID-19 pandemic. But for those of us in the Adapted Fitness community, I hope that our memories of this time have been brightened by the meaningful connections we continued to make with each other. And by how we have inspired each other to stay fit and hopeful during this difficult time.

The 300 students and 90 clients, who make up our incredibly special and wonderful community of individuals with diverse abilities, humble me. What we do during in-person instruction is already great. But what we've done during the pandemic is pretty amazing!

From the student teams and clients who meet by phone, email, and conferencing apps to exercise "together", or just to chat and check in with each other...To the clients who have created "virtual exercise classes" and invited everyone to participate sending weekly reminders to motivate one another...To the hundreds of discussion posts with positive messages and photos of how everyone is adapting to the circumstances...To the "participation" in our Virtual Open House with the inspiring message by Tim, the awesome rap video by David Helman, and the equally wonderful highlights video produced by Taylor Fricker...To all the volunteer student leaders and interns who have researched ideas for content on the Canvas site...To Mike and Ginny Conway, whose support of our program has made it possible for me to work with a program near and dear to my heart, and whose generous funding will provide us with an incredible new space when the Nat is rebuilt.

For all of these things, and so much more, I am inspired, honored, and very grateful. I hope we can all look back on the spring of 2020 and remember the ways in which we continued to make meaningful connections to Adapted Fitness clients, to students, and to each other. THANK YOU for everything you've done, especially during these very challenging times!

--Kecia



Durango Ski Scholarship Recipients



A distribution of funds from the Madison West Kiwanis Club is used exclusively for scholarships for Madison area residents with disabilities to participate in Adaptive Sports Association (ASA) programming and disabled sports in Durango, Colorado. The Adaptive Sports Association's (ASA) winter program has been providing adaptive skiing, snowboarding, and a variety of "sit-ski" instruction to people with disabilities for over 30 years. This year, four clients from Adapted Fitness won scholarships! This year's winners were John Arndt, Jim Dag, Max Rammer, and Stacy Gallagher!



Leadership in Adapted Fitness Travels to Boston for the Abilities Expo

In September 2019, Leadership in Adapted Fitness took a trip to Boston, Massachusetts to explore the Abilities Expo. In total, we had 13 students along with our club supervisor, Tim Gattenby, make the trip to Boston. The expo was held in the Boston Convention Center and featured many cutting-edge products and services, adapted sports and activities for better health, informative workshops, daily living aids, and many life-changing activities and products for individuals of all ages.

The expo provided students with the opportunity to learn about all the new technology and advancements becoming available to individuals with disabilities. There were 107 booths in total, and many more workshops, demos, and free activities.

Current Co-president of LAF, Emily Johnson described the expo. “The Abilities Expo was a great way to apply what we learned in Adapted Fitness and apply it to programs and companies across the nation! Also, it was a unique way to bring back information to better our clients and the program.”

One element of the expo that we can connect to Adapted Fitness is the many adapted bikes we saw. Many clients in Adapted Fitness use adapted bikes, and we have bikes that can accommodate individuals with all sorts of abilities. The expo gave us an opportunity to see all the new technology that we may be able to provide for our clients in the future.

Also at the expo was Mark Wellman, a pioneer in adapted climbing and an inspiration to millions of individuals all around the world. Wellman is paralyzed from the waist down, but that does not stop him from doing what he loves including climbing, becoming a park ranger, or being a Paralympian. He has a no limit philosophy that encourages individuals to strive “unreachable” goals. Wellman also provided adapted climbing equipment so that individuals with diverse abilities at the expo could use the climbing wall.

Overall, the Abilities Expo provided members of Leadership in Adapted Fitness a unique opportunity to expand and apply the knowledge they gained at UW-Madison to the real world.



Interested in supporting Adapted Fitness?

Thank you for your continued support of Adapted Fitness! Because of you, we are able to provide our clients with updated equipment and a safe workout environment. If you are interested in donation to our program, any amount can make a difference and is greatly appreciated. Donations are made directly to the Department of Kinesiology.

Follow this link (or click the hyperlinks below),

<https://kinesiology.education.wisc.edu/giving/> and you can either click on the Adapted Fitness Program Fund or the Kurt Christensen Adapted Fitness Scholarship Fund to make a difference today!

Thank you!

Tim's Tidings

In the midst of these odd and confusing times, we might look ahead and think about a year from now when we are going to have discovered so much about this mysterious virus. We will also have discovered so much about ourselves and how we can adapt to adversity. While we have been forced to distance ourselves physically we have also grown closer to each other emotionally. I realize that I have taken for granted the joy and excitement that I get from being around my students and my colleagues at UW-Madison. I miss being around all of you, but at the same time the opening of every web meeting, email or text we write starts with, "How are you doing? I hope you and your family are well and safe." It is a refreshing and comforting feeling knowing we really care about each other.

So many things have happened this year and so many things are continuing to evolve for the future of Adapted Fitness. Firstly, We finished our first year with having a teaching assistant in Adapted Fitness! I have to say once again, thank you to Kecia for her quality attention and detailed efforts to provide for students and staff in Adapted Fitness. It's been so wonderful having her in the program and I can't remember how the program ran without her all these years. Having Kecia in the program is a direct result of a very generous gift from the Conway's. And then on top of that, the Conway's came through with the financial resources to provide Adapted Fitness with a new gym in the New Natatorium 3 years from now! We have so many exciting opportunities to look forward to in the future! These opportunities will allow AF to provide more services and programs for people with diverse abilities and more training for students going into health and medical professions. Our students will truly come to understand the needs of people with a wide array of disabilities and abilities.

We unfortunately lost a number of clients this year. All very special people with enormous characters that brought us fun challenges and wonderful life experiences. I know that we all will cherish each of them as we move forward. May we strive to be as impactful in our lives, as they were in theirs.

Finally, Adapted Fitness has been awarded with an instructional lab modernization funding source! A proposal was submitted and approved that will provide Adapted Fitness with over 20 major pieces of exercise equipment and another 30 individual items for our new space at the Medical Science Center and also be used for the new Natatorium that will be completed in three years. We also received the funding to move the new equipment into storage until we are ready to use it. The new equipment that we will receive was purchased at about 10% of what it's true value would have been. We are extremely grateful to the UW recwell program, who offered us the equipment at this tremendous discount.

Stay well everyone. Stay safe and it will be such a wonderful time when we all come back to being together in the near future.

Tim G. Gattenby

Distinguished Faculty Associate

Coordinator Adapted Fitness & Personal Training

