

A message from Anne Bethune, President, Vancouver Adaptive Snow Sports (VASS)

There is something I call the *VASS magic* that is very real. It goes beyond skiing and snowboarding and it is the stuff that creates enduring friendships, skills for life and truly changes lives. *You* are the VASS magic.

I reflect back on the many highlights of the 2011 season. In addition to providing almost 1,000 student lessons, and training an eager crew of new instructors, we had our 4th annual VASS Challenge Cup, which raised \$56,800, with help from our Gold Sponsors supporting us: YVR, HSBC, & PwC.

We are blessed with many wonderful community partners, such as Grouse, Seymour and Cypress Mountains, who make what we do possible. We are now stocked with the latest equipment with thanks to our friends at Rotary and Lions Club. We also

celebrated our Blue Streaks Adaptive Ski Team, who has now developed a well-deserved reputation of athletes who are cleaning up in the medals. Our vision for the future is strong and VASS is just getting started with regards to reaching our potential. It is an exciting time!

One of the greatest sources of inspiration to me in VASS is experiencing the generosity of the people that VASS attracts - generosity comes in the form of time, skills, money, resources and often just smiles. Our 2012 season is around the corner so get focused on participating in our 5th annual VASS Challenge Cup, grab a friend to join our VASS volunteer crew, and keep on sharing your generous gifts with VASS. I look forward to more VASS magic in 2012!

Warmly, Anne

VASS profile: Brian Kingsley - a truly inspirational tale

Brian Kingsley's life story will have you in tears - tears of sadness, admiration, and joy. It's a story that shows how commitment, dedication and a will to never give up pays off.

In June 1991, at the age of 19, an event turned Brian's life upside down. Brian was involved in a car crash that resulted in the death of his best friend and left Brian in a coma for almost four months. After two years in hospital, Brian entered rehabilitation for a further two years, where he met VASS president Anne Bethune.

But this story doesn't end here. One morning, just four months after leaving rehab, Brian was shot in the back of the head during a gas station robbery. Brian then spent another month recovering in hospital before returning to rehabilitation.

The events left Brian with a partially paralyzed left arm, and a weak left side of the body. The shooting affected his senses and he suffered a brain injury that means he suffers from short-term memory loss and behavioural problems.

While some may have felt defeated, Brian took charge of his own destiny. Among his many commitments, Brian decided to return to the sport he loved and joined VASS.

For the next 20 years he was able to continue skiing, with the assistance of VASS volunteers. However, a major breakthrough occurred during the 2010/2011

ski season when Brian skied unassisted on the beginners run Paradise for the first time since joining the VASS program.

"Watching Brian ski for the first time on his own was absolutely amazing, we had to rub our own eyes," said VASS instructors James Lewandowski and Kot Frankowski. [Continued over.]



From left: James Lewandowski, Brian Kingsley, John Palmer, Kot Frankowski

A good time for all at the Annual Year End Party

It was an opportunity for a fun night of bowling for all the VASS volunteers at the Varsity Ridge Bowling Lanes on April 30th. The annual party is also an opportunity to celebrate the exceptional commitments made by all the volunteers throughout the season. A fun night as always, this year saw a good turnout and a successful night of bowling. Thanks go to Fadi Asfour and Elic Chan for the organization.

2010-2011 in review

On average each year, over 100 students and nearly 200 volunteers participate in 700 lessons. In 2010-2011, VASS volunteers provided over 7,500 hours of skill and expertise to delivering our programs. VASS has delivered ski and snowboard programs to more than 6,000 children and adults.

Coming up in Fall 2011

Ahead of the 2011-2012 season, VASS will be launching its volunteer drive, encouraging new volunteers to get involved with all the great work done by VASS. The Fall Newsletter will have all the details about how to get involved with VASS both on and off the mountains – such as at the VASS booth at the Canadian Ski Patrol's Winter Extreme Ski Show & Swap in November.

The VASS AGM will be held September 13th, 6-7:30 pm (refreshments at 5:45) at Lower Level - Guinness Tower # 1055 West Hastings, Vancouver. Contact: info@vass.ca

More VASS news

To keep up-to-date with all VASS events, including new opportunities to get involved, visit www.vass.ca or find



Vancouver Adaptive Snow Sports on Facebook.



"We felt so proud to be a part of that moment. It was unbelievable to see the look of pure determination on his face suddenly change to that of pure elation. It was the biggest smile we'd ever seen on Brian's face. It was incredible to watch him do something that he himself didn't even think was possible at the start of the season."

But that wasn't the end of it. During the final wrap up party Brian came in late, and for good reason. It transpired that he had skied The Cut, a green run on Grouse Mountain.

In fact, 2011 has been Brian's year. To add to his achievements, in July he won the Disabled Skiers Association of BC's Skier/Snowboarder of the Year award. The award is given to a member who has improved their skiing/boarding skills during the season to a great extent while demonstrating a positive attitude - a well-deserved award.

"It took him 19 minutes to ski down the Cut solo – but 20 years of effort for Brian to get ready to make that run! These are the moments that make VASS great," commented VASS members Dan Moscrip and Liisa-Maria O'Hara.

VASS Cup a big success, despite the 'challenging' weather

The VASS Cup is the biggest day out of the season and this year's event was a smash success, despite the weather. Held on March 11th, a day later than scheduled due to the inclement weather on Grouse Mountain, the event saw 14 disabled racers and 62 able-bodied racers competing in the race.

The emphasis is on fun for the competitors. The disabled racers team up with the able-bodied racers in a team of 4 and do two runs down 'The Cut'. The prizes go to the team that matches their two times the closest.

Despite the day's delay, there were some 'challenging' weather conditions with plenty of snow to make it interesting. Once the

times were tallied, the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) team took the overall title. As well, there was plenty of fast and furious sledge hockey taking place.



The VASS Cup is also an important fundraising event for VASS and this year saw gross revenues of \$56,800 – up from \$44,000 the previous season – so a great job by all those involved in fundraising efforts. The VASS Cup was presented by Grouse Mountain with YVR Vancouver Airport Authority, HSBC, and PwC as the Gold Sponsors.



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