



Therapeutic Adventures

To: Therapeutic Adventures

You guys are awesome!

Mark et al,

THANK YOU > THANK YOU >THANK YOU >THANK YOU >THANK YOU >THANK YOU

Saturday was an awesome day, and a perfect culmination of the ski season. Joshua had decided not to go and no pleading and encouragement on my part could convince him otherwise. Then, one call to Mark and he was raring to go:-) As I watched the skiers, their friends and families throughout the day, I was frequently overwhelmed by the great joy this experience brought to the competitors and all who support them. I wanted to just say thanks and to note that I hope you realize how incredible your work is and the gift you give to so many people. Your work is truly missional. We are looking forward to kayaking adventures this summer.

Jane Ellen

Thanks again for all that you have done to help me get back to skiing. Everyone said that the skiing today was great but I was so tired and sore from yesterday that I was concerned that if I went out today I would hurt myself also I could not find anyone to go out with me today. So I decided to end my season with yesterday's high. Surprise! Discretion won over excitement again. Well there will be next season to get skiing independently.

All your work to get me parallel on my left traverse seemed to pay off in yesterdays race except that I was gaining too much speed going into the red gates and overshooting the groove to turn at the gate putting me out in the crud to make my right turn which is where I fell both times.

Your locker was locked so I put the trombone and tethers under your locker and the outrigger against the wall to the left of your locker.

Happy Spring and I hope to see you for paddling soon.

Ken

Thank you so much for providing such a program!!! Marc and Peter have enjoyed it so much. The Masloff's and I are really grateful for such an opportunity for them. Looking forward to next year or maybe some of the other events. Thanks again.

Joan

Didn't get a chance to thank you for the opportunity to ski again. Learning the mono-ski was a great experience. I hope to get better at it in the future. Please let me know of any further adaptive sports programs that you have to offer, as I would love to participate.

Thanks,

Evita

To: Mark Andrews
From: John Kostanecki
Subject: Therapeutic Adventures

About 5 years ago I moved my family to Charlottesville, VA to start work with a new Company, and was pleasantly surprised that the area boasted not one but two ski resorts within easy driving distance. Growing up in Connecticut, I was an expert skier, having spent some of the best times of my life skiing in Vermont with my cousins and high school buddies, until a car accident when I was 18 left me paralyzed from the waist down. I had tried mono-skiing, with very poor results several times when we lived in California. Because of the great times I had when I was growing up, my wife and I decided to introduce our two young girls to skiing during our first winter in Virginia, about 5 years ago, late in December shortly after Massanutten opened for the season and I bumped into Mark Andrews while I was sitting in my wheelchair at the bottom of the slope hoping to catch a glimpse of my family learning to ski. Skiing for me in Virginia was not something I expected to do but Mark encouraged me to give it another try with him. Since that first meeting I have progressed from the bunny slope to navigating the expert trails from the top of mountain and even landing a few jumps every now and then. The best part is that I can race my daughters down the slopes and I am happy to report that I can still beat her to the bottom! I am now a regular with Therapeutic Adventures. Mark has taken me fly fishing for trout on Virginia Rapids, cruising overnight on sailboats and, provided my middle aged body can take it, he's got this crazy notion about he and I hiking the Scottish Highlands together. No doubt I think will need a lot of "therapy" thereafter.

I feel so lucky to have become friends with Mark and join him and the rest of the Therapeutic Adventure people.

Thanks so much for the wonderful weekend. I had so much fun, and met such a wonderful group of folks. It was great! I think you and your volunteers did an awesome job! Thank you, thank you, thank you! I look forward to seeing everyone again soon.

Denise

Thank you for such an awesome weekend. Getting to know everyone, they are such great people. I think I laughed and smiled more that weekend than I have in a long time. The smile is still plastered on my face. Last evening I saw Pat Cheeks, the Director of Women's Services for MJH, she had many questions (as she only knew about it the day before). I felt a sense of excitement telling her all the wonderful moments that I was blessed to share with the other ladies and the terrific volunteers! Words cannot express my thank you properly. The time that you put into making this a terrific escape for myself and the other survivors. Arranging all of the food, the flowers, the volunteers, the facility, and all of the events, the great fisherman who gladly shared their love of the sport with us, oh I must not forget the wine, you did not forget a thing. Thank you for this experience, I will treasure the time we spent together. You are a kind and compassionate man. I am a better person for having met you.

Thank you,

Nancy S

I have told everyone about the fabulous time we all had. Yesterday, my niece who is visiting from Texas, was thoroughly impressed with the various flies. She even knew the names of several. In fact her dog, Caddis, was named for a fly. She and her husband went fly fishing in Chile for their honeymoon. I have taken the various goodies, you all so generously gave to us, to several get togethers and everyone is impressed with what we received, tangible and intangible. Thank you again for coming up with such a splendid plan!

Looking forward to seeing everyone,
Jo Anne

LEAP Members Head For The Slopes

On February 9th, LEAP (Leisure Experiences for Active People) a recreation group designed for physically challenged individuals sponsored by the Recreation Therapy Department and Augusta Medical Center headed for a day at Massanutten Ski Resort. Six Head Injured folks from Fredericksburg along with four local spinal cord injured individuals attended the adaptive ski program for a day of fun and fellowship. Amie Trinca and Shelley Payne, Recreation Therapist and Brittany Campbell, Mentorship Student from Fort Defiance High School along with Mark Andrews, Director of the Therapeutic Ski Program and several volunteers from the University Of Virginia began the day with instruction on adaptive equipment and safety on the mountain. The ambulatory skiers were fitted with helmets and outriggers. The sit skiers were fitted for mono-skis or bi-skis appropriate for their level of injury. It was a very successful and therapeutic fun filled day for all!!!!

Didn't get a chance to thank you for the opportunity to ski again. Learning the mono-ski was a great experience. I hope to get better at it in the future. Please let me know of any further adaptive sports programs that you have to offer, as I would love to participate.

Thanks,

Evita

What you do at Therapeutic Adventures helps folks make the mental leap from can't to can, and then gives them the opportunity to try it..... Thank you

Dear Mark & Teresa

The idea of fly fishing has always been intriguing to me (in fact, if I had made a "bucket list," it would have been on it). But I never dreamed I would actually be standing by stream with a splashing trout on my fishing line. It was a thrill I will never forget!

Many times things we imagine to be special turn out to be a disappointment - not the experience at the retreat. It was every bit and more exciting than I imagined. Interesting enough I've always wanted to learn how to tie flies as well.

Although the activities were the highlight of the weekend, the generosity and inspiration of all you who volunteered to make the weekend possible will never be forgotten or underestimated. You all made the "perfect weekend" (and I don't say that lightly.)

Please count on using me as a volunteer next year in any capacity needed.

Sincerely,

Sandy

P.S. For Mother's Day I received a fly rod kit from my kids.

By the way, loved the camp fires!

Netanel can not stop talking about skiing. We greatly appreciate the opportunity that you and the wonderful volunteers have given him. You are terrific & you inspire the people around you. Many people in our group have told us how impressed they were with all the volunteers they saw .

Thank you all again.
Carol

Mark -

I cannot begin to thank you for everything that you did leading up to and including Friday. The kids were a glow talking about it. The parents I spoke with had tears in their eyes as I explained what their kids did. It was an amazing day for all! I hope we can make this an annual event!

Thank you thank you thank you!!

Lauren V. Heberling, M.Ed.

Special Education

Fort Defiance High School

Football & Basketball Cheer Coach

JV Softball Coach

Hey Mark,

Just wanted to thank you again for allowing Tripp to ski with you on Sunday! He had sooo much fun. We are truly blessed to have the Andrews family in our lives! If there are any other dates that would be convenient for him to ski again, please let me know.

Thanks,
Jamie

Mark,

Again I want to thank you so much for taking charge and helping CJ with the adaptive skiing - it was a birthday present he will never forget! We are interested in the weekend in late February where there will be the slalom course and a party. Please send information on this and I believe you were going to send us some other information.

Much Thanks!

Kevin, Barb and CJ Wills

Mark

Seifi had a great time. We are planning to attend in February and are looking forward to the event. Thank you so much for running this program

Chip & Mary Retzlaff

Hi Mark:

We hope the past year has been a good one for you!

We have been thinking of you recently as we normally ski at Massanutten the last weekend of February with Therapeutic Adventures. We hope your adaptive program is still going strong. Now that Aaron is away at college (Goucher College in Baltimore, MD) it is extremely difficult for him to get away the last weekend of February to go skiing and still keep up with school work and mid-terms which, unfort., are the first week of March at Goucher.

We were planning on skiing this year at some point the first 2 weeks of January when Aaron was home with us for winter break. We had planned to go to Pennsylvania, either Liberty or Whitetail, for a change. Unfort., it was so warm and didn't seem worth the trip due to the lack of snow at the resorts. Maybe next year!

Anyway, Aaron is doing well at Goucher and loves it. Skiing with you and your Therapeutic Adventures volunteers over the years gave him great confidence, inner strength and made him overcome his fears and I know these skills are now a part of him and will support him in his college endeavors and throughout his life. Plus he knows how to ski! Thank you so much for all you have done for him.

Best to you always,
Jill, Kyle, Aaron and Jake Richmond

Thanks again Mark!

Had an awesome time skiing and look forward to doing a lot more. Appreciate the program you have set up to inspire and help kids and adults alike, such as myself! Now I have yet another hobby/interest to look forward to and have a blast with!

Your hard work and efforts definitely don't go unnoticed and I'm sure pay off when seeing the happiness on everyone's faces when they can see what all they can do with a little help and encouragement!

Thank again,
Newly addicted skier :)
Doug

Mark,

Thank you! CJ had such a great time, and he is hooked on skiing! It was really nice to meet some of the volunteers - they are truly the best representatives of all that is good in our youth today! Here are some of the pics I took.

Kevin Willis

Mark,

I can't begin to tell you what it meant to our whole family to have Grace on the slopes! You and your volunteers have amazing hearts full of love! We could not get over the smiles on the faces of all of the volunteers as they lift heavy bi-skis onto the lifts and helped skiers as needed! The smiles never left their faces!!!! We are blessed to have met so many incredible people!

Thanks for the experience of a lifetime! We will see you next year, Gracie is hooked!!!!

Julianne Ogle

Just today, I had a phone conversation with a mother scheduling some skiing sessions who told me, *"It is so refreshing to have someone understand the financial hardships we face. The support you provide makes me want to cry with joy. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"*

Thanks to Therapeutic Adventures, Thomas Jefferson Trout Unlimited, MJH, an amazing group of volunteers, and a fabulous group of kick ass women for an unforgettable weekend!

Casey B.

Dear Mark,

With Special Thanks

*This extra-special thank-you note sent to you today
Holds more appreciation than words can say. . .
for you're among the nicest people I have ever know,
And you'll never be forgotten for the thoughtfulness you've shown.*

The past two years working with you has been absolutely amazing. The most important lessons I have learned in college were not in the classroom, but on the slopes. You have taught me kindness, patience, love, and a hope that I have never experienced before. I came home every weekend from skiing and would call my mom and tell her how happy I was. My university experience would not have been the same without Therapeutic Adventures. I met my best friends, some amazing people, had the best laughs, and found one of the biggest role models I have. You are such an amazing man, a wonderful friend, and a genuinely good person. I hope to continue to learn from you, and hope that one day I will have the same impact on another group of kids. You have truly inspired me and changed my life for the better. I will miss seeing you every weekend next winter, but I promise to come back whenever I get the opportunity. Thank you so much for the best experience I could have dreamed of.

Love,

*Alexandra "Alex" Ball
Program Director 2010-2012
Madison House - Student Volunteer Center
University of Virginia*

A HUGE STANDING OVATION AND THANK YOU!

Hey Mark,

Just wanted to express my gratitude once again for the one-of-a-kind wool adaptive ski vest. Alex, Jeff, and I can't wait to come back next year and strut them on the slopes and pretend to be mini-Marks for a day!

I also want to thank you for starting Therapeutic Adventures and allowing me to be part of the adaptive ski family. I know I was not an ideal volunteer when I first came out, but thank you for giving me a chance! Hands down, adaptive ski has been my favorite activity I've been involved with for the past three years. It has helped me grow as a person and realize that you can achieve your dreams no matter what type of adversity you are presented with if you dedicate your efforts 100% to the task at hand. Working with the clients has fueled my desire to work in the medical field, particularly in the areas of pediatrics, sports medicine, and neurology.

I hope that wherever I end up for school and my career that there is an adaptive ski program nearby. During ski season, my main motivational factor at school was to get my work done during the week so I could stay on the slopes all day and meet and ski with the tremendously phenomenal clients. I've truly enjoyed listening to their trials and tribulations while on the lifts and learning how to ski as a cohesive unit with them. It's been a pleasure to watch the returners become stronger, more confident skiers under your guidance and one day I hope to become the Mark Andrews of the slopes.

Furthermore, I have met some of my closest college friends through adaptive ski and am already making plans to visit the ones who have graduated and live in other states. My adaptive ski colleagues will be among the few college friends I plan to stay in touch for years after graduation. Adaptive ski fosters an environment that attracts outdoorsy, good-hearted, hard-working, cordial people who dedicated 8-12 hours of their weekend assisting people with different abilities. What more do you need in a friend?

Thanks again for everything. Words alone cannot express how much I love and will miss adaptive ski. Thank you for being a great role model and mentor and I look forward to making it back for the 2013 Independence Cup!

Cheers,

Margaret

Mark,

I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for giving Ava such a wonderful experience this past weekend. She continues to be so very proud of herself and that is priceless. We came for a little bit of “I can” and you took her to “I did” and “I did it again”. What an amazing thing to give a little kid a brand new experience. Thanks so much for making that possible.

Enjoy the snow coming your way!

Stephani Ruggieri
VP, Consumer Solutions

Dear Mark,

Thank you for putting together the wonderful Fly Fishing weekend. I really enjoyed everything about the weekend - the music, fishing, being outside, the camp, massages, the falconry lesson, great food and best of all, my time with the other women and volunteers. You have an incredible team of volunteers who really made me feel cared for, and I know the other women felt the same. I also appreciated learning about T.A. and what an incredible organization it is. I can tell you love your work and you are a real gift to those you serve. You certainly extend the love of Christ to every life you touch. I pray the Lord blesses you abundantly just as you have blessed so many people through Therapeutic Adventures. Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

Otilie Austin

P.S. I love the Reflections on Spiritual Fishing! I've been reading and reflecting all week. ☺

Hi Mark,

So great to hear from you. Today for the first time since I returned home I wore my T shirt and hat to my Moving On exercise class at MJH. I was able share what a great experience this was. I'm hoping I will be able to help next year. I would love to help with the Sugar Hollow hike. I have hiked there for years. It was great for me to share with the others some of my favorite spots, and I pointed out some of my favorite trees.

I'm so grateful for this opportunity and for you and all the guides and volunteers. I shared with you that I didn't think I would want to actually catch a fish but I changed my mind. John was so quiet and kind, When he casted and a trout took the fly instantly he handed me the pole. I reeled in, he netted the trout and quickly removed the fish. You showed up and got the picture of me kissing the fish as directed. I'm laughing out loud now remembering it. I could go on and on sharing other special memories and I know your busy and I 'm not a writer so please feel free to edit and share if you wish.

Namaste'

Belle Newheart RN

Mark,

I am so glad you sent the email. I've been thinking of you and wanted to thank you again for such a wonderful weekend. There really is no way to express with words what the weekend meant to me. The idea that so many people volunteered their time and energy to care for 11 women was truly amazing. I enjoyed every minute, from meeting the women and volunteers, to enjoying the incredible food, to just being in such a peaceful space, and yes, of course, I enjoyed the fishing. I plan to use my new skills to fly fish in Montana this summer.

Diane Lohrer

First off, let me thank YOU for organizing such a wonderful program. It is always so much fun both for the clients and the volunteers. I learn much more from watching you handle the clients, than I can ever do in any of my classes here at UVA. It is definitely an honor to learn from you, and to serve those amazing people. . .

Sina Mazaheri

Eskimo Joe

MASS Adaptive Snow Sports Volunteer

Madison House