

Kids are winners on wheels

Winners On Wheels Sports Day brings out the best kids for a one-of-a-kind special event

By Jaime Dunkle
Associate News Editor

...ledge to be the best that...
...so that I can take my...
...in the circle and join oth...
...make a difference. I am...
...ner On Wheels. WOW...
...is do it!" -Winners On...
...Pledge.

...ry year the Clackamas...
...munity College Associat...
... Government hosts the...
...Day event for WOW in...
...dall Gym. On Saturday...
...17, I joined ASG and...
...for a day of fun and

...W in Oregon has been...
...for more than 10 years...
...events happen all year...
...ing children 4- to 17-...
...ld who use a wheelchair...
...or full time.

...ough there is an age...
...for WOW scouts, indi...
...more than 18-years-old...
...come to participate. Older...
...ers are the "pit crew." Much...
...W terminology reflects race...
...iving.

...ole of all ages attend...
...Day. It was moving to see...
...in constant good spirits...
...were on every face in every...
...in. The gym resounded with...
...and playful shouting.

...re I attempted to get in...
...chair and play, I spoke...
...udent Outreach Advising...
...ruitment Specialist Ariane...
...z. She has been participat...
...Sports Day for more than...
...years. I asked her what it...
...e to wheel around, so that...
...ll have a better idea of what...
...ect.

...really made me appreciate...
...uch work it is," Amstutz...
...was so sore afterwards."

...le we were talking...
...ment Chair of Student...
...ship Mindy Brown told...
...there were limited extra...
...available. The wheelchair



Wesley Northcutt Clackamas Print

Jaime Dunkle of *The Clackamas Print* plays a game of red light/green light with Andrew Ricks (left) and another boy. Winners on Wheels Sports Day was on April 17 in the Randall Hall gym.

used by volunteers are usually the old chairs belonging to WOW members.

"Regardless of your age, you get a chair every five years, and one of the difficulties in that world is trying to keep your chair together," Brown said.

Other volunteers were occupying the additional wheelchairs, so Amstutz and Brown introduced me to 25-year-old pit crew member Andrew Ricks.

Born with Hydrocephalus, or Water on the Brain, has not stopped Ricks from having fun. The 25-year-old has a very outgoing personality. I asked his mother, Carol Ricks, how WOW helps people like her son.

"It gets them out of their regular routine and gets them more social stimulation," Carol Ricks said.

I pushed Ricks in a game of "shark." We were "minnows" escaping the tap of each "shark" in the center of the gym floor. He chuckled with triumph. Then,

"Shark!" We were it. We were sharks chasing minnows.

The game wiped me out! My arms felt like jelly, and my legs were tired. However, I did not stop there; it was time to wheel myself in a race of red light/green light.

Steering the chair was difficult. I felt like I was in one of those broken shopping carts that always head slightly sideways. I was riding diagonally for the first few rounds of the game.

The amount of effort it takes to push the chair was serious. No matter how many rotations I thought my hands spun the rubber wheels, I only moved a few inches. I realized there was no way I would win one single match of red light green light.

My chair only reached past the center of the court once. I was so exhausted I had to take a break and eat some food.

When I returned I spoke to WOW Leader Teryl Figgins. She told me more about WOW events.

"We take the kids snow skiing, there is a summer camp, a big Christmas party," Figgins said. "We try to give them as normal of a life as we can."

Star athlete Zach Abbott catapulted his sportsmanship at WOW in Oregon as a kindergartener. He has since moved on as freshman at the University of Arizona.

"He's ranked World Class at this point, for wheelchair sports," Figgins said. "He is competing in Eugene on April 30, and then he's going to World Games in June."

WOW accepts all participants. Whether you are an adult or child in a chair, or a volunteer, you are welcome to become a WOW enthusiast.

"We run the program at no cost," Figgins said. "If anyone wants to get a child involved, get a hold of us."

For more information, contact Figgins at woworegon@gmail.com, or go to the WOW Oregon website at www.freewebs.com/woworegon.

LANTZ: NWAACC bound thrower a star for track

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Considering how long the gap was between competing when he was younger and how well he is doing now, it is a great accomplishment.

Adam Minder, a former discus and shotput athlete in high school, comments that it is very difficult to compete in these events safely and competitively. Minder also adds that it takes a good balance of strength and form to throw at the distances that the top athletes achieve. Unfortunately, he suffered a shoulder injury that disabled him from competing again.

Lantz has a minor injury currently, a simple strain, and will resume practicing after this week; he expects to be fully recovered.

Currently pursuing general studies, Lantz hopes to move on to criminal justice and may possibly move on to Concordia University; however, nothing is for certain.

One of his coaches, Keoni McHone, Clackamas's track and field coach, comments that Lantz is very important to the track and field team because of his athletic ability. But Lantz also believes the team has the potential to be very strong.

"We could have a very strong team ... the guys are all freshmen," said Lantz.

The other athletes being freshmen leave a full year of improvement if they choose to come back as sophomores and hopefully next year we will see our track and field excel even further than they have already.

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