



Dear ASF Community,

I have been skiing with the Adaptive Sports Foundation for 13 years.

My mom grew up in Vermont, where skiing was part of her school curriculum. She wanted me to experience the freedom and joy she felt on the snow, so when I was eight, she signed me up for ski lessons at the ASF. At first, I would have three or four lessons a year. Over time, my balance and strength improved. Even my physical therapist was impressed with how skiing helped me reach my goals.

One of my earliest memories with the ASF is seeing the ASF ski team and Sliders in the lodge at lunchtime. I thought they were so cool, and I wanted to be just like them someday!

Down syndrome makes many physical activities more difficult because of the low muscle tone throughout my body. It was hard to keep up with my neurotypical classmates as my body wouldn't cooperate. It was discouraging, but through the ASF, I learned a very cool sport that most of my neurotypical classmates could not do.

My dad and brother were so impressed by the impact the ASF had on me that they became ASF ski instructors. I increased my lessons and eventually improved enough to join the ASF Sliders! As a Slider, I was able to ski almost every Saturday and Sunday with friends and amazing coaches, a dream come true!

The ASF is so much more than skiing lessons. It is a community of people with and without disabilities who care about and accept one another. Even outside of ski season, we are friends!

I have many fond memories of skiing with ASF, but one of my favorites was the day I skied my first blue trail. I walked back into the lodge at lunchtime with my instructor, who loudly announced to everyone that I had just skied Wrap Around, my first blue. Everyone stopped what they were doing and cheered for me! I felt so loved.

Another fun memory—celebrating my birthday during ski season. My mom always gets a cake big enough to share with all of my ASF friends and their families, and it is really cool when everyone having lunch sings Happy Birthday to me.

At the end of every season, all the students and instructors celebrate at the annual Ralph Hartman Race and Dinner Dance. It is one of my favorite days of the year—so much so that my sister rescheduled her whole wedding to avoid the date!

The ASF and skiing have given me self-confidence and joy. Now, I know I can face and

overcome any challenge if I keep skiing and learning!

**Best wishes,
Anna “Skicat” Lazare**

P.S. I recently received my high school diploma and completed a college program at Westchester Community College, thanks to the confidence I gained from the ASF.

A note from Mary, Anna’s mom:

I know it sounds like hyperbole, but the Adaptive Sports Foundation has been life-changing for our daughter, Anna, and, indeed, for our whole family. My husband, Steve, began teaching at ASF after seeing how profoundly it had affected Anna. My son Alejandro taught for several years as well, before professional duties got in the way of skiing. Although I can no longer ski, I try to help out from time to time by making quilts for silent auctions and by assisting new parents in acclimating to the ASF.

Before joining the ASF, we felt somewhat isolated from other families, as most of our friends did not have family members with disabilities. As a parent, your greatest wish is for your child to be happy and to feel loved and accepted. At the ASF, we are part of a family that values each student, regardless of their disability. Like a family, we are happy when students achieve their goals and love to celebrate their accomplishments. We are also so grateful to the many instructors who give their time, expertise, and kindness to make a real difference in their students’ lives.

