

Monday, February 10th, 2013

To Whom it May Concern,

I, Wendy Andrick, am writing this letter in support of the recreation program that my daughter and other children have benefited from. The funding for these programs is paramount in ensuring that children with vision impairments are afforded the opportunities to recreate in exciting and challenging ways. Without these funds and the willingness of the VI instructors to arrange the activities like skiing and climbing, it simply couldn't happen. So many details go into securing a safe and successful day of recreation with our children and many agencies aren't able or willing to accommodate an individual family. However, when a school program is making a request and providing the funds, anything is possible for our children and that is a gift they don't experience every day.

This past fall a day of rock climbing was sponsored. My husband and I have enjoyed climbing for years but we haven't had success with taking our daughter to the local indoor climbing gym. The routes are too challenging, there are crowds around the one or two accessible climbs for her and there is nobody on hand to belay her while I climb and assist at her side. The day that we were invited to the climbing gym with her VI instructors was a very different, very positive experience. Not only were the routes set up and reserved for our kids, instructors were on hand to assist. My daughter climbed to the top on her first try. It was an incredible success for her. She absolutely loved it and felt like she could do anything! This is a priceless gift to a child who missed out on so much of the world visually.

In addition to the recreation these funds are making reading at a higher level accessible for my daughter, and many children by providing iPads. With the support of this technology my daughter is able to access books, in the proper size font, track her reading and move along with the class. This is a remarkable resource. The vision instructors have opened up so many possibilities for children with the funds to purchase and use the iPads. In today's world they must continue to have this academic necessity.

On a final note I would like to express gratitude for these funds. Not only have they opened the doors of technology and climbing, but also to a favorite sport. One enjoyed by my husband and I for years, and now with these funds, my daughter has found her passion and love for skiing as well. With all of the added expenses and services a family needs with a child who experiences a disability. Paying for extra-curricular activities isn't always an option. Yet is it fundamentally necessary to our happiness and well-being. My daughter has participated each year with the VI ski clinic at Mt. Bachelor. The first time she went, I didn't know what to expect.. so I didn't expect much. My daughter had an incredible experience and I owe it to these very funds for opening doors to rooms that I thought were sealed off. It is my hope that these funds continue to be available. Not only to my child, but to all the children who deserve to have doors opened, expectations raised and endless opportunity.

Thank you for your time.

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