

THE POWER OF PARASPORT



*Celebrating
Five Decades
in Ontario*



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With thanks to the support of the following:



FOREWORD

“A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats.”

– John F. Kennedy

I know the power of parasport. I've known it quite personally in fact in each of its five decades in Ontario. We found each other in the late 1970s. It's somewhat ironic though. As generous as parasport has been to me for most of my life, I resisted it at first. Granted, we were both young, very young, both finding our way in unmapped spaces and places.

I was a teenager, a relatively new amputee, and parasport in Ontario was even younger when we first met. Neither knew who or what we wanted to be really. And neither had any inkling of who or what we would become someday. But we were as idealistic and uncompromising as teenagers and pioneers could be.

Decade by decade we matured and evolved. We learned from others, challenged perceptions, and made bold predictions about what we would accomplish, together and independently. Reliably, new pathways continued to present themselves for both. Milestones ensued. For me, it was the Paralympic Games and a lifelong passion for sport. For parasport, it was about opportunities for all – an ever-rising tide in the form of a Movement.

This publication, for me, is an extension of that passion. A nod to the bounty that parasport afforded me in our time together years ago and ironically too, long thereafter. *The POWER of PARASPORT* celebrates five decades in Ontario by applauding parasport visionaries and pioneers, believers and backers, and of course the athletes too... all who brought us to here!

Jeff Tiessen

Executive Director, ParaSport® Ontario



CONTENTS



THE POWER of PARASPORT Celebrating Five Decades in Ontario

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FOREWORD... Five Decades in Parasport

By Jeff Tiessen, Executive Director, ParaSport® Ontario

IN THE BEGINNING 5

The first Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, hosted in Cambridge in 1975, was essentially a sign-up event. It was only in 1978, when athletes first had to qualify to participate. To understand how far the Parasport Movement has come in Ontario, is to understand where it began, and how it was presented and perceived at that time.

VISIONARIES 11

With any journey, it begins with the first step and those of the Parasport Movement were taken in the late 1970s. It was a dawning era for sport for athletes with a disability. The first steps of our visionaries were like the proverbial "pebble in the pond"... the ripple effect creating an infinite groundswell for inclusion in Ontario and beyond.

PIONEERS 27

In the Parasport Movement's early decades, new ideas weren't incubated in boardrooms so much, but on poolside bleachers and trackside benches, in small-town bars and hotel bedrooms where Ontario's trail blazers would meet after the games. Our pioneers... from what they fostered, parasport settlers have certainly prospered.

MILESTONES 65

Superlatives, dates and numbers – first, farthest and fastest. Milestones. Like the number three for amputee Carlos Costa, who on his third attempt became the first person with a disability to swim across Lake Ontario. The year 2012... the year wheelchair racer Josh Cassidy recorded the world's fastest time ever at the Boston Marathon. And so many more.

GAMES 91

The "Torontolympiad" set the stage for regional and provincial games for Ontario's athletes with physical disabilities, with highwater marks in "Mel Lastman's Games" – the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled in North York – and of course Toronto's hosting of the Parapan American Games in 2015.



*“Let us watch well our beginnings,
and results will manage themselves.”*

– Alexander Clark

The first Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, hosted in Cambridge in 1975, was essentially a sign-up event. It was only in 1978, when athletes first had to qualify to participate. To understand how far the Parasport Movement has come in Ontario, is to understand where it began, and how it was presented and perceived at that time.

What you will read in this section is sourced directly from the printed pages of the *1978 Program for the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled*, held in Windsor, Ontario.

Of course, the submissions to the publication were well-intentioned, but far from how parasports and athletes with disabilities are portrayed today – far from how our contemporary disability community is now characterized in ink and in attitude. But by 1980, the Parasport Movement was taking shape and gaining traction, with visionaries and pioneers emerging and paving the way for many milestones to follow.

This however, in the beginning, is where we began.

IN THE BEGINNING

Welcome to the 1978 Games



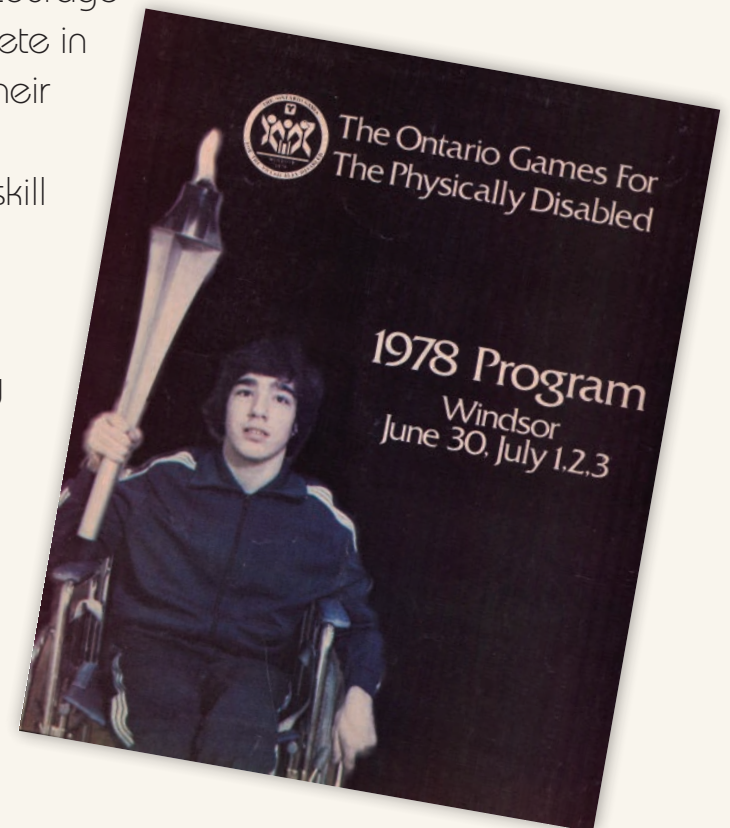
1978 is proving to be a very significant year in terms of opportunities for Ontario's disabled athletes. As well as a much stronger emphasis on regional competition, this year features the largest Ontario Games for the Disabled, from which Ontario's team attending the Canada Games for the Disabled will be selected.

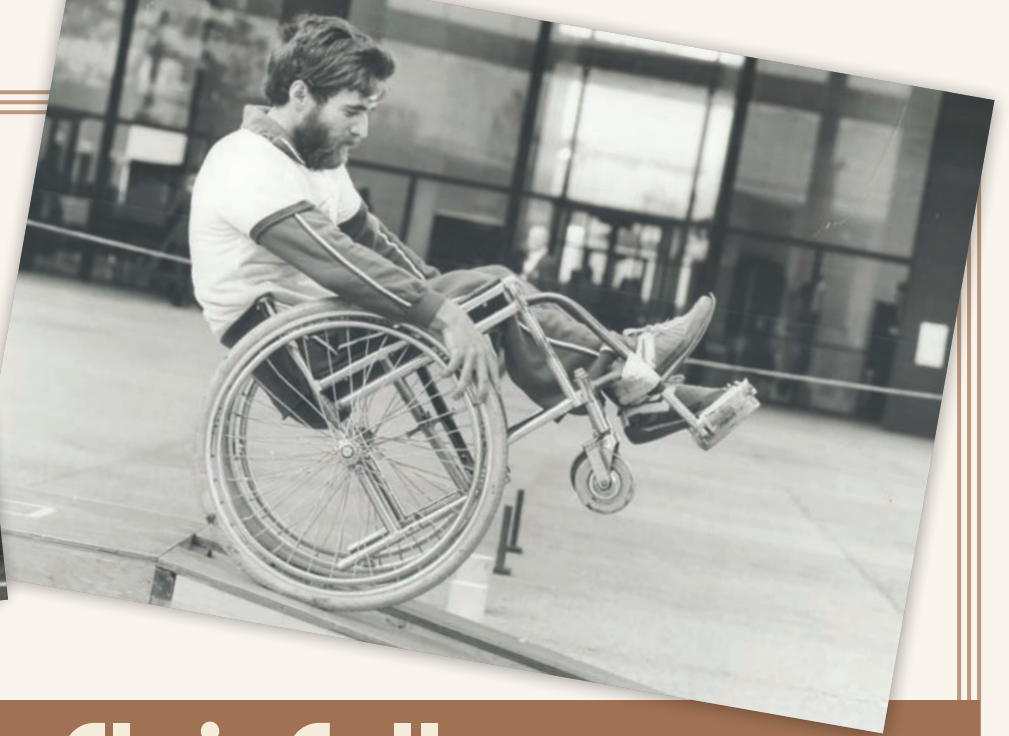
In previous years, athletes were welcomed to attend the Ontario Games on a "first-come basis." This year however, competitors had to qualify to come to Windsor on the merit of their performance in regional competitions held in St. Catharines, Etobicoke, Kirkland Lake, Kingston and Brantford (blind athletes only). These regional games afforded the opportunity and encouragement for new or novice athletes to compete in a sanctioned competition and develop their skills. They also offered the experienced athletes further opportunity to test their skill

and prepare for provincial and national competition.

A significant change in this year's Ontario Games is the identification of a special category for cerebral palsy athletes. Last year in Brantford marked the first time cerebral palsy competitors entered the Ontario Games but, they had to compete against spinal injuries athletes. With the assistance and cooperation of the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy, an internationally-accepted medical classification system has been established which identifies the C.P.s in a separate competition class.

Hopefully sport opportunities will continue to increase in the years to come.





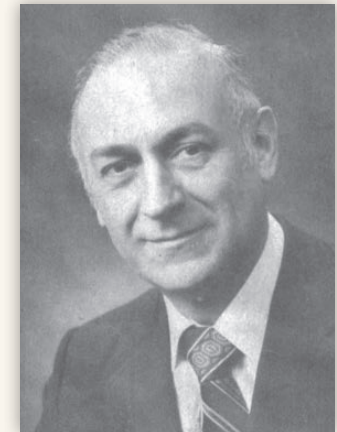
Welcome to St. Clair College

I wish to extend a hearty welcome to each and every one of you who are here to experience the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, on behalf of the Board of Governors of St. Clair College, and the entire College community.

The athletic facilities of St. Clair are second to none in the entire college system of Ontario. Disabled athletes and their families will appreciate the fact that most of our facilities are readily accessible at ground level.

To the athletes, whether you win or lose, may you feel that special joy that only comes with a fully active life, and a healthy spirit of competition with your peers. To the spectators, may you more fully appreciate the special problems of the physically handicapped, but more importantly, may your awareness increase of the unusual abilities of these outstanding young people.

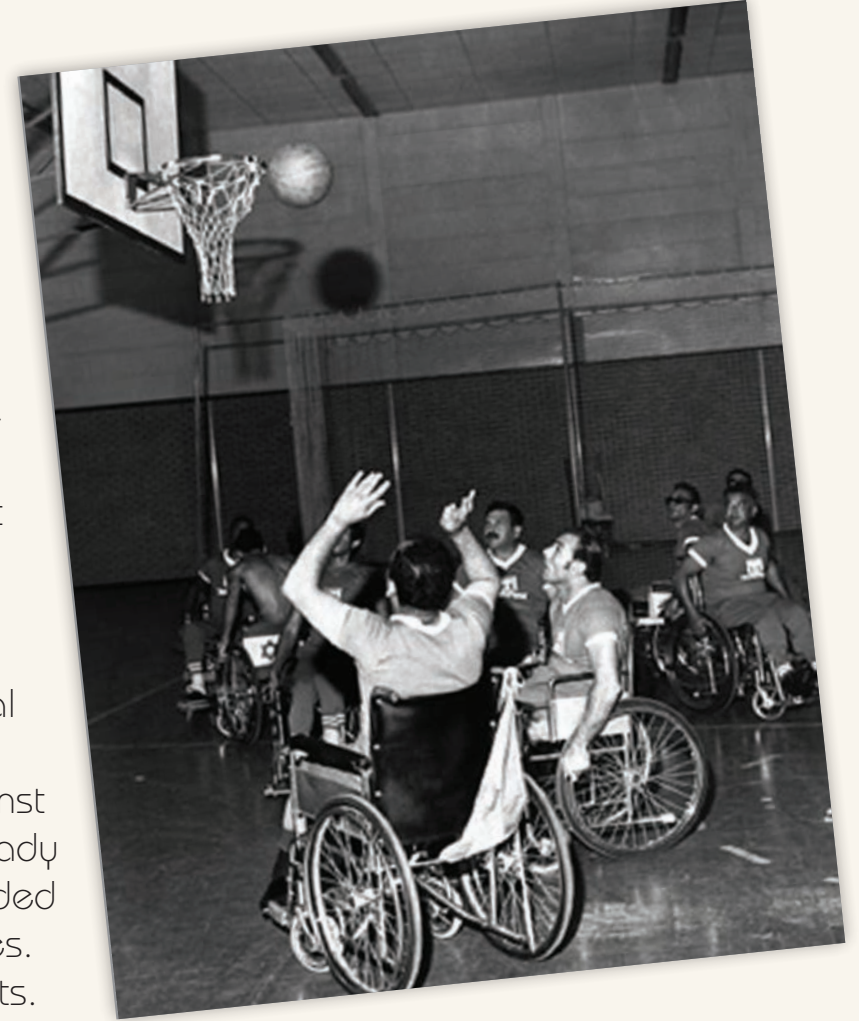
Sincerely,
William Case
Chairman, Board of Governors



Disabled in Sporting Activities

The medical profession has throughout the centuries recognized the great value of physical exercise and has utilized it in the treatment of disabilities. Since the First World War, this interest in remedial exercise has, in general, vastly increased and medical specialties have been created.

Although disabled people have been encouraged by their medical advisors to take up sport, it is true to say that some handicapped individuals have done this on their own initiative, sometimes against medical advice. They were by no means only those who had already been active in sports before they became handicapped, but included people who had never before been interested in sporting activities. This group also includes some who were born with physical defects.



With the increasing popularity during the last 30 years of sport in general, it has become more widely recognized that even a major physical defect may not necessarily be a hindrance to high-class performance in sport, provided that the disabled person has succeeded by systematic and intensive training to mobilize and utilize his remaining abilities and thus compensate for his physical handicap. If a disabled person had already mastered a certain sport prior to his disability, he may even utilize this particular sport in addition to conventional methods of physiotherapy to conquer his disability.

Sport for the Physically Handicapped

It is an undeniable fact that for thousands of years the attitude of society towards the severely disabled was basically negative and these unfortunate people were looked upon by the community as outside accepted norms and as outcasts of society. Many were hidden by relatives from the eyes of the community as if they would bring shame on the family.

It is only in comparatively recent times that public opinion, generally, has recognized the advantage to the community, as well as to the disabled themselves, of making the utmost use of such people and fitting them into suitable places of employment.

In particular, the introduction of the modern concepts of rehabilitation after the Second World War has resulted in a positive approach and attitude toward the severely disabled, who are now increasingly accepted as part of the community. Government, itself, now plays its part in making it a conscious aim of public policy to train the disabled for employment and through its agencies, to get them jobs on the one hand and include them in recreational and sporting activities on the other.



However, there is still room for improvement to enlighten society as a whole that the physically disabled person does not want sympathy or pity, but empathy, thus acquiring true understanding and full comprehension.

The aims of sports are to develop in the disabled: activity of mind, self-confidence, self-dignity, self-discipline, competitive spirit and comradeship – all of which are essential for getting the disabled person out of the ghetto of self-centred isolation.

The Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled has been held every year since 1975 to encourage people with a physical handicap to participate in athletic competition. The games were implemented by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation. This year, at the 1978 Games, 336 athletes will be competing, despite their handicaps. The athletes have often surprised spectators with their unusual physical capabilities.

It is said that "a thousand-mile journey begins with the first step." The words and sentiments associated with the 1978 Games, albeit incredibly awkward and inappropriate by today's semantic standards, were just that... those very first steps of a five-decade passage.

*“There is something more important than believing. It is action!
The world is full of dreamers. Only a few will move ahead to
take concrete steps to actualize their vision.”*

– W. Clement Stone

With any journey, it begins with the first step and those of the Parasport Movement were taken in the late 1970s. It was a dawning era for sport for the “physically handicapped”. Those first steps were those of our visionaries, in a five-decade passage that brought us to here.

One of those first steps arrived with a hop and a swing of an artificial leg across the Ontario border in the sweltering summer of 1980. Terry Fox is now an icon. Back in 1980, he was just a kid trying to save the world from cancer. The images of Fox toiling along the Trans Canada Highway changed what Canadians thought they knew about athletes with disabilities.

In his own words, Fox said: “Even if I don’t finish, we need others to continue. It’s got to keep going on without me.” And it did with many other great visionaries. Like the proverbial “pebble in the pond”, the ripple effect of their visions and missions created an infinite groundswell for inclusion in Ontario and beyond.

VISIONARIES

The Relentless Terry Fox

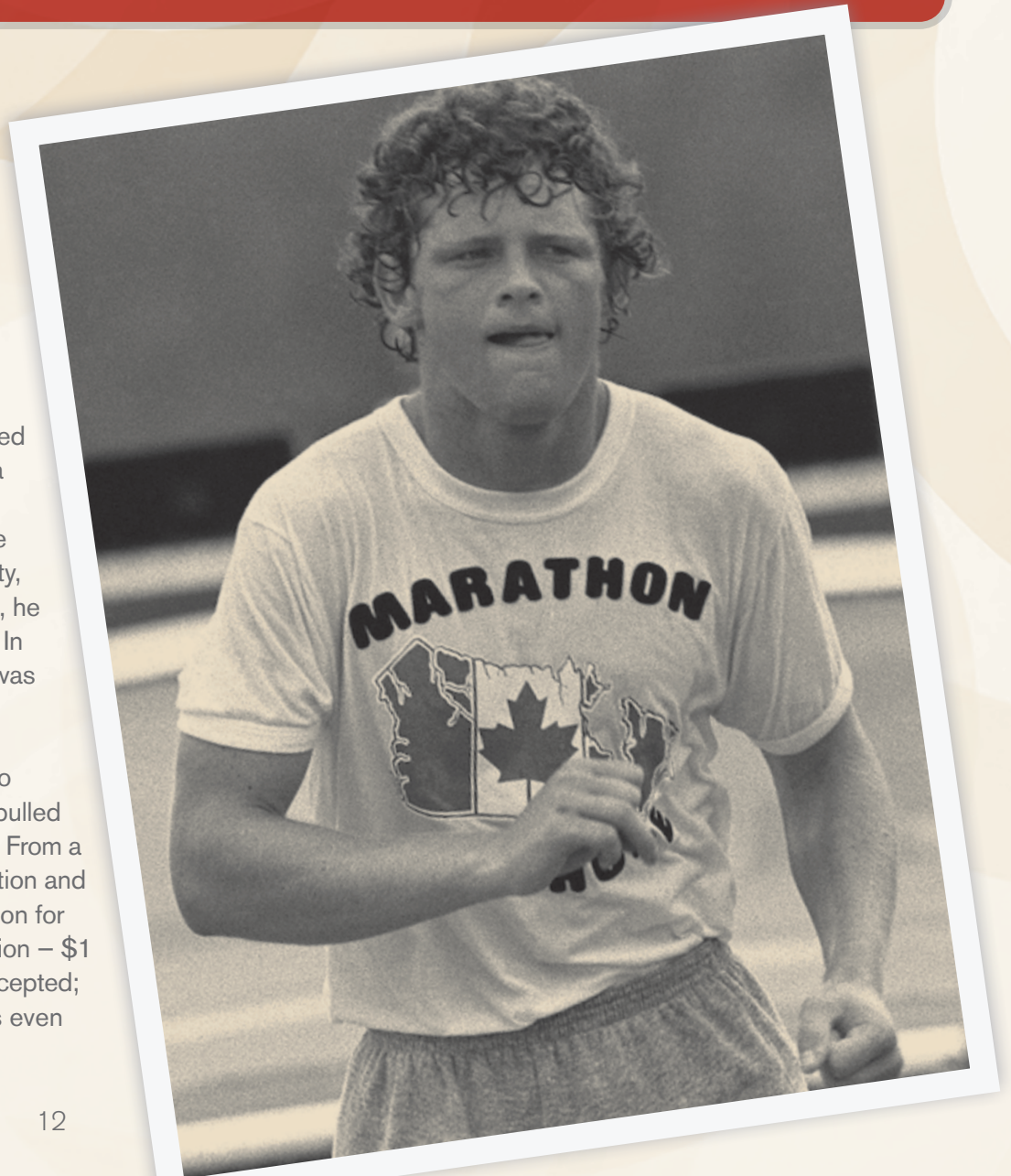
An abridged version from *Maclean's Magazine* archives: Terry Fox is now an icon. Back in 1980, he was just a kid trying to save the world from cancer.

By Ken MacQueen, April 2005

It was 5 a.m., just west of Sudbury, and Terry Fox was having his first fight of the day. I'd yet to meet the guy, except for a friendly nod as he left his motel room for the Marathon of Hope van to take up his run where he'd stopped the day before. Terry's pal Doug Alward, unsung hero of the run, warned me the night before not to talk to Fox first thing in the morning. Couldn't agree more. No one has ever told me anything of value at 5 a.m.

The dispute stemmed from a combination of dark, fog and a skittish member of the Ontario Provincial Police. The officer had pulled escort duty and, understandably, he did not wish the increasingly famous Terry Fox to be winged by a semi-trailer on his watch. The discussion at the side of the Trans-Canada Highway did not go well. It was Aug. 6, 1980. Fox had taken about two days off since the run started in St. John's, Nfld., on April 12. This cop was only the latest in a line of well-meaning meddlers – stretching back to Fox's mom, Betty, in Port Coquitlam, B.C. – who'd told him at various times, for various reasons, he should not be running. They were right, of course. And they were wrong, too. In any event, they might as well have told him not to breathe. A second cruiser was called, and the procession headed west.

Fox, aged 22, had been a minor blip on the nation's radar until he entered Ontario, until he stormed Ottawa (meeting Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who knew nothing of the run), and, especially, until the Canadian Cancer Society pulled out the stops for his triumphal entry into Toronto and through southern Ontario. From a fundraising perspective, it was a master stroke. Fox won national media attention and public acclaim. Finally, the money rolled in. He nailed his initial goal of \$1 million for cancer research, but by then he'd upped the ante to a preposterous \$24 million – \$1 for every Canadian. It was to be raised on his terms: corporate support was accepted; corporate exploitation was not. There were no logos on his clothes. He was even uncomfortable with the trademark three stripes on his running shoes.



Southern Ontario added huge strain and hundreds of extra miles to his run. Betty suspects it destroyed his health. When I met him, he'd finally shaken loose, running west above the Great Lakes, headed home.

The media orgy had infused the Marathon of Hope in a golden glow, as though Fox was being borne cross-country on the shoulders of adoring Canadians. Not true. By northern Ontario, the run had reverted to form: mile after mile through brutal heat, ground out in Fox's awkward, painful cadence. Two hops, a swing of his artificial leg. Pounding the stump of his right thigh, over and over and over. "I think of one day at a time, Fox explained. "Past this sign, that tree, this knot of school kids. I set a thousand goals today," he said one afternoon.

I was the only reporter with him for my three days on the run. Sometimes I'd ride with Fox's brother Darrell, just 18, who was witty and wise beyond his years. Other times I'd ride with Alward in the Ford van, which smelled of sweat, rotting socks, and the remnants of restaurant doggy bags. Alward – serious and thoughtful, with a stubborn streak as defining as his friend's – drove a mile, parked until Fox chugged by, then drove another.

Fox was, as Alward fondly described him, "relentless." On the hills, in the worst of the heat, and on the long empty stretches, he seemed to retreat inside himself. I asked him, in every way I could think of, why he was doing this. His answers were always direct, but maddeningly unadorned by personal feelings or philosophy. He'd talk about the real heroes of this run, the people left behind in cancer wards. I'd ask about the physical toll of the run and he'd say it was nothing compared to those cancer wards. I asked about the increasing demands of his new celebrity, which he seemed to carry like a physical burden. "The only pressure that is really on me," he said, "is pressure I put on myself." But why, I wondered. Why are you doing this to yourself?

"Betty [Fox], who'd wanted nothing to do with this crazy idea in the first place, had now given two sons to the road."



Fox was 18 when he was diagnosed in March 1977 with a malignant tumour in his right knee. Doctors amputated much of the leg within days. "We were told he had a 20 to 50 per cent chance of survival," Betty recalls. Some two and a half years later, she was the first in the family he told of his plan to run across the country to raise funds to improve what he correctly concluded was the dismal state of Canadian cancer research.

No, she said, reacting as a mother who'd come too close to losing her son. They talked it out. "He said, 'I thought you'd be one of the first to believe in me,'" Betty recalled with a sad smile. "And I wasn't. I was the first person who let him down."

The Foxes had every reason to worry: Terry's health, highway traffic, vast distances, all to be handled by two 21-year-old guys in a van who had never been away from home. "No matter what you said," said Terry's dad Rolly, "you weren't going to stop him." By Nova Scotia, some of their fears proved right. Fox and Alward were barely speaking, drained by fatigue, poor returns and the enormity of the task. Betty and Rolly arrived to make peace. They decided the boys needed a buffer – someone fun, energetic, with a sweet nature. They needed Darrell Fox, then 17. Darrell missed his Grade 12 graduation, leaving school a month early to hook up with the run in New Brunswick. Betty, who'd wanted nothing to do with this crazy idea in the first place, had now given two sons to the road. "I cried and cried," she says. "My 17-year-old kid is hugging me and saying, 'Don't worry Mom, I'll look after him.'"

The run ended on September 1st, after 143 days and 5,373 km, outside Thunder Bay, with a diagnosis that the cancer had returned and spread. Did the guy I saw just weeks earlier – so drained and driven, so attuned to his body – already suspect something was wrong? Darrell, citing his brother's growing impatience, thinks he did. "We were



VISIONARIES

still 2,500 miles away,” he says. “He wanted to know to the foot how far we had gone. More importantly, how far he still had to go. When I look back at it, I kind of sense that maybe something within Terry was happening at the time that he was aware of, and was trying to block out.”

Betty, looking back, had reached some difficult conclusions. “It was supposed to happen,” she said. How else could someone with a prosthetic leg run the equivalent of a marathon a day, every day from spring through that crazy summer? How else could a young man, dead before his 23rd birthday, become a revered and enduring historical figure? How else can millions still be raised by the power of his name? “And do this run for cancer research,” she said, her hand straying to the Kleenex box. Then, in a quiet voice comes the hardest conclusion of all: “He wasn’t meant to . . . to live.”

I’ve often wondered why this country hasn’t produced more Terry Foxes. I don’t know, but maybe I figured it out, almost 24 years after I wrote his obituary on a dismal June day in 1981. It was at the Simon Fraser University Theatre for the unveiling of the Terry Fox dollar, the first circulating coin, amazingly enough, to feature a Canadian. The Fox clan is here, dignitaries from the Royal Canadian Mint, and many of the people who, all those years ago, made the Marathon of Hope work. People who haven’t seen each other for decades were falling into each other’s arms.

I’m sitting with Doug Alward, who, in typical fashion, eschewed his rightful reserved seat at the front for the anonymity of the back row. Beside him is Fred Tinck, who was Terry and Doug’s high school running coach. Without Tinck, says Alward, Terry might never have become a runner. Without Alward, Darrell says, the Marathon of Hope would never have happened. Without Rick Hansen, who recruited Fox to his wheelchair basketball team just weeks after his amputation, would a still-ailing Fox have been fired by the same purpose? (Just as without Fox’s inspiration, Hansen might never have circled the globe in his wheelchair, raising multi-millions of dollars for spinal cord research.) And, without Darrell, Betty and Rolly, few think the Fox legacy would burn as bright.

Why is Terry Fox a rarity? Because he was an exceptional guy with an uplifting story, and because – by inspiration, good luck or higher purpose – he was blessed with the proverbial village of support. Hansen called his friend the instrument of a dream. “The vision behind it is so captivating it doesn’t always just depend on one individual.” Alward says, in all seriousness: “You know, he’s not dead; this is the strange thing. There’s a much higher purpose to his life than just physical life and death. It’s spiritual.”

Terry Fox was a relentless guy, blessed with a stubborn family and uncompromising friends, and that is the magic of this man. He ran into the wind, and they followed. And it’s true – he continues to blaze a trail as long and hard and true as the Trans-Canada Highway.

For the full feature by Ken MacQueen, visit www.macleans.ca/news/canada/the-relentless-terry-fox.



Marathon of Hope

emojis cheering him on. Instead, we have the iconic shots of the lone, curly-haired runner hobbling painfully along the Trans-Canada highway on a prosthetic leg, deeply-moving images that still resonate around the world today.

His goal was to raise \$1 for every Canadian for cancer research, which would have been about \$24 million back then. In four and a half months, he had covered 5,373 kilometres, running the equivalent of a full marathon every day. Although the physical demands of running took a toll on his body – shin splints, inflamed knee, and cysts on his stump – he kept up his punishing regimen. It was at the halfway point of the run that he had to stop in Thunder Bay because of chest pains and shortness of breath. There he found that the cancer that had taken his leg had spread to his lungs, forcing him to abandon his Marathon.

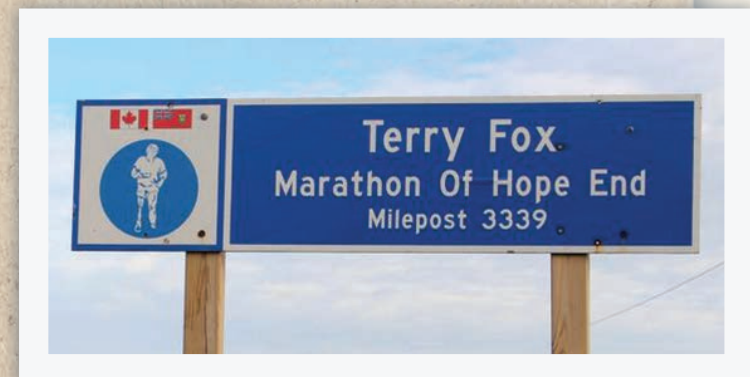
That decision had a galvanizing effect on sponsors. Among the donations were \$1 million each by the governments of British Columbia and Ontario. The former created a new research institute in Fox's name, while the latter gave an endowment to the Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. One of his earliest supporters, Isadore Sharp, the founder of the Four Seasons Hotel, had lost his own son to cancer. When Fox was unable to continue his run, Sharp organized what would become Fox's legacy – a fundraising run that would be held each year in his name.

Fox died on June 28, 1981. The Government of Canada ordered flags across the country lowered to half mast, an unprecedented honour that was generally reserved for statesmen. His funeral was broadcast on national television, with a public memorial service held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. And in a gesture that would have surely gratified Fox, Canadians overwhelmed Cancer Society offices with donations.

Terry Fox is not just a national hero. The annual Terry Fox Run, first held in 1981, has grown to involve millions of participants in over 60 countries. According to the Terry Fox website, as of 2016, more than \$700 million dollars have been raised to support cancer research in Fox's name. Even more encouraging, the survival rate for osteosarcoma, the cancer that took Fox, has increased dramatically since his death – which may be partly attributable to the funds raised

by the Marathon of Hope.

Considered a national hero, among numerous honours, and buildings, roads and parks named in his honour across the country, one of the most poignant statues is The Thunder Bay Monument, a nine-foot high bronze statue of Fox, overlooking Lake Superior, which is not far from the place where he ended his run. It captures his audacious spirit and determination that inspired others to take up the torch. "Even if I don't finish, we need others to continue. It's got to keep going without me," he declared.



Jackson Fathers 50 Years of Canadian Paralympic Teams

A pioneer in the field of arthroscopic surgery, orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Robert Jackson is credited with fathering the Canadian Paralympic Movement when he organized our nation's first Paralympic Team – 22 wheelchair athletes – in 1968 for the games in Tel Aviv, Israel.

It began with Jackson's attendance at the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. Born in Toronto and a graduate of the University of Toronto, Jackson was a medical student working with the Canadian Olympic Team as an orthopaedic consultant. He questioned why there wasn't a Paralympic Team joining Canada's Olympic contingent. While in Japan he noted his disappointment to Sir Ludwig Guttmann, the founding father of the Paralympic Games.

Jackson, along with several supporters, founded the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association and became its first president. In 1972 Jackson accepted the responsibility of organizing the 1976 Toronto Olympiad for the Physically Disabled, parallel to the '76 Olympic Games in Montreal. It was Jackson's vision and guidance for future development and inclusion that stands as his enduring legacy to Paralympic sport in Canada, and the founding of the Canadian Paralympic Committee.



Man in Motion Wheels Around the World for Change

With a dream, a trailer, and a passionate team behind him, 27-year-old Rick Hansen pushed his wheelchair out of Vancouver, B.C., on March 21, 1985 setting out on a journey that would make history: the Man In Motion World Tour. His epic global marathon inspired a generation to make a difference in the lives of Canadians with disabilities.

Hansen battled the odds and elements on four continents, forever redefining what it meant to be "disabled". But that wasn't always the case. When he became paralyzed from the waist down after being thrown from the back of a truck at 15 years old, the loss of the use of his legs was devastating.

"My attitude was probably a reflection of mainstream perceptions of disability at the time," he recalls. "I thought it was a condition to be pitied and I suppose I thought I should be pitied too."

Hansen credits Stan Stronge, the legendary coach and founder of the Vancouver Cable Cars – British Columbia's first wheelchair basketball team – with planting the first seeds of a life-long social conscience. It was on the Cable Cars team that Hansen and Terry Fox became good friends and Stronge's passion for sports and devotion to community service



Photo courtesy of Rick Hansen Foundation

emboldened the two young athletes with a real sense of social responsibility. Hansen emerged from the experience with a new and profound sense of purpose.

He took to wheelchair sports with a vengeance. Before hitting the road in 1985 on his historic Man In Motion World Tour, he racked-up one of the most impressive records in elite sport, winning 19 international wheelchair marathons, four world titles, nine gold medals at the 1982 Pan-American Wheelchair Games, six Paralympic medals over two games (1980 and 1984), and represented Canada at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. He was named Canadian Disabled Athlete of the Year three times. For all of that, however, it was his unprecedented around-the-world marathon that would permanently engrave his name and ideas on the popular culture.

The Man In Motion Tour was a truly audacious exercise in social activism. Hansen wheeled the equivalent of two marathons every day, grinding out some 40,000 kilometres in a heroic proposition to the world to take a good hard look at what people with disabilities can really do.

For more than two years through 34 countries Hansen surmounted a mind-bending array of bureaucratic, logistical and physical challenges. But his hero's welcome finally came upon his return to Canadian soil. On October 23, 1987, Hansen wheeled across the bridge from Hull, Quebec, into Ontario, and onto Parliament Hill. There, with much media fanfare, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney dropped a \$1 million cheque into a bucket held by Hansen. National newspapers report: "The \$1 million Drop in the Bucket." The cheque represented needed funds, and the government's commitment to the Tour and what it stood for.

Arriving home in Vancouver, Hansen and his Man In Motion Tour had raised \$26 million for spinal cord injury research and rehabilitation, sports and other quality-of-life initiatives for the disability community. It was, by any measure, an extraordinary achievement, but the real measure of the Tour's legacy is that it was only the beginning. More needed to be done. In 1988, Hansen launched the Rick Hansen Foundation, an innovative and far-sighted organization. It has compounded the original proceeds from the Man In Motion Tour into more than \$245 million worth of leveraged investments in the science and treatment of spinal cord injuries and a more inclusive world for people who live with disability.



A Decisive Decade for Parasport in Ontario

By Joseph Millage

While I was organizing 10K road races and coaching junior wheelchair basketball during the decade known for celluloid stars Kevin Bacon and Molly Ringwald and music icons Michael Jackson and Cyndi Lauper – the 1980s – superstar influencers on the parasport front included Cindy Patterson who brought inclusion to synchronized swimming and Mary-Pat Hayes, who introduced the same in the sport of rhythmic gymnastics.

There was Francois Roeder who integrated the sport of fencing for Ontarians with disabilities with an interest in the foil, the epee and the sabre. Faye Blackwood and Jenny Colborne were coaching emerging para-track athletes. Pawel Zbieranowski, Marco Ferrera and Ed Batt were intent on transforming the radical sport of Murderball into Wheelchair Rugby for inclusion on the Paralympic program.

Celia Southward was developing a parasport hotbed in Windsor as was Ray Rempel in Niagara, both regions boasting successful disabled sports

clubs and producing a steady flow of provincial- and national-calibre competitors.

At the same time, Dr. Graham Ward and Lynn Miller were in the lab proving that para-athletes could achieve the same levels of fitness as their able-bodied athlete counterparts. Paul Gains was integrating the province's premier track and field events and creating an environment that dared wheelchair athletes to break the four-minute-mile barrier.

Archie Allison was building leadership camps at Variety Village in Toronto to prepare a generation (and subsequently many more) for a world that was opening up to the abilities of persons with disabilities. And Joe Ross would create, and be the first to lead, the organization that is now known as ParaSport® Ontario. It was all set to the backdrop of the tireless work of Dr. Robert Jackson who fuelled the growing national Paralympic Movement which was driven by Ontario's visionaries and pioneers.



Coach Millage Takes a Reverse Approach to Integration

To say that Joe Millage has positively impacted the lives of tens of thousands of individuals with disabilities and their families in his career – both professionally and as a volunteer – is an understatement: the number is likely much higher than that.

Millage, a Whitby resident, has devoted his life to creating opportunities for people with disabilities in the realm of sport, recreation, health and physical fitness. Recognized internationally for driving organizations and individuals to achieve the extraordinary, Millage is a passionate leader who cultivates an attitude of inclusion and excellence in the parasport community. But with even more impact perhaps, he does it every day on a one-to-one basis, finding solutions for individuals, families and practitioners.

A coach who led individual athletes in 11 different sports to provincial or national championships and 49 Paralympic medals, a mentor, humanitarian, fundraiser, educator and administrator, Millage has led the Ontario Parasport Games as its chair, and has done the same for a number of other organizations including ParaSport® Ontario itself. He has created fitness programs in schools to facilitate the inclusion of students with special needs and designed facilities regionally, provincially and as far away as Russia... a Ronald McDonald Children Centre in Moscow being the first of its kind in that part of the world.

It all began for him back in 1981, as a program director at the newly-constructed Variety Village before becoming the world-renowned fitness centre's Managing Director. The only junior wheelchair basketball program in Ontario was found at Sunnyview School, a special education institution, led by Anne Shuggart. With a vision of a junior league similar to the Toronto Spitfires adult league, Millage put things in motion for a program at Variety Village, recruiting Sunrise Medical's "Quickie Dan" Sunstrum to donate a sports wheelchair for every one purchased. Millage began with 16 chairs, only half of a team of players and no teams to play against.

But the solution was right in front of him. The answer came from the unique design of Variety Village, an open concept 76,000-square-foot

fieldhouse where anyone in the building could observe what was happening on the courts. The sport was of interest to children who didn't have a disability and the extra sports wheelchairs welcomed them. Within eight months Millage had 40 players and a four-team league.

It was the first time, formally, that the model of integrated sport was reversed whereby non-disabled participants were asking to join a wheelchair sport for the fun of it, friends in it, and challenges of it. For the first time friends and family of youth with disabilities were competing in the same sport. Three years later the program produced teams that would win national and international titles.

The concept of reversing the "integration" paradigm would see the creation of Variety Village teams in six other sports and create an athletic club that would become a model for organizations trying to do the same all across North America. Incidentally, four of the initial eight athletes on the team went on to win medals at Paralympic Games.

His personal stories of how he has changed the lives of others are endless, but Millage shares a story about solving an issue for youth with congenital brittle bones – Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI) – as one that embodies many.

At a meeting with a dozen or more parents of children with special needs Millage boasted that his program directors at Variety

Village could create a quality, physical activity for anyone. After the meeting he was approached by several parents of children with OI, challenging Millage to do just that for their kids. At his team meeting the following week he asked for help, needing a challenging, progressive, physical program that would be safe for these youngsters. Khun Mio, a new staff member, proposed Tai Chi... hundreds of moves, with thousands of combinations that could challenge all levels of participants. An added benefit – repetitions to enhance range of motion and create strength while participants imagine a combative sport. One year later the Tai Chi Team was featured at the facility's Sunshine Games and introduced to over 500,000 viewers on CTV News. That's one story. Millage has so many more.





Archie Allison Rules the Court of Inclusion

Like the proverbial “pebble in the pond” the ripple effect of Archie Allison’s message of inclusion has given heart and hope to thousands of students, educators and organizations across the province, and beyond.

As a teenager, the idea of working with kids with disabilities was never part of Allison’s career plan. It took a fortuitous high school co-op placement up the hill from his Scarborough school to change that. After just one week in the company of the staff, students and participants at the world-renowned Variety Village he was hooked, motivated by its infectious spirit. That was over 30 years ago. “Even as a teen,” he explains, “it was easy to see how Variety Village transcended stereotypes, prejudice and segregation.”

The student became the teacher, tirelessly pushing, pulling and challenging parents, youth, and visiting students and educators alike, all in the name of play. Inclusive play that is, where everyone can join in sport and recreation activities with their peers regardless of ability.

Quick to deflect any credit for the new world of inclusion he helped to construct, his proudest moments rest in the accomplishments of others...

those who have flourished at the Village. “Too often,” he says, “too many kids don’t participate in physical activity because they lack the confidence to join in, or feel they don’t have the skill set to play, or are just not aware of the opportunities out there for them. By introducing them to sports like wheelchair basketball, or goalball, or rockwall climbing, or synchronized swimming, or power wheelchair hockey, for example, we show them that it is possible to participate with their peers.”

An early and ardent proponent of the concept of reverse integration, he worked from the premise that you make provisions for disability first, then integrate the rest of the community. “Inclusive programming doesn’t have to be that difficult,” Allison understands. “We all have varied skills and abilities and experiences. When you create a venue that understands these differences it creates access for everyone. Like most things in life, it comes down to personal relationships that prove to be most effective in making a difference in others’ lives. Really, we all want the same things. We all want to be welcomed and accepted. We all want to be included.”

Canada's Best-Known Paralympian Pushes a New Perspective for Parasport

Six-time Paralympian and six-time World Champion Jeff Adams has redefined expectations since he was a child. In tandem with his athletic career, he earned a reputation as one of this country's most articulate advocates for people with disabilities.

Adams is outspoken – and sometimes controversial – when it comes to the Paralympic Movement, accessibility issues and inclusionary opportunities. The Toronto resident says that the city has access problems that have to change. “There are a lot of barriers that are just based on bad attitudes toward disability,” he states.

One of our country's best-known Paralympians, Adams has appeared in television commercials, acted as a global spokesperson for multinational corporations, and worked as a journalist and broadcast commentator. He served as Chair of the Accessibility Committee for the Toronto 2008 Olympic Bid Committee and the Chair of the Ontarians with a Disability Advisory Council.

He was largely responsible for creating his own popular image through the media. But he talks about a dark side of that. “I just got tired of watching myself look for attention for my sport. Have you ever watched anyone look for attention? It rings hollow. I was attacking life based on sport. Granted, I was trying to make a living. That was my first priority. I looked at myself as a professional or semi-professional athlete. For me, now, if someone wants to come out and watch a wheelchair race and appreciate the beauty of it, I love that. It's a natural, honest approach to sport. There's nothing token about it. The Australians have understood that for decades.”

Adams started using a wheelchair at nine years old; the radiation therapy that saved his life while battling cancer in infancy later manifested as permanent damage to his spinal cord. He was an athletic kid and was encouraged to take up wheelchair sports.

But he preferred competing with his friends and family in regular sports like tennis and road hockey. According to Adams, bucking expectations goes with the territory when you have a disability. “You are always on the receiving end of other people's theories about who you are. If you don't face those assumptions head-on, you run the risk of losing part of your identity.”

By simply looking at his wheelchair as a piece of athletic equipment, like a bicycle or a canoe, the Brampton, Ontario-native came around to the idea of wheelchair sports and became a premier middle-distance wheeler. He competed at six consecutive Summer Paralympic Games from 1988 to 2008, winning a total of three gold, four silver, and six bronze medals and setting several world records along the way. His most decorated event came in 2000. At the Sydney Paralympic Games he won five medals, gold in the 800m and 1500m races, a silver in the 400m and bronze in the 5000m and the 4x100m relay.

Throughout his career he looked at racing in a wheelchair as nothing less than sport,



plain and simple. When questioned on his Paralympic ideal for inclusion in the Olympics, he responds this way. “What we need to look at is, what makes an event a sport and what makes the Paralympics a good thing. I get frustrated because we’re talking about the Paralympics as an elite sporting event but we aren’t doing what we need to do to make them one. We’re marketing ourselves as elite but we’re not selling our sports that way. If there’s value to the Paralympics, why do we always promote ourselves in the context of the Olympics? I think there is an intrinsic value that we’re not talking about, and we need to.”

Adams feels strongly that parasport athletes and leaders would make a strong statement about wheelchair sport, and fuel its growth and legitimacy, if it was opened up to all competitors. “If I have an able-bodied buddy who wants to race me in a wheelchair, he should be able to, but he can’t. I’m working hard to make things accessible for people with disabilities, yet my own sport isn’t accessible to able-bodied competitors.”

In response to concerns that opening up wheelchair racing to able-bodied athletes would run wheelchair users out of the sport, Adams answers: “If at the end of the day, 40,000 able-bodied competitors showed up at races all over the world I’d say ‘Great’. This would be a natural progression of the sport. But we’re fighting against it, and promoting protectionism of the sport. If you truly love sport and you truly love participation, then you have to define what makes a sport elite and let anyone who meets that criteria compete. And, you



can’t tell me that an able-bodied person has an advantage over a double-leg amputee in wheelchair racing. The double-leg amp is naturally suited for the sport.”

In 2002 Adams reached new heights when he climbed the CN Tower stairs in a specially-designed wheelchair – all 1,776 steps. The Raising Awareness to New Heights project was a fundraiser for Variety Village.

Adams talks quite a bit about the spectrum of disability. “It’s not as if there’s some arbitrary line that when crossed, all of a sudden you have a disability. We all have a disability to some degree; it’s just that some disabilities are more obvious than others. Unless you identify yourself as the perfect specimen, you have a disability.”

Canada's Paralympic Leader Committed to Connecting the Community

For as long as she can remember, sport has been the place that Karen O'Neill felt the most welcomed and most connected to a community. Sport was the place where she found the most joy, fulfillment and opportunity to contribute.

And for as long as she can remember, O'Neill has been involved in sport for Canadians with a disability. Her sport background began with the opportunity to work at the Pointe-Claire Pool with Wendy Campbell and her Aqua Percept program. The experience had a tremendous impact on her. She learned from Campbell about the importance of really taking time to watch and understand an individual's needs and interests in order to develop opportunities for engagement.

It's been her keen interest and this personalized approach that has driven O'Neill's career. Among a number of sport organizations that contributed to her resume, her work in programming for persons with a disability remained a constant. The same was true for her volunteer roles, including the Quebec Red Cross and then the National Red Cross where she created its first resources for an adapted swim program, co-authored with McGill University's Dr. Greg Reid. Her propensity for volunteering led her to the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) at the Board of Directors and Committee levels. When the opportunity to lead the organization became available O'Neill embraced the challenge as CPC's Chief Executive Officer. In 2018, she was named Sports Media Canada's Executive of the Year following Canada's most successful Paralympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea.

A conscientious advocate for inclusive sports environments, O'Neill has shared her voice and experience to better the sport community not only in

Canada but worldwide. Prior to joining the CPC, she served as the Chief Executive Officer of Field Hockey Canada and the Rick Hansen Foundation, where she oversaw a period of rapid growth and innovation. As CEO of

Commonwealth Games Canada from 1997 to 2004, O'Neill led the team to the 1998 Games in Kuala Lumpur and the 2002 Games in Manchester with strategic savvy and technical detail.

O'Neill also served as Director General of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association from 1989 to 1992, and was the Chef de Mission for the 1996 Canadian Paralympic Team in Atlanta.

Common to every contribution, O'Neill has always been guided by her vision for access to quality physical activity and sport for everyone. Those principled contributions have been instrumental in the growth of the

Parasport Movement in Ontario and the Canadian and International Paralympic Movements.

Canada's reputation for parasport performance and leadership is well respected. O'Neill's commitment to continuing this rich tradition is equally strong, consistently using every resource available to her to continue to propel Canada forward with long-term athlete pathways. In keeping with her vision for quality opportunities for all, "It's all about finding ways to connect the community and coming together to create solutions," O'Neill envisions.



WhyNot Marathon Brings About Historic Change for Athletes with Disabilities

Since its inception, the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) has raised more than \$30 million in support of the disability community, with funds channeled into projects as diverse as housing, employment and parasports.

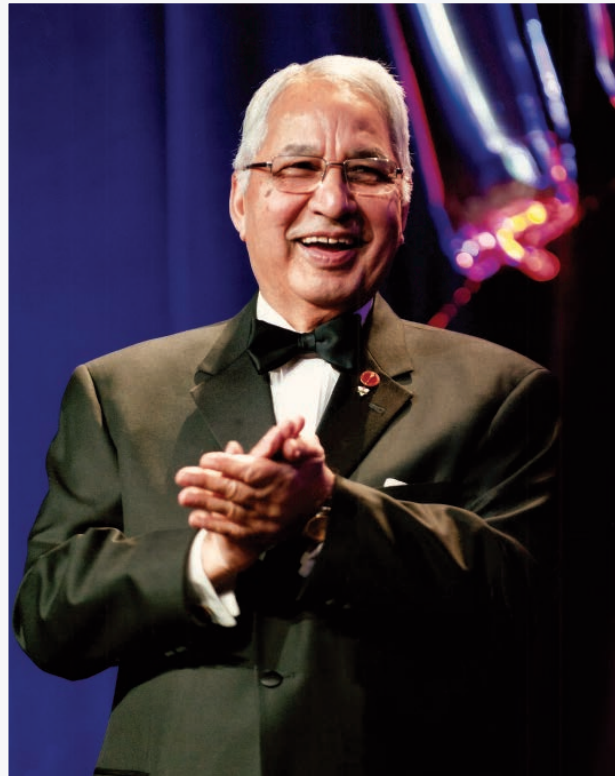
At the heart of it all is its founder and enduring Chairman, the Honourable Vim Kochhar, the first Indian-born appointee to the Senate of Canada.

Born in 1936, Kochhar left India at age 18 and enrolled at the University of Texas in Austin, graduating with an engineering degree in 1960. Working harder than anyone else was always his guiding principle in life. That, and giving back to the community. "My father used to say that making a living is not an accomplishment," Kochhar recalls. "It's what you do for others that matters in life."

With his formidable work ethic, Kochhar retired in his early 70s, and threw himself into answering his charitable callings.

In its infancy the CFPDP and its revenue-generating Galas served as a conduit for support of existing organizations in the disability community. But there were stark inequities. For example, Canada's Olympians were getting ample government and corporate support, but Paralympians received little to nothing. "When we saw that our team's ability to go to the 2000 Paralympic Games in Australia was in jeopardy, we wrote a check for \$100,000 to the Canadian Paralympic Committee to help them get there," tells Kochhar.

The lack of media coverage for Paralympic athletes was another injustice Kochhar sought to correct. Although the 1984 Paralympic Team returned home with 222 medals and a second-place finish, there were only about 30 newspaper stories about its athletes across the country. So Kochhar threw a party for the team, with each athlete receiving an award from the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Although more than 1,000 fans and supporters attended as guests, the conspicuous absence of the Toronto media that evening



infuriated Kochhar. Channeling that frustration into his characteristic motivation, Kochhar had the satisfaction of having publishers of Toronto's three biggest media companies sitting at his Gala table with him two years later. Stories in their newspapers followed.

In speaking to the achievements of the CFPDP over its 30-year existence Kochhar has difficulty naming its most significant accolade. The WhyNot Marathon was certainly one.

What started as a dream, became a national event. Kochhar's vision for a cross-country torch run to raise awareness for Canada's Paralympians and the abilities of all people with disabilities became a reality.

The Royal LePage WhyNot Marathon began on May 27, 1996, when the Eternal Flame of Hope was lit in Toronto by His Excellency Romeo LeBlanc, Governor General. From there, two specially-designed torches were brought to flame and flown to St. John's, Newfoundland, and Victoria, British Columbia. For the next two months, the torches made their way through all 10 provinces as thousands partici-

participated as torchbearers, fundraisers, volunteers and onlookers waving the Canadian flag.

On July 24, the torches converged in another impressive ceremony at Toronto's Metro Hall, became one, and headed to Atlanta to the 1996 Summer Paralympic Games. "It was a huge undertaking," remembers Kochhar. "We wanted to bring about an historic change in the way we think about people with physical disabilities."

It's estimated that the 11,000-kilometre Marathon touched more than 75 percent of the Canadian population, traveling through 700 communities and enlisting more than 8,000 torch carriers, 150,000 runners, 17,000 sponsors, more than 300 Rotary Clubs, 12,000 Rotarians, 7,500 Royal LePage agents and more than 200 Paralympic athletes. The epic trek also stopped at more

than 100 schools, camps and hospitals to inspire over 40,000 children.

What was at first deemed impossible, was propelled by the passion and commitment of a volunteer crew of 52 and legions of others on the sidelines. "Crossing each province was emotional, as successes were left behind," recalls Kochhar. "Being met in Ottawa by Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Deputy Prime Minister Sheila Copps was special, as was a letter of support from U.S. President Bill Clinton."

Kochhar remembers every day being as unique as it was challenging. "But every day people of all ages – from four years old to 94 actually – from villages, towns and cities across the country walked, ran, wheeled, rode horses, bicycled, rollerbladed, motorcycled, and rode in golf carts and scooters along the route to support and motivate us. Each one wanted to experience the magic of the flame. They wanted to celebrate with us."

In financial terms, the 60-day odyssey raised \$2 million, well short of its initial



objectives, with 50 percent of the funds raised by Rotary clubs left to be used for projects in their communities. But in the end, the success of this journey was not to be measured in dollars and cents. In terms of its awareness goals, the WhyNot Marathon was a total and unprecedented success. An historic change in attitudes toward Canadians with physical disabilities was realized. "We tackled what Petro Canada did with the 1988 Olympic Torch Run and \$37 million

in taxpayers' money with virtually no financial support," he shares proudly.

There was coverage in the media across the country, totaling over 3,000 reports. Almost every radio and television station covered the event. Because of WhyNot, the ensuing Paralympic Games received more than 1,500 articles across the country. "Almost everyone thought it could not be done," smiles Kochhar. "Compared to previous national events of this magnitude, we had practically no funds, very little staff, very little know-how, and no government or public funding. We all stood in awe at the end of it all. We did it!"

Mr. Sport Paves Way for Ontario Athletes with Disabilities

Robert Secord (1924-1993) was known as Mr. Sport and Recreation for being influential in the development of amateur sports and recreational programs across the Province of Ontario.

After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1948, Secord was employed by the Government of Ontario and was responsible for the development of sport and recreational programs. Through his direction in government, the Sports Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Sports Centre were established and financial assistance to provincial sports organizations was implemented.

In the 1970s Secord played an integral role in establishing the Ontario Games and was appointed Assistant Deputy Ministry of Sport and Recreation in 1980. For his contributions to sport, Secord was made an Honourary Life Member of the Canadian Olympic Association and other Ontario recreational societies. He was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 1993.



Parasport Pioneers. Ontario's trail blazers did things and made things that just didn't exist, and still do. And in the Parasport Movement's early decades, new ideas weren't incubated in boardrooms so much, but on poolside bleachers and trackside benches, in small-town barrooms and hotel rooms where leaders would meet after regional and provincial games that brought them together.

Some were athletes, like Kevin Humphrey, who pushed power hockey in Ontario for more than a quarter century. Some were coaches like Ken Hall, Ken Thom, Faye Blackwood, Steve Bialowas, Joe Millage, Anthony Clegg, Peter Ericksson and Amanda Fader just to name a few... not because of what they did, but how they did it!

Some were builders like Celia Southward, who created the Windsor Classic Indoor Games, the largest indoor adapted sport event in North America. Some were teachers like John Howe from the W. Ross Macdonald School who manufactured so many opportunities for blind and visually impaired students.

Our pioneers... from what they fostered, parasport settlers have certainly prospered.

PIONEERS

Fieldhouse of Dreams

Variety Village is one of only a handful of completely barrier-free recreational facilities in the world where people of all ages and abilities can play and learn and pursue their full potential.

For over 70 years Toronto's Variety Village has upheld its goal to improve the quality of life of all citizens, regardless of their abilities. Through innovative and specialized programs and services, the forward-thinking organization has leveled playing fields for people with disabilities. Naturally, it has evolved since its inception in 1948, and so has its definition of inclusion.

The idea of inclusion for the disability community in 1948 meant people with and without disabilities living in the same neighbourhoods. That was progressive for the time, as was Variety's residential vocational training school. A project of Variety Club Ontario, it was designed to provide opportunities for boys with physical disabilities between 16 and 18 years of age. Atop land donated by the Province of Ontario on a site along the rim of a Scarborough bluff overlooking Lake Ontario, the school welcomed students to learn a variety of trades. Recreation needs were filled with arts, swimming and target practice at the local police rifle range.

With the integration of students with disabilities into the Ontario educational system in the 1970s, Variety's focus shifted to physical fitness for young boys and girls.

George Gross, the legendary sportswriter for the *Toronto Sun*, began a conversation on the need for more accessible facilities for athletes with disabilities. He engaged leaders and philanthropists, most importantly Reg Bovaird (Carling O'Keefe), with his vision for the Variety Club of Ontario property and the vocational school. Some of the most influential people in Toronto were assembled, including the architect firm of Bregman and Hammon. Gross challenged George Hammond to exceed the accessibility standards of the day, and build a facility that would welcome and celebrate everyone.

With the construction of the Variety Village Sports Training and Fitness Centre in 1981 – a 76,000-square-foot fieldhouse with a 200-metre indoor track, and later indoor swimming pools and a 3,000-square-foot weight training area – accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities



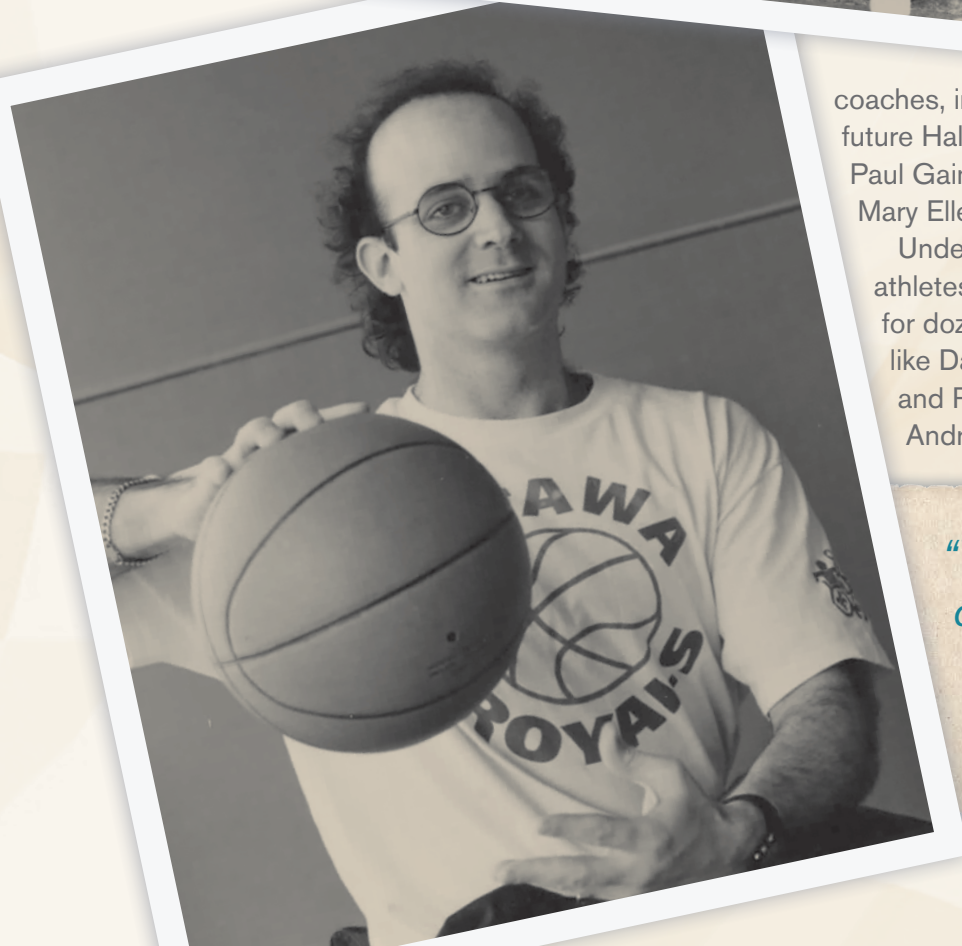


found a new home. This proved to be a dramatic turning point for sport for youth with disabilities as they could now participate alongside able-bodied kids for the first time on their own turf so to speak. Marcia Munro would be the centre's first Administrator and Dr. Graham Ward its Program Director.

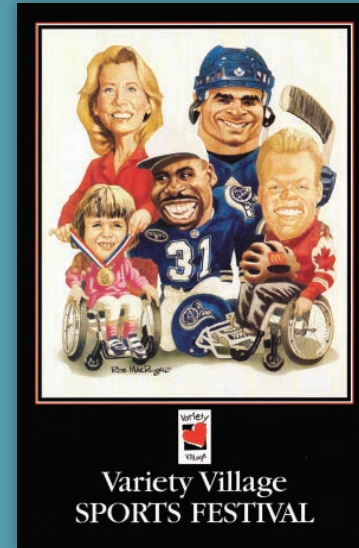
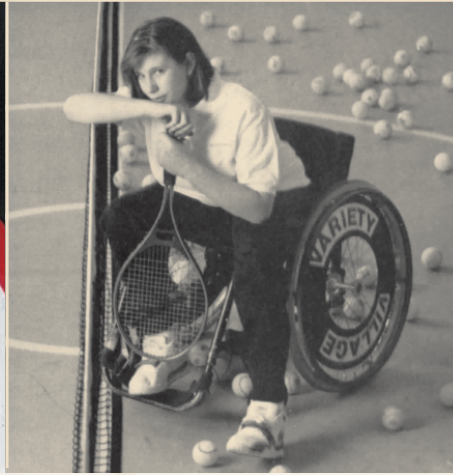
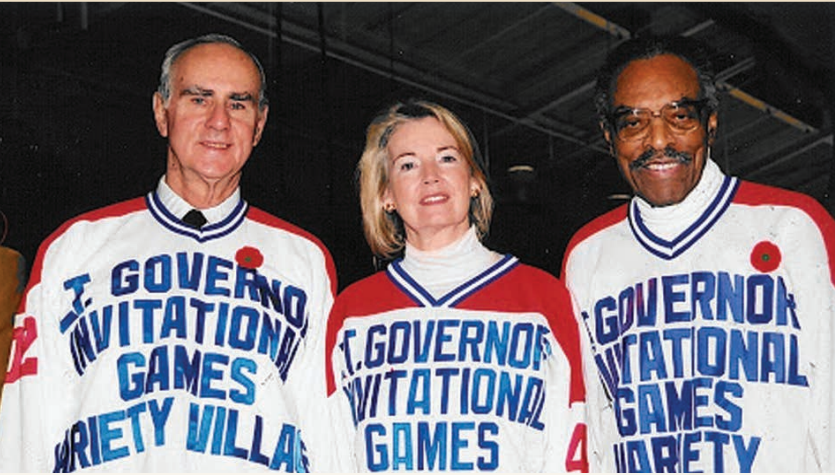
Unique to Canada, Variety Village established a new benchmark with its world-class facility through its innovative programming and philosophy of inclusion. From sports such as rhythmic gymnastics, sledge hockey, synchronized swimming, kayaking, rock wall climbing, tae kwon do, and of course track and field and wheelchair basketball among an extensive list of others, the "Village" revolutionized the model of inclusion as a strong supporter of reverse integration. It became one of the few facilities where fathers, mothers, siblings and friends could borrow a piece of adaptive sports equipment and join in a game of wheelchair basketball or goalball or any other sport. Variety Village sent a message that this facility would not discriminate... able-bodied people were welcome as well.

Shortly after the doors opened, it was common to see Canada's top coaches, including Charlie Francis, Ivan Pintaric and Carrado Degasperis, working with future Hall of Fame athletes at the Village. Soon after, other notables like Faye Blackwood, Paul Gains and Ted MacKeigan would join the Village's coaching staff alongside Joe Millage, Mary Ellery, Jenny Colborne and Ron Thompson.

Under Ward's tutelage the course was set for the emergence of some of Canada's best athletes, training and/or competing at Variety Village. The pathway to the Paralympic Games for dozens of athletes passed through the Village. A litany of wheelchair racing superstars like David Lash, Ron Payette, Ron Minor, Ron Robillard, Angela Ieriti, Martha Gustafson and Ron Thompson, were followed by other Canadian greats by the likes of Mel Fitzgerald, Andre Viger, Rick Hansen and Jeff Adams.



"What makes Variety Village a truly magical place is the dreams realized within. Every day, hundreds of members push themselves and their physical abilities, finding support from those around them who do the same."



Top left: standing (left to right) coaches Kelly McLeod, Pawel Zbeiranowski, Sue Mount, and Barb Montemurro.
 Far left: (left to right) Lieutenant Governors Hal Jackman, Hilary Weston and Lincoln Alexander.
 Left: Paralympian Tracey Ferguson.



Next, wheelchair basketball, rugby (known as “murderball” at the time) and swimming were added to the Village’s core programs. The developmental nature of the programs led to Leadership Camps, created by the facility’s longest tenured employee, Archie Allison, who serves as the Director of Access and Awareness still today.

After the first unofficial Junior Canadian Wheelchair Basketball title was won by the Alberta Northern Lights, Susan Cohon (Chair of the Board) worked with Variety Village CEO Joe Millage to ensure that the Village had every resource needed to support youngsters in their development through sport. The Variety team took the crown the following year, utilizing the country’s best facilities, best equipment through Quickie’s contribution of sports wheelchairs, and most importantly, with a group of young athletes that seized the opportunity they were given. “The best thing I did as a coach was hand the program over to Steve Bialowas,” says Millage. “Steve took it from good to great, and kept it there for the next 20 years.”

On the track and in the field, Village coaches like Faye Blackwood, Anthony Clegg and Mary Ellery, were producing Paralympians in Jeff Tiessen, Frank Bruno and Rob Snoek, among

others. Ellery developed grassroots programs at Variety Village as well, with four of her six athletes competing at the 1988 Seoul Paralympics being products of Variety Village.

The power of the early programs was also easily seen in the weight room where Frank Quinn coached athletes like Andrew Wrzeszcz to world records.

These podium performances, in many cases, had their roots in early development opportunities provided by Variety Village in the form of its annual events – The Lieutenant Governor’s Games, The Police Games, The Sunshine Games, The Sports Festival and dozens of all-comer meets and grassroots tournaments. The Village established a tradition of ensuring that everyone had a chance to play at their own level, from grassroots participation to international competitions. It did, and still does, serve an important role in the recruitment system for provincial sport organizations, and the Canadian Paralympic Committee as well.

The longest-running, and most exemplary program at the Village is called Ability in Action, which started with 300 participants and now sees 6,000 through its doors annually. It’s for youth who have difficulty participating in physical education at school. The program brings their whole class, or grade, or in some cases the entire school, to Variety Village to better understand how they can be socially and physically active together.

What makes Variety Village a truly magical place is the dreams realized within. Every day, hundreds of members push themselves and their physical abilities, finding support from those around them who do the same. Some simply want to improve their fitness level or lead a more active lifestyle, while others are training for high-performance competitions like the Paralympic Games.



Variety Village Track Classic Proved to be a Landmark Event

By Paul Gains

In 1983, the introduction of the Classic Series brought the best from around the world to Toronto. The event also led the way in establishing the first sub four-minute 1500m for wheelchair racers. And at the same meet, David Reid broke Bruce Kidd's Canadian Junior record with a 3:58.03 mile of his own. The Village also hosted road races and again the best in the world came to Toronto. Mel Fitzgerald of Newfoundland rolled through the 10K Variety Village wheelchair run in 29 minutes, 34 seconds, to shatter the 31.37 record set by Toronto's Chris Stoddart.

When I dreamt up the Variety Village Track and Field Classic thirty-five+ years ago I never imagined that the event would become the world's first fully-integrated track and field competition and help bring sport for athletes with a disability into the mainstream.

I interviewed for a Variety Village instructor's position with a willingness to help program director Dr. Graham Ward promote "sport for the disabled" as it was then called. It was clear that Graham and I shared a vision.

Our first effort was an indoor competition solely for athletes with disabilities at Variety Village. While it offered participants a competitive opportunity there was little interest from local media. The *Toronto Star*, through my reporter friend Al Sokol, printed some results but that was the extent of the coverage.

Learning from this disappointment came the idea for the Variety Village Track and Field Classic.

Canadian athletes had recently returned from the Commonwealth Games in Australia with much success on the track, putting athletics in the spotlight for a brief period. I reasoned that interest in these elite able-bodied athletes could draw attention to *sport for the disabled*.

We would host a competition with three able-bodied events (men's and women's 200m and the men's mile) together with eight events for various disability classes, highlighted by a world-class 1500m wheelchair race.

Nearby Birchmount Stadium was the chosen venue. Variety Club board members, who funded the centre, were lukewarm to the concept at first. World-class sport does not elicit sympathy which translates to donations. But Graham defended our plan.

Together with my fellow Variety Village staffers, we set about producing what would become the world's first fully-integrated track and field competition. The first edition was set for July 1983.



I managed to secure athletes I knew, such as Commonwealth medalists Mark McKoy (who went on to become the 1992 Olympic 110m hurdles champion), Angela Bailey, Angella Taylor (Issajenko), Molly Killingbeck, Tony Sharpe and Ben Johnson to race the 200m events. I wanted to see a sub four-minute mile and a sub four-minute wheelchair 1,500m. This meant paying expenses for athletes from Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Kenya, United States, Australia, France, Ireland and across Canada.

My friend Cecil Smith, Executive Director of Ontario Track and Field Association (now Athletics Ontario), was on board and quickly provided a couple of airline passes.

Fellow Village staffer Steve Dovaston sold advertising and sponsorship which included Adidas Canada which had sponsored me at one point in my running career. A program was produced, printed by a Variety Village member at his company's own cost.

The entire event team leaned on friends, parents and Village staff members to billet athletes to eliminate hotel and meal costs. The wheelchair athletes stayed in the Village's accessible dormitory. Other friends volunteered as officials and for numerous other positions.

The event was a success. More than 1,000 tickets were sold and with advertising and sponsorship funds the event was paid for with some to spare.

Major newspapers sent writers and photographers. The wheelchair 1500m athletes were in the spotlight. Global TV's Bob McKeown sent a crew to film for his late-night program Sportsline, broadcasting both the men's mile run and the wheelchair 1500m. The Adidas representative reported that the company got more exposure from our event than any other track and field competition in Canada.

Over its four-year history the Variety Village Track Classic had a sub four-minute mile every year as well as four 1500m wheelchair world records. Most notably, the world's best wheelchair athletes of the day graced the meet with their performances – Gregor Golombek (Germany), Paul Van Winkel (Belgium), Peter Trotter (Australia) and Canadians Rick Hansen, Andre Viger and Mel Fitzgerald, who was Canada's 1980 Athlete of the Year in a class that included Wayne Gretzky.

The International Paralympic Committee sent congratulations to Graham. But the greatest acknowledgement followed the 1983 meet. I received a phone call from the Los Angeles Olympic Games Organizing Committee which was exploring the addition of an exhibition wheelchair 1500m race at the 1984 Summer Olympics. The committee wanted to know how to set about inviting the world's best wheelchair racers and how many athletes could be put into a final, and what about having heats, among other things.

I watched with pride as Paul Van Winkel and Andre Viger finished first and third respectively in the 1984 Olympic men's 1500m wheelchair event, with Mel Fitzgerald fourth and Rick Hansen seventh. Five of the eight finalists had competed at the Variety meet.

The inclusion of wheelchair events continued at subsequent Olympic Games and World Championships for decades. There is no doubt that the success of the Variety Village Track Classic was a major impetus in bringing elite wheelchair sport into focus.



“But the greatest acknowledgement followed the 1983 meet. I received a phone call from the Los Angeles Olympic Games Organizing Committee...”



Coach Bowes Credits Forest City Flyers for Success

The London Forest Flyers Wheelchair Basketball team was founded in 1977, and boast a Wheelchair Basketball Canada True Sport Award winner in their national-level team coach Paul Bowes. Bowes has always given credit to the Flyers for his accomplished career. "The Flyers let me try all my crazy ideas on them," he said. "The success I received internationally is drawn from them."



Windsor's May Continues City's Tradition of Trail Blazing

Wallaceburg-native Jeff May blazed trails on the track for 20 years. Growing up with a disability, he was determined to assimilate with his able-bodied peers. In high school, May was the first athlete to compete in the wheelchair 1500m track event in his area.

Attending the University of Windsor, May accomplished another first when he became the debut athlete with a disability to train as an active member of the University's track and field team.

As president of the Windsor Bulldogs Disabled Sports Club and head coach of the club's track and field team, he co-founded the Boiling Point Wheelchair Classic in 2007, a high-performance international track meet for people with disabilities.

As an athlete May collected 26 Ontario Championship first-place finishes at distances ranging from 100m to 5000m. He captured his first National title in the 5000m at the Canadian Track and Field Championships. Despite being ineligible for Paralympic competition, May raced against the world's top athletes creating pathways for those who followed behind him.

Senior Power Lifts Thompson to Gold

Sarah Thompson began her athletic career at the age of 60 and became a world champion powerlifter. When she lost some of her eyesight to a retina condition, life went on for the Belleville, Ontario, mother, raising a family and living life without interruption.

It wasn't until many years later, in 1974, that Thompson suffered a stroke that robbed most of her remaining vision and weakened her right side.

Thompson regained her mobility through a dedicated regimen of exercise. When a speaker came to her White Cane meeting to promote sports for individuals who are blind, Thompson immediately took up the challenge. She began training in her backyard concentrating on track and field events. She began competing in the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled and went on to claim Canadian Blind Masters records in two track events and four field events.

Two years later she discovered the fledgling sport of powerlifting for athletes who are blind. At 66 years old, she sought out a coach to teach her the basics of the sport and began to train in earnest. In 1987 the Ontario Blind Sports Association named her Athlete of the Year when she was Canadian Blind Masters' Powerlifting Champion. The following year she took gold at the World Cup of Powerlifting for the Blind in Perth, Australia. Before she passed away at the age of 82 Thompson was still very active and remained a huge inspiration to others.



Cuban Girl Finds Pathway to ParaSport in Ontario

Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1979, Anne Polinario started to swim at a very young age. Born with drop foot paralysis and the daughter of Cuban National Swim team parents, she was born to swim.

Her family moved to Canada when Anne was a teenager to give her a better opportunity for acceptance and inclusion in the sport world. Her father, Rafael Polinario, coached her at Variety Village in Toronto. She worked her way up to a spot on Canada's National Swim Team.

Polinario won three bronze medals at her first Paralympic Games in 2000 in Sydney. Four years later she was simply sensational in winning three gold and two silver medals. Polinario wrapped up her Paralympic career in Beijing in 2008, with another gold medal, swimming into the hearts of young Canadian girls and validating her parents' homeland decisions for her parasport aspirations.



Paralympian's Goalie Mask Takes Its Place in Hockey Shrine

Like most young Canadians, Paul Rosen dreamed of playing hockey in the big leagues – the NHL. By the time he was 15 Rosen was dominating AAA midget hockey and working towards that dream. But that was compromised when Rosen's skate got caught in a rut breaking his leg in 14 places. Twenty years later he had his leg amputated above the knee.

Rosen turned his attention to para ice hockey, again setting his sights on fulfilling his lifelong dream of playing hockey in the big leagues... this time the Paralympic Games. Rosen became the oldest rookie in Winter Paralympic history at the age of 41. A goalie, he went on to represent Canada at three Paralympic Games, winning a gold medal for Canada at the 2006 Torino Games. His mask from that tournament now resides in the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto.



PERSEVERANCE



Mississauga Mom's Multisport Program Joins Cruisers

Kathy Ludwig created her multisport program in 1991 after her son was born with Spina Bifida and there was no place for him to play. One program grew into two, one in Mississauga and the other in Brampton, and both joined with Cruisers Sports for the Physically Disabled.

Ludwig added a wheelchair basketball team to the Cruisers lineup. As a coach for Team Ontario, she witnessed athletes in her program grow from recreational participants into Paralympic athletes.

"My greatest achievement is watching athletes develop," she says. "It doesn't really matter much the level, but watching that progression and seeing them still having fun as an adult."



Hall Hosts National Para Challenge

Ken Hall began his para-coaching career in the late 1990s with sledge hockey for Cruisers Sports for the Physically Disabled. Hall then piloted an athletics program with both tie-down seated throws and ambulatory field events which he continued with for more than 20 years.

Hall has coached many athletes to success, be it recreationally or at the elite level, with his greatest claim to fame, arguably, coming as the founder of the National Para Challenge which provides funding and competition opportunities for track and field athletes.

A passionate advocate for his athletes and club, Hall's name is linked to the parasport movement in Ontario and across Canada. "What inspires me most is getting people with disabilities active with peers and outside of their homes," Hall emphasizes.



For the Love of Wheelchair Racing

A summer job introduced Amanda Fader to parasport and the world of wheelchair racing. Working at the Terry Fox Athletic Facility in Ottawa she watched a wheelchair racing group using the facility to train.

Fader couldn't believe the tenacity. She immediately wanted to coach them. Fader credits her success as a parasport advocate and coach to her exposure to great coaching minds. Her mentor, Bob Schrader, played a major role throughout her career, ensuring that she flourished personally, professionally and as a coach. She believes that for her it was about being in the right place at the right time that helped shape her path and fuel her passion to grow wheelchair racing on an international level. She went on to help pioneer the World Wheelchair Basketball Challenge at the Roosevelt Center for Therapeutic Recreation in the U.S.

Amidst her career with the Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association, Fader has shared her expertise as a volunteer with the Ontario Wheelchair Sport Association, ParaSport Ontario, the 2004 and 2008 Paralympic Games with Team Canada and the 2012 Paralympics as a personal coach.

"I love wheelchair racing," she exudes. "It's my passion in parasport. Over the past 20 years parasport has introduced me to the most incredible people and places on earth. I feel extremely blessed to work and volunteer in a field that I love!"



Paying It Forward with Passion and Pride

Adam Lancia was born missing his feet but he never let that define him or his mission in life. At the age of nine, he was introduced to Variety Village in Toronto. He was thrilled with all of the adaptive sports available to kids with disabilities.

He fell in love with wheelchair basketball and his competitive spirit was fostered. He joined Team Canada in 1997 and played in the inaugural Junior Men's World Basketball Championship and won the gold medal.

A winner of five consecutive National Championships as a member of Ontario's Provincial Team, Lancia was crowned MVP in 2010 and 2011 before going on to play semi-professional wheelchair basketball in Europe. As a member of the Men's National Team, Lancia was part of the gold medal-winning team at the 2004 Athens and 2012 London Paralympic Games and captured silver at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics.

With a degree in kinesiology he focused on the Prosthetics and Orthotics Technician program where he designed his own prostheses. His philosophy has always been, "if you can't find it, make it!"

It's important to Lancia to convey how the game changed his life and he encourages kids to embrace their disabilities and challenge themselves. He is thankful for the opportunities afforded to him, tips his hat to those who paved the road before him, and is determined to continue to break down barriers for others... paying his success forward.



Boyko Bolsters Lasalle Lightning Wheelchair Sports Club

John Boyko has been entrenched in wheelchair basketball for four decades. He was a member of Provincial and National wheelchair basketball teams and now oversees the Lasalle Lightning Wheelchair Sports Club. The club's mission is also to raise awareness about disabilities by going into schools to provide students and staff with the chance to experience wheelchair sports.

The club is open to those with and without disabilities, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to play a sport. Boyko works to make communities more inclusive, serving on the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Windsor/Essex Sport Advisory Committee, as well as acting as the Peer Support Coordinator for the Canadian Paraplegic Association in Ontario. He's been an important difference-maker in breaking down barriers at the community level, making his more inclusive on many fronts.



Opening Barn Doors for Therapeutic Riding

Canada's first therapeutic riding centre was opened just outside of Toronto in 1969 by Dr. Reginald Renaud and Joseph Bauer. They were impressed by the idea of therapeutic riding and convinced of its benefits. The Community Association for Riders with Disabilities (known as CARD) celebrates 50 years in 2019.



Bialowas Celebrates 35 Years of Para-Coaching

Stephen Bialowas has been coaching wheelchair basketball for more than three decades, a career that began in 1985 at Variety Village as a volunteer at the inclusive sport facility. Thirty-five years later his name is synonymous with wheelchair basketball in Ontario, and across Canada, and he still presides over Variety Village's Rolling Rebels.

Bialowas began coaching at the National level in 2001 as the Assistant Coach with the Junior National Team. He led them to defend their title the next year and win back-to-back gold medals at the World Junior Championship. He also served as the Assistant Coach of the Senior Women's National Team, helping them win not only a World Championship title in 2002, but a Bronze medal at the Paralympic Games in 2004 as well.

In 2005, he became the Head Coach of the Men's U23 Team, and again in 2013. In 2015, Bialowas was named Head Coach of the Senior Men's National Team, leading them to a silver medal performance at the ParaPan Am Games in Toronto, and then on to Rio for the 2016 Summer Paralympic Games.

Known for his leadership and ability to develop some of the top wheelchair basketball talent in Canada, what Bialowas enjoys most about coaching is the shared commitment between coach and athlete, the interactive nature of coaching and the fact that learning is infinite.



Therapeutic Riding Pioneer Shares Magical Connection with Animals

As founder of Sunrise Therapeutic Riding and Learning Centre near Guelph, Ontario, Ann Caine has seen the lives of thousands of youth and adults with physical, cognitive and emotional challenges transformed. "Animals are very accepting and that feeling is something we all want," says Caine. "But for many people with special needs, especially children, it's such a struggle to be accepted."

A founding member and past president of the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association and the Ontario Therapeutic Riding Association, Caine was a leader in the push to raise certification standards for instructors, the incorporation of medical professionals in therapeutic riding programs and the development of the highest standards of service delivery. She also played a formative role in the development of Paralympic equestrian sport, and was a founding member and Canadian representative on the International Paralympic Equestrian Committee. But to families in and around Guelph and Cambridge, Caine's greatest achievements will always be Sunrise, her passionate leadership and her heroic 30+ years of fundraising work to ensure that her riders could "fly without wings" by experiencing new-found independence on the back of a horse.

Kezes the First to Pilot Sit Ski at Track 3

The late Sandor Kezes, a mainstay at Variety Village, was an all-around athlete, shining in multiple sports such as swimming, archery, wheelchair rugby and athletics. The respected advocate's true passion was hockey, and as a member of the Canadian Electric Wheelchair Hockey Association he competed for Team Ontario and Team Canada, eventually turning to coaching as a volunteer. But his claim to fame came with the Ontario Track 3 Ski Association where at the age of thirteen he became the first student to use a sit-ski. Kezes always credited his mother Marion for his accomplishments, getting him active and being his biggest fan.



Windsor Powerhouse Celia Southward Reshapes Adaptive Sport

An energetic advocate for seniors and people with disabilities not only in her hometown of Windsor, but across the province and beyond, Celia Southward's vision for equal opportunity profoundly redefined public perceptions and created new opportunities for all Ontarians living with disabilities.

When Southward joined the City of Windsor's sports and recreation department in 1976, consideration for adapted sports and rec opportunities played virtually no part in the civic business of Ontario cities. She immediately made it her mission to accommodate so-called "special populations" into all city programs.

She is past-president of the Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association and the Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association, a certified coach in hockey, track and field and swimming, founder of a number of local sport organizations and has established rigorous training and certification standards for coaches and officials working with athletes in adapted sport.

But her greatest accomplishment? "Without a doubt it's creating the Windsor Classic Indoor Games in 1982," she beams. The annual event became the largest indoor showcase of adapted sport in North America.

Burlington Officials Inducted into Athletics Ontario's Hall of Fame

Ken and Elaine Lake began officiating at track and field events in the 1970s, after their daughters became involved in the sport. Assignments around the world culminated in the couple being inducted into the Athletics Ontario Hall of Fame in 2012. Those assignments spanned the gamut, from the 1976 Olympic Games, to Paralympic Games and Provincial Parasport Championships.

Spending more than half of their lives volunteering their time to sport officiating, Elaine points out that when they joined the Burlington Track and Field Club they never dreamed that a highlight of their officiating career would be the Paralympic Games.



Church's Coaching Credibility Serves as a Bridge to Inclusion

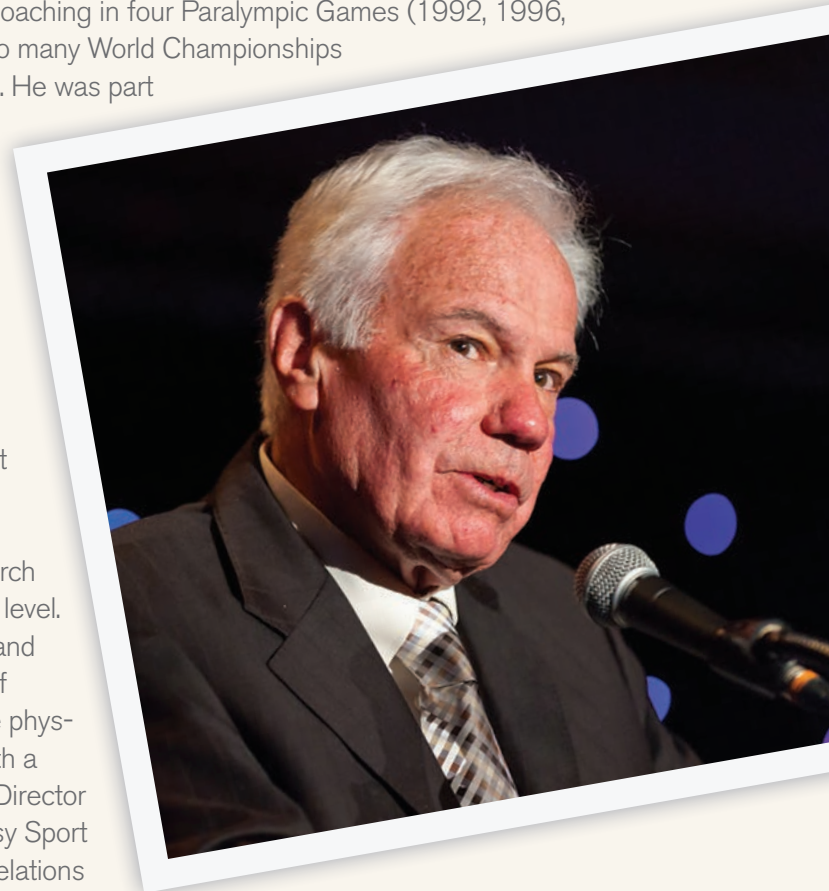
Niagara's Dr. Earl Church was already a well-known and respected athletics coach when he was introduced to the world of Paralympic sport in 1989. His involvement grew over the next 19 years to include coaching in four Paralympic Games (1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004) in addition to many World Championships and other international events. He was part of the coaching staff of the first fully-integrated athletics team at the 1994 World Athletic Championships.

Church made an extraordinary contribution to the field sport of throwing for athletes with cerebral palsy. Many of his athletes, including three-time Paralympic gold medallist Joanne (Bouw) Berdan, have earned world and Paralympic medals and credit Coach Church with getting them to that next level.

Church brought credibility and professionalism to the sport of para-athletics and pushed the physical boundaries of athletes with a disability. A former Executive Director of the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sport Association, he helped build relations between the organization and other

sporting bodies such as Athletics Canada. He is esteemed by coaches and athletes across Canada and around the world as an executive of the Coaching Association of Ontario, and with his involvement in both the Canadian and International Olympic Academies.

Church's contribution to the sport of throwing for athletes with cerebral palsy is incalculable. "Earl made his athletes accountable," recalls Berdan. "There were expectations of your commitment to working in the weight room as well as your commitment to field training. I remember Earl saying to me 'I am a coach. I will train you in the proper technique. I will teach you power and strength drills. I will treat you like an athlete. I know very little about cerebral palsy or other disabilities, but that doesn't matter. I have the same expectations of you as I do of my other athletes and I will not treat you any differently because you have a disability.'"



CONTRIBUTION

Pushing Power Hockey for a Quarter Century

As Canadians, we learn early on that hockey is our national sport but are we still hockey-crazed when our beloved game is played in a gymnasium on wheels? Most definitely, as power hockey is a fast-paced and dynamic sport too.

An ardent advocate for the sport, Kevin Humphrey pioneered the sport in Ontario, has played electric wheelchair, or power, hockey for over 25 years and served as president of the Canadian Electric Wheelchair Hockey Association's Toronto Chapter. As a player, he won three National Championships with his team, and one more as an assistant coach.

"The sport gave so much to me," shares Humphrey. "Being able to compete in a sport at such a high level, with a severe disability, has totally contributed to my general overall health and development."

And not just his own. Humphrey advocates for the sport for the benefit of many others, and the sport itself. "The more people who play will ultimately enhance the quality of the game." His mission is built upon providing the same opportunity to experience the benefits of sport to those who may have too often been left on the sidelines. "If I didn't get involved," confesses Humphrey, "I would have missed out on so much in my life."



Ross Leads as First Executive Director of ParaSport® Ontario

The car accident that left Joe Ross a quadriplegic changed the direction of his life but it never took away his love of sport and competition. Ross had passion for many things, and was especially enthusiastic about a good game of wheelchair rugby. Ross was one of the founding members of the Toronto Bulldogs Wheelchair Sport Club and the first executive director of Sport for the Physically Disabled (now ParaSport Ontario) leading with that passion and his vision for parasport for athletes with a disability.



The 2000 Ontario Summer Games hosted by the Region of Durham were the first-ever integrated multi-sports Games in Canada. The 2001 Canada Summer Games in London followed suit.

Carrying the Torch for Women in Sport

Elisabeth Walker-Young enjoyed competitive swimming from an early age. But as an elite athlete at her Toronto high school, she noticed something – a distinct lack of girls with visible disabilities participating in high-performance competitions. Walker-Young was born without arms below her elbows. Beginning with her first Paralympic Games in 1992, and eventually winning six medals – including three gold – over four Paralympic Games, she knew that she was in a position to change that.

Both as an athlete and sports administrator, Walker-Young has forged a path for para-athletes and women in sports. She was Canada's Chef de Mission at the 2015 Toronto Parapan American Games, a prestigious position as the official leader and spokesperson of the team. While her unflinching efforts over the years have brought long-overdue recognition to the Paralympic Movement, she considers her work far from over.

"I am who I am because of sport," she says. "I'm proud to have transitioned out of a high-performance sports career and into one of affecting change within the very same sport system. I truly believe that everyone – regardless of their walk of life – deserves the right to participate and reap the benefits of an active, healthy lifestyle, whether it's for recreation, or with sights set on international podiums."



Silver is Doing Heavy Lifting for Inclusive Fitness Facilities

Jess Silver is a fitness enthusiast and advocate who doesn't believe in limitations, particularly her own in the form of cerebral palsy. Extending that mantra to others, she founded Flex for Access Inc., a non-profit organization that creates awareness and opportunity for adaptive fitness and sport. Watching the evolution of parasport in Ontario over the years and witnessing the exponential growth in the number of programs, sports and athletes who are participating and competing at elite levels has been inspiring for her. "Even more rewarding for me is how Flex for Access has flourished confirming that there is an increasing need for parasport and fitness." The goal of her organization is to ensure that there are more accessible fitness facilities in every region that welcome people with disabilities. Through her efforts to raise awareness on why fitness and adapted sport is crucial to disability management she is intent on making a lasting impact on societal and medical paradigms.

DETERMINATION

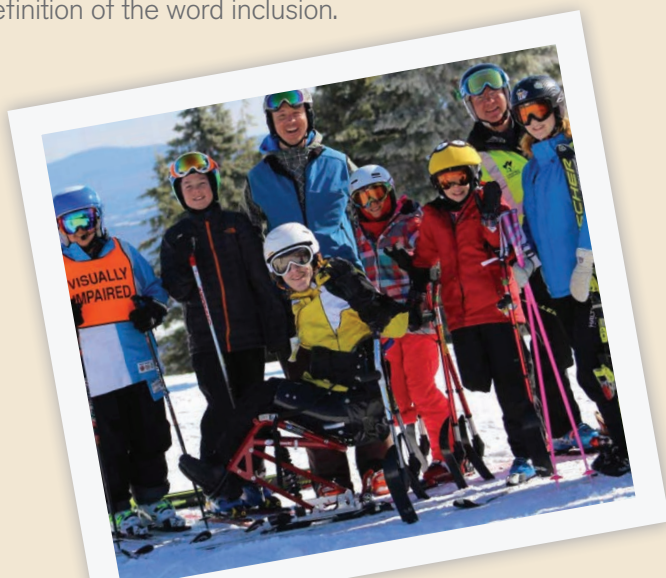
Carving Trails Since the Second World War

Para-skiing is an adaptation of the able-bodied sport, with outriggers, sit-skis and mono-skis used for a range of events including downhill and slalom.

It has its roots in Germany and Austria after the Second World War which produced a large number of injured soldiers who returned home as amputees. A few intrepid soldiers developed new ways of skiing, from attaching crutches to short skis to crafting sit-skis for those with lower limb loss. By 1947, Austria was hosting annual races, and word began to spread across the continent and beyond.

In the 1960s sports for athletes with disabilities began to be organized in the U.S. For a long time, adaptive skiing was restricted to amputees, but in 1969, Jean Eymere, a blind skier, began a program for skiers with visual impairments. In 1976, para-skiing was introduced in Canada by Jerry Johnston, an Alberta ski instructor, who was intrigued by the challenges associated with teaching kids with disabilities how to ski.

The first Paralympic alpine skiing competition was held in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, in 1976. Since then it has become one of the most popular and fastest-growing sports for people with disabilities. Due to its popularity, the sight of able-bodied skiers and skiers with disabilities sharing the slopes is a commonality on many Ontario ski hills and resorts now, fortifying the very definition of the word inclusion.



P.E. Teacher Shows Students *Howe* It's Done



As a founding member of the Canadian Blind Sports Association, John Howe was a driving force in the development of sports for athletes who are blind or have a visual impairment. Affectionately referred to as "Howe Man", for him it's never been a question of can his athletes compete, but more importantly, how can they compete.

His first job, in 1966, as a physical education teacher at what is now called W. Ross Macdonald School – a center founded in 1872 in Brantford, Ontario, for students who are blind – gave him insights into how visually impaired athletes could competing in sports. In his first year, he introduced

his students to wrestling and had them compete against other local high schools. In his second year, he formed a high school cross-country team which competed against area schools as well. It was Howe who introduced goalball at the first Canadian Games for the Physically Disabled in 1976, and promoted its development provincially and nationally. He also encouraged a number of his skilled wrestlers to take part in Judo.

He went on to coach at three Paralympic Games and two World Championship events. A remarkable number of his high school students have gone on to become Paralympic medalists.

Throughout his career, Howe presented workshops, seminars and lectures on physical education and sports for athletes with a visual impairment or blindness, receiving many awards for his efforts, including the Certificate of Appreciation for the Development of Disabled Sport in 2005, and the 25-year Award for Volunteer Service from the Ontario Blind Sports Association.

LEADERSHIP



The Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association was formed in 1972 with a dozen members, today governing three sports: wheelchair basketball, tennis and rugby.



Veterinarian “Doc Amy” Launches New Leg of Terry Fox Run

Dr. Amy Doofenbaker has always managed to make meaningful contributions to her community as a role model and as an innovator. A skiing accident in 1975 nearly cost her her leg due to surgical complications. Years of rehabilitation and multiple operations enabled her to walk with a leg brace. Her athletic spirit needed an outlet and so, Doofenbaker found wheelchair sports.

She excelled as a wheelchair basketball player and earned her place on the Canadian National Women’s Team. But it was her love of long-distance racing that catapulted her success on the international stage. In 1984, Doofenbaker set world records in the 800m, 1500m and 5000m track events.

Renowned Canadian artist Ken Danby contributed to the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled with a signature portrait of Amy Doofenbaker.

One year later she finished third in the Boston Marathon in her disability category.

When Doofenbaker was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis she refused to give up on her yearly participation in the annual Terry Fox Run. She was a devoted supporter of the event as an athlete, fundraiser, committee member and local chairperson for more than a decade prior to her dual disability diagnosis. No longer able to wheel the 10K, the avid kayaker proposed an equivalent water course on Lake Huron near her Ontario home and the Kayak for Cancer Research event was launched as part of the Terry Fox Run.

Aurora’s Alan Dean Paves Way for Amputee Athletes

An unexpected twist of fate gave the parasport world a leader in the development of elite sport for athletes with disabilities. Alan Dean led the parasport movement for amputee athletes as a founding member of both the Ontario and Canadian Amputee Sports Associations and as a technical advisor for the Toronto Olympiad in 1976.

Dean, an amputee and elite parasport competitor himself, was a competitive soccer player in his native England when, in his thirties, he broke his leg during a routine practice. A laceration was left unattended under his cast. Infection ensued and his leg, below-the-knee, could not be saved. It was his life mentor, Dr. Robert Jackson, the founding father of Canada’s Paralympic Movement, who introduced Dean to the possibilities of adaptive sport. Dean enjoyed success in competitive sport, but discovered a passion for the evolution of technology, athlete development, and organizational growth. For over four decades Dean played an integral role in the development of parasport, regionally, nationally and around the world.



Ontario's Lady of the Lakes Goes Poolside

Vicki Keith Munro was described as an unlikely athlete, not apt to succeed in any sport. She refused to accept the negative comments about her abilities, and today is the most successful marathon swimmer in the history of the sport with an unprecedented sixteen world records.

Her most recognized accomplishments include becoming the first person to swim across all five Great Lakes – which she did over a two-month period in the summer of 1988 – and for being the only person to complete the 104K double crossing of Lake Ontario. She was the first to butterfly across the English Channel and the first to cross the Catalina Channel, with a blue shark beneath her no less.

Keith Munro didn't start life destined to be a marathon swimmer. "My life started as a young person who was kicked out of ballet," she recalls, "and who was poor at every sport I participated in. I was always picked last for team sports." But she loved the YMCA and hung out there a lot. Her mother pushed her to get involved in volunteering. When Keith Munro was just ten and volunteering at the Y in Ottawa, she worked with a young person with a disability. She remembers taking this young child into the pool. "On land he needed his wheelchair, but in the water he moved independently; water was his freedom," she remembers.

For Keith Munro, her marathon swimming career was never about breaking records. "It was always about doing what others thought to be impossible," she says, and now shares that personal mantra with youth who aspire to be like her, especially kids with disabilities. All of her big swims have been done to raise money for charities, except for her very first one. Her Great Lakes swims raised \$600,000 for the Sunshine Pool at Variety Village in Toronto, where she coached. In 2005, Keith Munro came out of retirement (she retired from marathon swimming in 1991) to swim 80.2K across Lake Ontario, from Oswego, N.Y., to Kingston. She raised over \$200,000 for a new 25-metre pool at the Kingston Family YMCA and an inclusive swim program called the Kingston Y Penguins.

Keith Munro has raised over one million dollars for services and programs for youth with disabilities worldwide. She coaches full-time and inspires kids living with disabilities to celebrate their differences and recognize their similarities with able-bodied youth.



In Memory of Mississauga's Legendary Leader

Ken Thom founded a program where there was none. He built an environment where athletes of all abilities had the opportunity to reach their potential. Between his athletes, fellow coaches, clubs and programs around the country, he left an indelible mark. Thom lost his life in a diving accident in 2017. From Mississauga, he was an instrumental part of the track and field program with Cruisers Sports for the Physically Disabled. He also coached his son Curtis to appearances at the 2004, 2012 and 2016 Paralympic Games. And he served as the head coach of the Bermuda Paralympic Track Team. To honour the memory and contributions of the long-time wheelchair athletics coach, the Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association established the Ken Thom Memorial Coaching Award.



The Ontario Blind Sports Association was incorporated in 1984 to develop sports programs for blind athletes, and select athletes, coaches and support personnel as members of teams representing the Province of Ontario.

Snooker Champion Racks Up 40 Years of Impact

Dean Melway began his career at the Ontario March of Dimes, then on to Ottawa for a 10-year tenure as Executive Director of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association. He continued to impact the disability community by joining Carleton University in 1990 to open the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities and then lead Carleton's READ Initiative (Research, Education, Accessibility and Design). Melway enjoyed a long career as a competitive athlete representing Canada with medal performances at Paralympic Games and World Championships over three decades beginning with a gold medal in snooker from the 1976 Toronto Olympiad for the Physically Disabled and culminating with a silver from the 1998 Winter Paralympics in Nagano in para ice hockey. He also competed in wheelchair basketball and wheelchair tennis.





Putting Parasport in Flight

Shirley Shelby's impact on parasport spanned the course of four decades, as both an innovator in travel for those with disabilities and as a sports administrator for athletes with disabilities.

It began in 1975 shortly after Shelby retired from teaching music in Toronto with a plan to travel the world with her husband. Shelby's husband suffered a stroke and she quickly realized the obstacles that people with a disability face when traveling away from home.

Shelby opened a ground-breaking agency, Travel Helpers, a full-service agency that specialized in providing travel services for people with disabilities. During her time running the agency, Shelby was instrumental in changing many policies, including one that stated that airlines could only carry eight wheelchair users at a time. She managed the travel needs of organizations like the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association, Canadian Amputee Sports Association and the Canadian Blind Sports Association.

In 1981, Shelby shifted her focus from travel to sport. After heading up the Services Committee for the Canada Summer Games, she became president of the Ontario Blind Sports Association (OBSA) guiding the organization in that position for several decades. Under her leadership and contributions, parasport in Ontario was impacted immeasurably, not only felt by OBSA members but by athletes and travelers of any disability type.



The 1978 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled was the first to recognize competition for athletes with cerebral palsy in Ontario. In the years to follow, a dedicated steering committee developed the foundation for what was to become the Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association. In 1982, the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation deemed the association to be an amateur provincial sport organization.

Powerlifting Coach Pushes Athletes to be Champions

As the National Team Coach for the Paralympic Powerlifting Team from 1984-2000, Frank Quinn spent 34 years

training and coaching for the Ontario Powerlifting Association with numerous athletes rising to international success. Quinn was the Head Coach at an International Blind Sports Association's Powerlifting Championship and developed athletes from the Ontario Blind Sports Association for 10 years as well. He was named Canadian Amputee Sports Association's Coach of the Year in 2008.





Legendary Grandmaster Creates Inclusion in Taekwondo

Head coach of the Canadian Olympic Team at two Games, Grandmaster Young Su Choung has produced many Olympians, national team athletes and coaches as well as international referees and judges. As the Head Master of Young Choung Taekwondo Academy, he also founded the Variety Village Taekwondo Program in Toronto, the first integrated and inclusive Taekwondo program in Canada.



FOCUS



World-Class Swimmer and Ontario Curling Champ at Forefront of Inclusive Sport

An elite athlete for most of her life, Anne Merklinger was a member of Canada's national swim team from 1977–1981. She earned a silver medal at the 1979 World University Games in the 200m breaststroke. After a distinguished swimming career, Merklinger focused on curling and was consistently ranked as one of Canada's foremost curlers, winning the Ontario Women's Curling Championships four times, and twice leading her team to the final of the Scott Tournament of Hearts. A passionate and inspiring leader, Merklinger helped shape Ontario's Parasport Movement through her work with the Commission for Inclusion of Athletes with a Disability and the Canadian Federation of Sport Organizations for the Disabled (now the Canadian Paralympic Committee).

Stuart Gradon/Calgary Herald via CP



McClellan Puts His Products in Play

To talk business with Reg McClellan is to talk basketball. And to talk basketball is to talk business as well. These two careers are as tightly knit as the fabric of his coveted 10 national wheelchair basketball team jerseys.

His company – 49 Bespoke – is not your typical wheelchair manufacturing and distribution company. Its approach to business has been keenly influenced by the machinations of team play that McClellan scripted as an administrator and wheelchair basketball coach, and executed as a player, all with a social entrepreneurial spirit of advocacy.

McClellan grew up believing that wheelchair basketball is a sport first, so everybody and anybody can play – whether you are a T5 para or an able-bodied person. That philosophy took hold in Canada where an able-bodied player can play at any level, except at sanctioned international competitions. As he explains, able-bodied players have not taken over the wheelchair basketball world. “What has happened,” he assures, “is just like what happened with me; my able-bodied friends join me in a sport we enjoy together. That’s inclusion.”

McClellan spent 20 years on national basketball teams, with a resume comprising six World Championship appearances and four Paralympic Games teams. He was the founding Executive Director of the Canadian

Wheelchair Basketball Association... the first sport-specific derivative organization for athletes with disabilities in the country.

McClellan worries however, about the future of wheelchair basketball in Canada. Community-based teams are on the wane. “Less opportunities to play and less volunteers to do the work,” he asserts. “I would argue that there are fewer people playing the game today than in the ‘70s.”

McClellan acknowledges that there may be many reasons for that, not the least of which being so many more accessible sports and recreation activities today. “There isn’t the exclusion that there was three decades ago and of course that is a positive thing,” he observes, but contends that development programs just aren’t keeping pace. “The development model borrowed from the able-bodied system doesn’t seem to work in the context of youth with disabilities. I think the inclusion or amalgamation of our [disability-specific] sports associations with national able-bodied sport organizations has by and large hurt athletes with disabilities... there just hasn’t been much development for wheelchair basketball under the umbrella of able-bodied sport.”

The transition from the high-pressure basketball court to the high-stakes boardroom was an easy one for McClellan. “Sport played at the highest level brings a true expression of who an individual is,” he says. “That doesn’t change from field to field. Teamwork is teamwork.”



Formidable Firsts for Windsor Goalball Athlete

While most sports enthusiasts are familiar with wheelchair basketball, sit-skiing and sledge hockey, the same can't be said for goalball. Created in 1946 as a rehabilitative activity for veterans who lost their vision in the Second World War, it's a team sport in which a ball containing bells is thrown toward the opposing team's goal at the opposite end of the court. At the elite level, some athletes can hurl the ball up to 60 kilometres an hour.

As one of goalball's true pioneers, Brian Arthur has done plenty to promote this largely unknown sport. After competing in the first-ever Ontario and Canada Games for athletes who are blind, he brought goalball to a larger stage when it was introduced as a demonstration sport at the 1976 Toronto Olympiad for the Physically Disabled. From there, he earned his spot on Canada's team at the first World Goalball Championships in 1978.

Arthur also has the distinction of being the first Canadian to score in an international goalball competition. Thanks in large part to his early efforts, the sport is more recognized today, with many regional, national and international goalball tournaments around the world.



Therapist and Teacher Propels Canada's Murderball to Paralympic Play

A physiotherapist and physical educator, Pawel Zbieranowski came to Canada from Poland in 1979 looking to find work in a rehabilitation centre. During an interview at Lyndhurst Rehabilitation Centre he came across a posting for a volunteer coach position for the local "murderball" team (now wheelchair rugby). It was a good fit, a chance for him to improve his English, stay involved in sport and meet people in his new country.

Soon thereafter Zbieranowski made it his mission to take the new sport of murderball (invented in Winnipeg) and get it recognized on the international and Paralympic stage. He became the assistant coach of the Toronto Bulldogs.

Thinking of ways to better the sport with sponsorship, he proposed a name change from murderball to wheelchair rugby. His instincts were correct and with a name change the sport took off.

Zbieranowski went on to coach Ontario's provincial teams and the National team, and became the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation President in 1993 and then went on to be the sport's Chairperson for the International Paralympic Committee.

One volunteer job and 30+ years of dedicated involvement turned the sport of murderball into a world-renowned, respected sport played in more than 30 countries around the world. "It's a simple sport," Zbieranowski explains with a smile. "Wicked crashes by quads who grind and bang for victory." With great pleasure he accepts his part in that legacy.



Photo: MyKawartha.com



The Ontario Amputee Sports Association was founded in 1976 by a small group of individuals recognizing the need for amputee athletes to have a voice in an organization to represent their sport interests. In the late 1990s the name of the organization was changed to the Ontario Amputee & Les Autres Sports Association to include athletes with disabilities (les autres) who did not fit the classification criteria of other provincial sports organizations.



A New High for Parasport Under Low

Debbie Low's three-year tenure as the Executive Director of the organization that today is known as ParaSport® Ontario arguably coincided with a time that witnessed the biggest pendulum swing for the Paralympic Movement. When she took the helm in 2002, it was called Sport for Disabled Ontario. Believing that the word "Paralympics" was more positive on all levels, she developed a partnership with the Canadian Paralympic Committee and changed the organization's branding to Paralympics Ontario.

"It was a challenge in the beginning," she recalls. "We needed sustainability to establish the organization as an important player in the Ontario sport sector." According to Low, resources were limited at that time, with everyone competing against one another rather than working together towards a common goal. Her tireless efforts set the movement in motion, ensuring that athletes with disabilities would receive the recognition and support they deserved.

Low left Paralympics Ontario in 2005, moving over to become President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Sport Institute Ontario – a world-leading multi-sport daily training environment for high-performance athletes and coaches. In 2008, she was Canada's Chef de Mission at the Paralympic Games in Beijing. She was also part of the Toronto 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games Bid Team, serving as Director of Sport.

Proud to have her name written in the Paralympic Movement history books, she credits the volunteers and her staff for making her time at Paralympics Ontario so memorable. "We all cared passionately about the athletes, coaches, classifiers and officials. All of them would go above and beyond to ensure that the athlete experience was the very best it could be. Watching individuals with disabilities compete had a profound impact on me."

Mapping Change Across the Province

When Cathy Vincelli assumed the job of Executive Director of Paralympics Ontario (now ParaSport® Ontario) she didn't realize it would be a life-changing decision. "I honestly didn't know what to expect," she admitted "I was new to sports for people with disabilities. It was a real awakening for me."

It wasn't always easy and like any job, Vincelli faced some major challenges along the way. Under her six-year term, the organization would undergo another name change, at the demand of the Canadian Paralympic Committee. Vincelli led the ambitious undertaking, deciding to change the name of the organization and rebrand as ParaSport Ontario, a name she herself coined and protected with a trademark for the organization.

The "ParaSport" Movement was launched. Vincelli felt that a name change was a step backwards for the organization, but reluctantly accepted the change and worked diligently to rebrand with an eye on the prize of making strides in the right direction for the parasport community. With a dedicated team, and the help of grants from organizations like the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Vincelli developed and introduced ten Accessible Sports Councils in communities across the province. A club development program was put in place and an online, province-wide club and program parasport directory was created... major progress in a fast-changing world.

"I was never one to accept that things could not change, improve or move forward," tells Vincelli. "Looking back, it was the passion and the collaboration of a community's efforts that allowed for change. Onward and upward we went as a team and I loved every minute of it"



Change for Female Athletes Cast from Shadowed Sidelines

The mainstream success of the Paralympic Games helped change societal perceptions of people with disabilities. And while the superstar athletes are often credited with bringing about these changes, the coaches working behind the scenes – often in obscurity and facing tremendous barriers – had a huge influence as well.

Elizabeth MacCullum is one of these coaches. But back in 1959, when she began coaching young girls with a visual impairment in sports, the prevailing view of disability was a negative one, based on a fear of difference and a perceived need to be “normal.”

Recognizing a need to empower young female students, she used sports as a tool to demonstrate what could be possible with hard work and the right attitude. Her unflagging commitment paid off. Almost twenty years later, she had the hard-won satisfaction of seeing some of her athletes participate in the 1976 Toronto Olympiad for the Physically Disabled. Through decades of coaching she positively impacted the lives of hundreds of athletes with a visual impairment, changing perceptions, and demonstrating that sport at the highest level should be accessible to all.



Championing the Seated Game

For the past 30 years, Lawrence Flynn has been a leading figure in the development of volleyball programs for athletes with disabilities in Canada. As part of the first Canadian Amputee Sports Association national team in 1988, he went on to win a silver medal at the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney.

After the Sydney Games, Flynn switched to coaching. This coincided with the International Paralympic Committee dropping standing volleyball from future games, a decision that didn't sit well with him. When his efforts to get it back on the program were unsuccessful, he turned his attention to a new type of play that was gaining popularity – sitting volleyball. For a decade, he conducted sitting volleyball clinics to promote the sport which eventually paid off with its inclusion in the 2016 Paralympic Summer Games in Rio.

In 2017, Flynn was inducted into the Canadian Volleyball Hall of Fame. Despite the honour, Flynn knows there is still more work to be done in championing sitting volleyball. His mission is to see the sport gain the recognition and popularity that volleyball for able-bodied athletes enjoys.

Looking Backward... Misciagna Raced Toward Unfinished Business

As a multiple Paralympic gold medallist Laura Misciagna is in a very elite group. She is one of Ontario's most remarkable athletes in the way she competed as well. An athlete with cerebral palsy, she propelled her racing wheelchair with her strong thigh and calf muscles, pushing the wheelchair backwards while twisting her upper body to see behind her and maintain position within her lane.

What was not unlike other high-performance athletes like herself was Misciagna's training program, designed by coach Mary Ellery to be similar in scope and intensity to other provincial and national team athletes whom she coached.

But Misciagna's story is about more than all that. As the Paralympic Games evolved throughout the 1980s and '90s, the number of events was reduced based on sport and athlete classification. Misciagna's classification was ultimately eliminated from the games program. She would have to compete in a higher class.

Misciagna and her coach knew that her style of wheelchair wasn't optimal; she could go faster. It was also a time when the equipment for all classes was changing. Thanks to racers/inventors like Gregor Golombek, Paul van Winkel, Mel Fitzgerald, Ron Payette, Dan Wesley, Rick Hansen and others, new technologies were being introduced to customize racing wheelchairs to make them sleeker and faster.

Enter Bill Phelan and the Toronto East Rotary Club. An entrepreneur with a passion for helping others, Phelan and the club embraced the idea of a new racing chair for Misciagna, and it paid off with a ticket to the 1988 Seoul Paralympic Games and three gold medals, a bronze and a new world record for Misciagna. However, she raced herself out of competition. Misciagna's times were so fast that the track events in her new classification were also eliminated from future games because organizers felt there would be too little competition.

"All dressed up with nowhere to go," defined Misciagna's situation. But the talented world record holder, with a drive for improvement, knew she could go faster. So, she kept training. She continued on for another year which culminated early one morning, in a dimly lit fieldhouse, with her coach and a photo timing device to be used for a track meet later that day. Misciagna took her mark on the starting line, the only participant on the track. Both Misciagna and Bruce-Ellery had unfinished business.

On her coach's "GO!" Misciagna powered her racing chair, with muscles and mind, around the tight corners of the indoor 200-metre track, crossing the finish line to the applause of her coach and a new world record to her name... another personal best, on her own terms and turf.



Peterborough Welcomes Henderson to Sports Hall of Fame

Roy Henderson certainly left his mark on the Peterborough-area sports scene with his achievements in wheelchair basketball, celebrated with his induction into the Peterborough and District Sports Hall of Fame.

Henderson began playing wheelchair basketball in Peterborough in the 1980s before moving on to play with teams in Toronto, Kitchener, Ottawa, Hamilton and Scarborough, as well as with provincial and national teams.

A five-time Paralympian between 1988 and 2004 (gold medals in 2000 and 2004), in 2004 Henderson's Canadian Men's Wheelchair Basketball Team won the Canadian Sports Award and received the honour of Team of the Year. Within fellow athlete circles, legend has it that Henderson has another claim to fame... logging over one million miles on his accessible van travelling to tournaments and practices over his illustrious career.



Illustration: Courtesy of Peterborough & District Hall of Fame

TEAMWORK

For Ottawa's Dupuis Her Contributions are Classified

As a Public Health Nurse Specialist for Ottawa Public Health, Lorette Dupuis has made significant contributions in enhancing the lives of persons with physical disabilities in Ottawa. A sport enthusiast, she dedicated most of her life to parasport, with a special focus on athletes with cerebral palsy.

Her greatest contributions have come as a lead classifier with the Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association, shaping the development of para-athletics and boccia at provincial, national and international levels. She has dedicated thousands of hours to classification, working her way from the grassroots, club level to serving as a Classification Official for the International Paralympic Committee.

Smart's School Sets Canada's Course for Adaptive Sailing

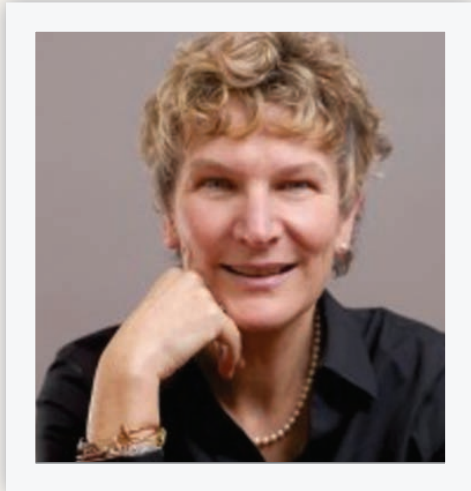
Independence Afloat Sailing School (IASS), Canada's first accessible sailing program, was founded in 1980 by Toronto sailor Cathy Smart. A recent graduate in Recreation Leadership with an interest in therapeutic recreation, Smart had sailed a good part of her life and decided to incorporate her two passions – sailing and assisting persons with a disability.

After securing a site at Queen's Quay on Toronto's Harbourfront and four Bombardier 4.8s, scavenging a trailer to act as an office/club house and raising funds through government grants and private donations, Independence Afloat was up and running!

With support from the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre (now known as Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital), Smart and five enthusiastic sailing instructors taught fifty youth with a disability to sail that first year, and expanded to offer classes to adults the following season.

Word was soon out across the country about IASS and similar programs began to develop in British Columbia and the Maritimes. When Independence Afloat was designed, the primary objective was to teach persons with a disability the fundamentals of sailing and then to encourage the graduates to carry on into established clubs around Toronto. This theory worked to a certain extent, but the biggest obstacle was lack of physical access to the sites.

Over its years, hundreds of IASS students learned how to race and compete in local and national regattas before the program was shuttered in 1996 due to lack of funding. Importantly however, Smart's initiative led to the creation of Ontario Sailing Association (OSA) adaptive "able sail" programs across the province. And since 1999, OSA member Queen's Quay Disabled Sailing Program has operated from the IASS site using the same clubhouse and docks with which Smart pioneered accessible sailing in Canada.



Coach Wilton Contributes to Classification Change

As one of the founding members of the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Association, Doug Wilton worked tirelessly towards the goal of a national organization for many years. It all began in Windsor where Wilton was a young coach with the Windsor Bulldogs Disabled Sports Club. With a lens on athletes with cerebral palsy and most specifically those with severe disabilities, he advocated persistently for these athletes to be recognized at national and international levels.

His coaching philosophy was focused on the importance of training to one's highest potential, even in a time when participation alone was often the reward in and of itself. Wilton was also an administrator and a classifier. He played an integral role in changing the established classification system to one that assessed range of motion and speed movements for athletes with cerebral palsy. This system evolved to become a functional system that still serves para-athletes today.

Tonello Helps Stamp Toronto Spitfires on the Map

CBC Sports article excerpt, by Patrick Anderson

Long before he became a Paralympic gold-medal-winning coach with Team Canada, Jerry Tonello was one of the best wheelchair basketball players in Canadian history.

Blessed with a soft touch and an imposing frame, Tonello was a force. He broke scoring records. He smashed wheels. He dominated at Nationals. He scored over 20,000 points in the Toronto Spitfire League over a three-decade career. Not bad for a guy who didn't even have a disability.

A standout high school tennis player and track athlete, Tonello took up wheelchair basketball for reasons anyone can relate to. He played because his

friends played and because he was good at it. He began after his friend Michael Bryce suffered a spinal cord injury in a motorcycle accident. When Bryce started the Toronto Spitfires, Tonello and Michael's brother Bobby helped put the Spits on the map as a top-tier international club team with a distinctly, though not always welcome, able-bodied flair... and its own international tournament.

Canada supplanted Australia atop the wheelchair basketball world at the 2000 Sydney Games. Tonello, perennially good enough to make the team but never "classifiable" as per international rules, was its assistant coach.

In the subsequent years, Tonello played a crucial role in Canada's run of four consecutive Paralympic podium finishes, ending as head coach at the 2012 London Games.

At his funeral, his family and friends were flanked by players, coaches, referees, administrators, advocates, and builders from the wheelchair basketball community. It was fitting, as Tonello had filled all of those roles in his wheelchair basketball life at one time or another. Not bad for a guy who wasn't even disabled.



Montemurro Puts Sport Wheels in Motion

Barbara Montemurro was a founder and pioneer of wheelchair sport in Ontario, a dedicated champion of the sport for over 40 years.

A former president of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (CWSA) and the Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association, Montemurro received numerous awards in recognition of her work. A member of the CWSA Hall of Fame in the Builder category, the CWSA also created the Barbara Montemurro Award, which is presented to outstanding volunteers.

She began her involvement in wheelchair sport as a volunteer at the 1976 Toronto Olympiad, launching an extensive career which touched many facets of wheelchair sports. Known for outstanding spirit and dedication, Montemurro was a force in the development of parasport in Ontario and across Canada, establishing a reputation as an indispensable volunteer, administrator and mentor to many. Her international involvement took her to the Paralympic Games in Seoul in 1988, Barcelona in 1992 and Atlanta in 1996.



Three Generations of Inclusion for Binsfeld

Adaptive sport was “normal” for Gwen Binsfeld throughout her entire life. Her grandfather, a leg amputee from the First World War, lived with her family. It was young Gwen’s job to carry his wooden leg (which truly was made of wood) whenever the family went swimming. Accompanying him everywhere as a young child, Binsfeld regularly travelled to Sunnybrook Hospital with her grandfather, meeting his many friends who were missing limbs, in wheelchairs, or blinded in military service.

“I seemed to gravitate to including everyone in all sports and activities that I participated in,” she tells. “Therapeutic recreation was just developing as a profession at the time I went to university, but I became certified in adapted swimming and figured out how to adapt most sports to be inclusive.”

Binsfeld’s niece was born without a hand, and her parents were devastated. She lived with Binsfeld part time, from infancy, and learned to do everything with her peers from skipping rope to bike riding. A few years later, one of Binsfeld’s own children, James, was born with a complex congenital cardiac condition, and began having strokes at an early age.

James had to learn, and relearn, how to walk, talk and swim, multiple times. Periods of months at a time at Sick Kids and Hugh MacMillan (now Holland Bloorview) were part of his growing up, along with skating, tobogganing, hockey, skiing, swimming, bike riding, and more.

James developed a passion for skiing after participating with Ontario Track 3. Binsfeld was already a certified ski instructor before training her son to race and eventually compete on the Provincial Para Alpine Ski Team, then called ODART (Ontario Disabled Alpine Race Team).

Binsfeld was quickly recruited and trained as a guide and went on to compete with a visually impaired athlete, racing at Provincials, Nationals and NorAms until 2009. She went on to become the Head Coach a few years later and to manage para alpine in Ontario, transitioning the program to an independent adapted Para Alpine race program and as an integrated system under Alpine Canada. She also produced the first online club directory for ParaSport® Ontario. Passionate about adapted sports of all kinds, Binsfeld is a proponent of sport’s ability to develop life skills and confidence in its participants.



Ottawa's Rhonda Nishio was a Master of Many Hats

As any athlete will tell you, it's about the team. Teammates of course, but "team" is also a reference to the supporting cast... coaches, family, doctors and therapists. Rhonda Nishio was involved in parasport from 1980 until 1993 as a physiotherapist. But she embodied what so many support staff contributed, which is more than just their area of specialty. "I often wore several hats," said Nishio. "I was a classifier at local, provincial and national levels for athletics, wheelchair basketball and rugby. I was proud to be on provincial and national teams including the Paralympics in 1988 and 1992."

Nishio's commitment to parasport benefitted the development of sports at the local level too, particularly in Ottawa. "I watched youth being discharged from rehabilitation and knew that there was so much more that they could be doing. I spent many hours each week helping new athletes develop their potential. It was my passion."

She also developed a parasport council, raised funds for local sports, coached and created coaching manuals specific to wheelchair track, and started a program that provided kids with opportunities in a variety of sports available in her region. And as a team, her athletes integrated with the Ottawa Lions Track and Field Club. A physiotherapist with many hats!



MacPherson Targets Inequity Between Able-Bodied and Para-Athletes

In 1988 after joining Archery Canada as a technical coordinator, Brian MacPherson discovered that the organization fielded a national para archery team. However, unlike the able-bodied national archery team, the para-archers had to pay for their competition, training and equipment expenses themselves. It would open his eyes to the fact that a segment of society does not enjoy equal access to sports equipment and facilities, much less to the funding required for participation at the elite levels of sport. "I just thought to myself, 'well, this is wrong, this is totally wrong,'" MacPherson said.

Before moving on to his next job, MacPherson made a promise to one of the para archers, Alec Denys, that he would do everything in his power throughout his career to minimize, or even eliminate, the inequity between able-bodied athletes and para-athletes. That career took a path where he has been able to influence national sports programming and national sports policy, as well as lead the Canadian Paralympic Committee as its CEO.

MacPherson's enormous contribution to enriching the lives of people with disabilities through sport is spread across a wide range of events, programs and services that he has helped create or enhance. Among them: the Canadian Armed Forces' Soldier On initiative, the CPC's Para-Equipment Fund and the Paralympic Sport Schools Program. Not as readily apparent but just as impactful, he played a leadership role in encouraging the federal government to establish Canada's first Policy on Sport for Persons with Disabilities.



Athletes Take Driver's Seat in Sport Chair Development

To understand the evolution of wheelchairs designed to facilitate excellence in sport means going back to the 1976 Toronto Olympiad where stainless steel wheelchairs weighed 15 kg. Modifications were limited to installing custom push rims and replacing the stock tires with better quality inflatable ones.

The wheelchair athletes were world-class but their chariots were reminiscent of Second World War rehabilitation equipment. In 1982, at the inaugural Canadian 10K Road Race Championships, Mel Fitzgerald won the event in a racing chair that he built for \$14. At that time, rules demanded that racing chairs had four wheels. At all of the major competitions the sport's top athletes would compare notes on modifications they thought would make a difference. Ground-breaking pioneers like Ron Minor, Andre Viger and Rick Hansen eventually had three-wheeled models approved, with refined seating systems... chairs that today include sleek carbon composite frames that creep into the \$20,000 range.

Basketball and rugby chairs evolved too, thanks to innovators like Marco Ferrara, Reg McClellan, Jeff Adams and companies such as Sunrise Medical with their Quickie and RGK lines. Wheelchair rugby chairs are designed to take a beating, low in profile to enable athletes with less grip strength to scoop up the ball from the floor. Rugby wheelchairs usually have solid wheels (so spokes don't get broken) and girding that prevents "hooking" by opponents.

Mike Frogley, the National Academy Director and Head Coach for wheelchair basketball at the Canadian Centre for Excellence at the Toronto Pan-Am Centre, emphasizes that a big part of building the game is getting the best equipment for emerging athletes. "It's important that players get equipment that can keep up with their development," Frogley notes. "It has to be the right fit and set-up for their needs. One of the coolest things is watching elite players interface with their equipment. Players like Benoit (Chantal) and Anderson (Patrick) imagine what they could do with a modification, and then they do it!"



Schrader's Panthers Regarded as First "Disabled" Club to Integrate

If it was sometime in the mid-'90s and you were looking for Bob Schrader, you'd find him most days at the track and field complex in Ottawa where he and his team of wheelchair athletes trained on a daily basis.

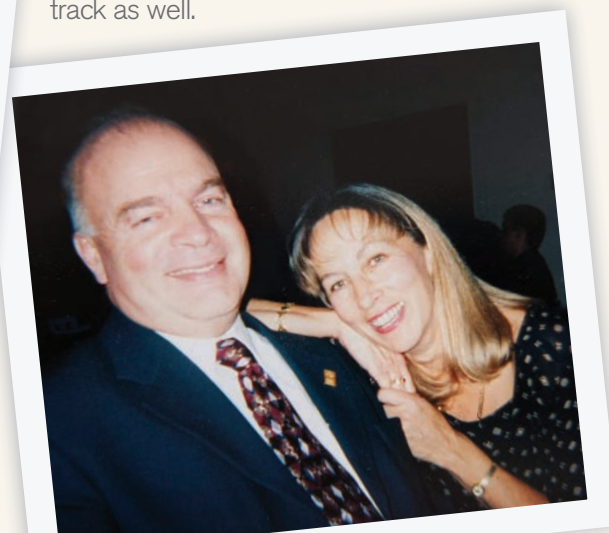
Schrader's first event was the Windsor Indoor Classic Games in 1989 which he attended with his son Joey. Moved by this grassroots event, he knew he could help wheelchair athletics. He immediately founded Panthers Athletics! A local club already existed but it was non-welcoming to kids with cerebral palsy. The Panthers started with five athletes – Caitlin Renneson, Joey Radmore, Jason Lachance, Chantal Fowler and Laurier Sokolowski – who, under Bob's leadership, competed in dozens of regional, provincial and national championship events.

Five years later the team had quadrupled in size because of Schrader's vision of inclusion. In 1998 the Panthers joined the Ottawa Lions Track & Field Club program, becoming the first "disabled" club to integrate into an able-bodied club.

With his rich knowledge of the sport, primarily acquired through trial and error, Schrader revolutionized training and racing techniques for athletes with cerebral palsy.

He represented Canada as a coach on numerous Paralympic Teams and for many years as an international consultant on wheelchair track for athletes with cerebral palsy.

And if you were looking for Schrader's wife Kathy during those years, you'd find her at the track as well.



The Evolution and the Controversy of the Prosthetic Running Blade

Blades are prosthetic lower limbs, used by amputee runners. Thanks to their curved shape and carbon fibre construction they are light and springy and allow runners to reach much higher speeds than traditional prostheses. Leading manufacturers of running blades include Össur and Ottobock.

The first running blade – the Flex-Foot – was designed by Van Phillips in the 1970s. He was an American inventor and an amputee himself. Phillips came up with the idea of running blades by observing animals like kangaroos and cheetahs as well as the mechanics of diving boards and pole vaulting. Until this point, prosthetic devices had tried to mimic human bones. His focus was more about replicating ligaments and tendons.

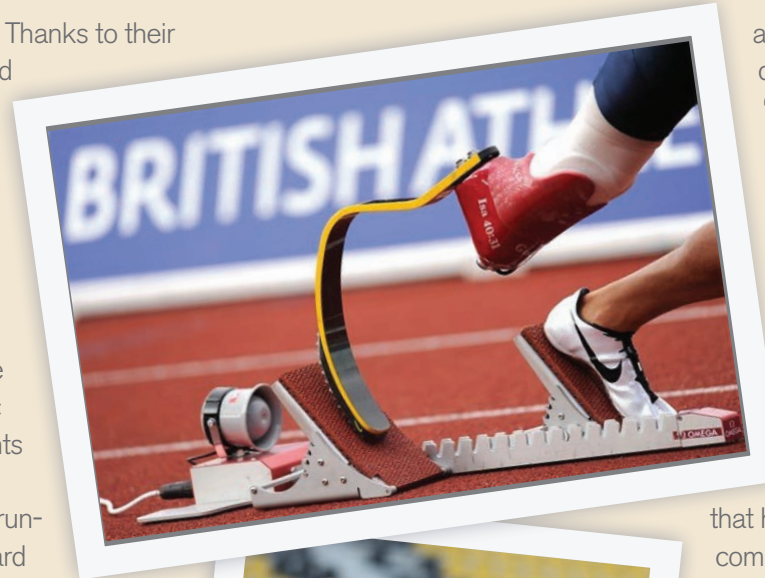
Made by Icelandic manufacturer Össur, the most popular running blade is the Cheetah, first launched in 1996. Its backward curve mimics the leg shape of the big cat. The curve creates a spring that stores the runner's energy as they push down and then release it, propelling them forwards.

Modern running blades are made from 100 percent carbon fibre, multiple layers fused together with each layer thinner than human hair. The manufacturing is computer-controlled to ensure that each foot made is to exact specification. Phillips's initial designs were J-shaped and included a heel, but as able-bodied runners don't use their heels while in motion he shifted to the now commonly-seen C-shaped blade design.

Today's blades are made of 80 hair-thin layers of carbon fiber, harder than steel and able to store kinetic energy like a spring. It's estimated that 90 percent of all Paralympic runners use some variation of Phillips's original design.

Prostheses designed for athletes have a 40-year legacy. Shying away from earlier heavy designs and focusing on the mechanics of muscle movement, these devices spurred an athletic renaissance. Yet the ongoing campaign for amputees to compete against able-bodied athletes is mired in controversy. Science has yet to definitively say whether or not an athlete with running blades has an advantage over an able-bodied runner.

Some studies of Phillips's design have shown that while sprinting the blades return 90 percent of stored energy as motion. However, a biological leg returns over 200 percent, seemingly giving running blades a disadvantage in sprinting. Despite this, there are still many who claim that running blades provide an unfair advantage against



an able-bodied runner – and also that some blade designs give an unfair advantage against other “blade runners.”

Running blades have been used consistently by Paralympians since 1996. It was only in 2012 that Australia's Oscar Pistorius, a double below-the-knee (BK) amputee, became the first sprinter with an amputation to compete in the Olympics.

In 2007, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) had banned “technical aids” in competition. Tests that the IAAF ran on Pistorius at the time suggested that he expended 25 percent less energy than other competitors when sprinting. He was disbarred from competing at the 2008 Olympics as a result.

He later appealed with other studies that suggested his blades provided no meaningful benefit over able-bodied runners. He was allowed to compete at the London Olympics in 2012 even though the studies he cited failed to provide consensus from the seven researchers involved.

One pro-blade argument suggests that the light weight of the blades can't transmit as much force to the ground, so wearers need to push harder. On the other hand, some suggest that because the blade will never tire, it gives wearers an advantage in the second half of a race.

The reason that it is difficult to come to a consensus is that the IAAF rules are vague, and the very nature of “providing an advantage” is up for debate. But to complicate matters even further, at the 2012 Paralympics Pistorius himself accused the winner of his 200m final, Brazil's Alan Fonteles Cardoso Oliveira, of having an unfair advantage. The reason? Oliveira's blades were four inches longer than those of other competitors! Technically, every runner's blades are personalized based on how long an athlete's missing leg would be. So, is this an unfair advantage?

These debates are still ongoing, and likely to get more complex with new developments in athletic prosthetic componentry and footwear.

Paralympian Translates Track Success into Publishing Enterprise

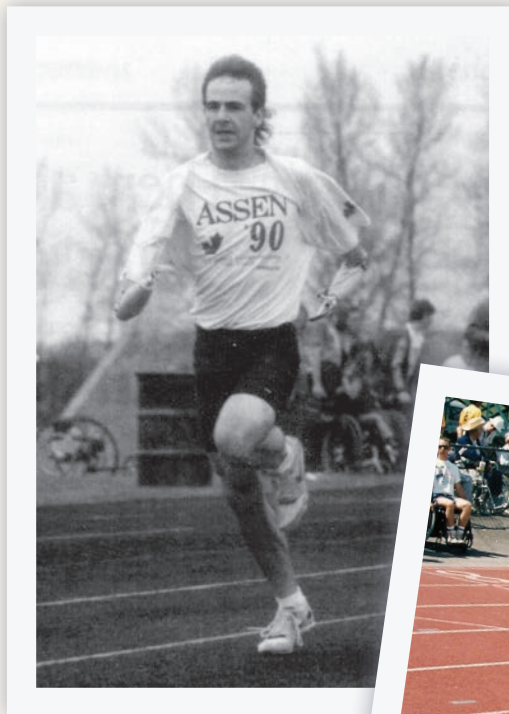
One of Canada's best-known Paralympic athletes, Jeff Tiessen reached the medal podium at three consecutive Summer Paralympic Games. But it is his achievements away from the track that made him one of the country's most influential advocates for people with disabilities.

Tiessen was thrust into the disability community by accident. At age 11, an electrical injury transformed the gifted young athlete's hopes and dreams of playing second base for the Detroit Tigers to learning to ride a bike again. But he is quick to qualify that relearning to do simple, everyday things with two prosthetic arms proved to pour the foundation for his future success.

"At a very young age I became my own advocate," Tiessen explains. He turned his baseball aspirations into a 12-year Paralympic run, winning a silver medal in 1984, a world-record-setting gold medal in the 400m track event in South Korea in 1988 and a bronze in defence of his 400m title in 1992. A three-time recipient of Canada's Amputee Athlete of the Year Award, he attributes that success to three men in his life... his father and two coaches.

His father crafted an adaptive hockey stick shortly after his injury as a way back into one of the sports that Tiessen enjoyed. With much resistance of his own doing, he played one year of PeeWee hockey in Leamington, his hometown, before convincing his father that soccer was a much more natural sport for him. But Tiessen acknowledges, "the confidence that that funny-looking hockey stick gave me truly paved the way to the podium at three Paralympic Games. Moving from minor hockey to taking on the best athletes in the world was a lesson in confidence as well," Tiessen adds.

He sought out one of Canada's best parasport coaches to prepare him for



that challenge, athletically and psychologically. He recruited Anthony Clegg, an unconventional thinker who was shifting training methodologies for athletes with disabilities to be more in line with regimens of the day. But Clegg's tactics were also mindful of how physiological considerations associated with certain disability types were important too. What's more, the "Big Man" as Clegg was fondly known, loaned his oversized personality to his coaching as well... opening the door to conversations that prepared Tiessen for emotional oppositions that awaited him in high-performance sport.

"Coach Clegg was a master at getting athletes to trust in our abilities and to disregard anything out of our control, namely competitors in the lanes next to us," Tiessen shares, "the same standard that my father fashioned in me with that hockey stick."

That confidence was reinforced by another one of Canada's best-known coaches, Tillsonburg, Ontario's "Big Dawg" Dennis Fairall. One of the most decorated coaches in Canadian university history, Fairall was honoured 65 times as the CIS or OUA Coach of the Year in track and field and cross-country. He was known for his coaching accomplishments, but more importantly for his patient and determined demeanour.

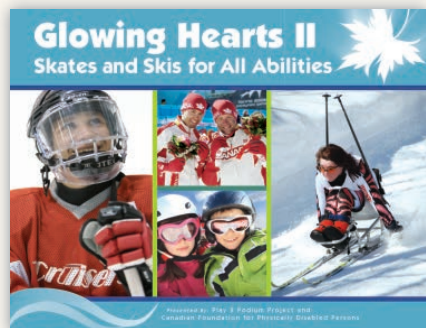
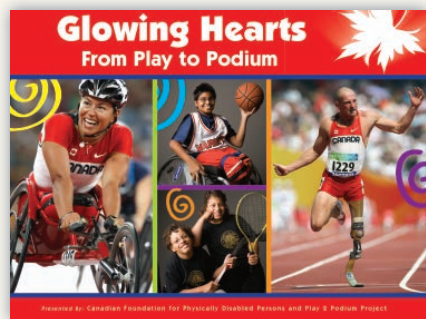
By the end of his career, Fairall had led his Lancers (University of Windsor) to 25 Canadian Interuniversity Sport championships and 45 Ontario University Athletics titles. Clegg shared his athlete with Fairall who welcomed Tiessen to his renowned track team, the envy of university athletics programs nationwide. As its first para-athlete, Fairall invited Tiessen to "run with us. If you can compete with us... great. If you can't, you'll still train with us."

Fairall was familiar with Tiessen's track potential before the University of Windsor athlete arrived in his office in 1987, one year prior to the Seoul Paralympic Games. One of Fairall's first assessments of Tiessen's abilities took place in the university's kinesiology laboratory. Fairall wanted to determine a value of efficiency loss accompanying running with prosthetic hands, forearms and elbows. He used that denominator – 25% – in his training program with Tiessen, staggering start positions on the track to ensure competitive finishes with the squad's best sprinters. Ultimately, Tiessen's world record in the 400m – 53.31 seconds – was exactly where Fairall and Clegg wanted it to be...

a 25% difference from the Olympic 400m mark.

Tiessen maintains that the lessons learned from coaches Clegg and Fairall served him well in his professional career as president and publisher of Canada's leading disability-media company, Disability Today Publishing Group. "I was entrepreneurial even as a kid," he shares, "and that didn't change when I went to work for the disability community. There was a terrific temptation to launch my company as a non-profit entity and benefit from the government grants of the day, but I resisted. I believed that if I was to be advocating for equal opportunity for all, then I should compete on that same playing field. I couldn't have it both ways."

An award-winning journalist and best-selling author, Tiessen carved out an inspiring 30-year professional career in the business of advocacy. With multiple magazine titles for the disability community, a thriving book division which includes his *Glowing Hearts*



series, and two momentous cross-Canada awareness exhibitions which welcomed more than two million visitors, most of his work has been tied to parasport promotion. "Twelve Days in September" relived Canada's experience at the 1992 Paralympics in Barcelona at over 30 shopping centres and festivals coast to coast. "Caravan" was created a year later with an interactive space the size of a Major League Baseball infield, travelling to colleges and universities across the country as well.

Tiessen finds himself in several sports halls of fame, but also the recipient of countless awards crediting his work and passion for the community he proudly serves. But what rewards Tiessen most is how he can impact others, using parasport as a voice and vehicle for inclusion... and confidence.

Ottobock Serves as Paralympic Pit Crew for Three Decades

For 30 years Ottobock has been at the heart of the Paralympic Movement. As the longest-serving Partner to the Paralympic Games, athletes at every Summer and Winter Games have benefitted from Ottobock's experience and technical service since the 1988 Paralympic Games in Seoul.

Similar to the services provided by mechanics in motor racing, Ottobock is responsible for the repair and maintenance of equipment used by Paralympians to get athletes back into the competition as fast as possible.

An international leader in rehabilitation technology for more than 90 years, Ottobock's corporate vision is to restore and maintain human independence in the spirit of the founding family that still owns and operates the healthcare giant today.

If the spoils of war go to the victor, amputees have consistently been among the greatest beneficiaries. It's a cruel irony that warfare steals away human limbs, but at the same time serves as a catalyst for technological advancements to their replacements. When young Otto Bock, a prosthetist, founded his first company in Berlin, Germany, after the First World War, thousands of war veterans had lost all hope of ever leading a normal life again. Back then, no one could have imagined that his vision for prosthetic manufacturing would lay the foundation for a company that is now a global leader with over 50,000 types of prosthetic and orthotic components, mobility and rehabilitation products.

Ottobock has a tradition of giving back to the community, supporting various charities and projects that are consistent with its mission of restoring independence... organizations such as ParaSport Ontario. Ottobock's commitment to parasports has long been a fixture of the company's philosophy. "We believe in moving athletes with disabilities into the throes of society, giving them a face and voice and spotlighting them as role models for the fact that living with a disability is not the same as living an impaired life," promoted Ottobock Canada President Mark Agro.



Larson Leads with Lifelong Love for Boccia

When she was just thirteen, Jennifer Larson attended an integrated Girl Guide camp where she met accomplished para-athletes Kirston Harwood and Elisabeth Walker. Before that, Larson hadn't spent much time thinking about disability or parasport at all. But around the same time, Rick Hansen's World Tour rolled into her hometown of Parry Sound. Her autographed poster decorated her bedroom wall for years. Little did Larson know that those were her first steps on her parasport journey.

A few months later she was invited to travel with a youth exchange group associated with Sport for Disabled Ontario to the 1989 Canadian Forester's Games in Richmond, B.C. It was that event that ignited Larson's lifelong passion for parasport. She became an athletics and boccia coach, a boccia performance partner and a referee, just to name a few of her roles.

For over twenty years, Larson has worked with a variety of organizations in leadership roles, including the Canadian Paralympic Committee, the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Association, Parks and Recreation Ontario, the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, and Ontario Special Olympics. One of her most significant contributions was her role in developing the national boccia referee and coach certification programs, training many boccia referees and coaches herself.

"If you had told me when I first started in boccia that we'd have a national boccia training centre with a permanent international-grade boccia court and full-time professional coaches I would have said you were dreaming," Larson enthuses.

Some of Larson's major milestones include her selection to the Mission Staff for the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games and supporting Nathalie Menard at the Atlanta 1996 Paralympic Games. But possibly her proudest moment was the success of her nomination of Marco Dispaltro to be the flagbearer for Team Canada at the Toronto 2015 Parapan Am Games – the first boccia athlete ever to carry the flag for Canada at a major games.

Larson's unfinished business centers on her vision for a parasport system that more robustly encourages and supports athletes to transition into leadership positions at all levels of sport. She thinks it is important that people see themselves reflected throughout the parasport system. "We've come a long way since Debbie Willows was the first boccia athlete to become an international boccia referee – but there are still far too few athletes in these types of roles."

Larson didn't have a vision for parasport when she started, only knowing that it was something magical that she wanted to be part of. Over time, she understood that the opportunities she was afforded stemmed from a lot of people advocating for her. Once she realized that, she felt she owed it to those who had come before her to do the same for those who were still to come.



Superlatives, dates and numbers – first, farthest and fastest. Milestones. Like the number three for amputee Carlos Costa, who on his third attempt became the first person with a disability to swim across Lake Ontario... 51 kilometres, 32 hours. The year 2012... the year wheelchair racer Josh Cassidy recorded the world's fastest time ever at the Boston Marathon.

And Rob Buren, the first-ever Canadian wheelchair user to complete Hawaii's grueling Ironman Triathlon, cranking his handcycle 180 kilometres, pushing his racing chair another 42 and swimming four more. And then there's simply just being the greatest, as in Chantal Benoit, considered to be the best wheelchair basketball player the women's sport has ever known.

And then there are the unsung heroes, like Clarence and Julie Merrigan who three times a week, year after year, rise at 4 a.m. to workout in the gym, on the court or in the pool, not with a desire to win... but just for enjoyment. These heroes are hard to measure with numbers, dates and distances, but they are important mile markers along the roadside of Ontario's Parasport Movement too.

MILESTONES

Speedskater Impacts Wheelchair Racing Coaching Like No Other

A world-renowned wheelchair track coach, Peter Eriksson is also widely credited as a driving force behind wheelchair racing's advancement to the highest levels of performance. Eriksson was the coach behind Canadian wheelchair racing greats Jeff Adams and Chantal Petitclerc, and many other highly-ranked athletes. Over two decades, his athletes won more than 110 Paralympic and World Championship medals.

Named Coach of the Year at the 2005 Canadian Sports Awards – the first Paralympic coach to receive the honour – Eriksson is recognized as the most innovative and successful wheelchair racing coach in history. As a high-performance athlete himself, a Swedish speedskater ranked in the world's top 10 at one time, he adapted his coaching to specialized training for Canadian wheelchair track athletes particularly with new training techniques, wheelchair technology and racing strategy.



Durham College Grad Mines Gold

In just two international games appearances – the 1990 World Championships and the 1992 Summer Paralympic Games – Toronto's Frank Bruno dominated his track and field events with eight gold medals, two silvers and five world records.

Bruno began running in 1988 as a means of improving his coordination, strength and stamina after sustaining neurological injuries from a construction site fall that resulted in motor impairments similar to those associated with cerebral palsy.

Once a star basketball player at Durham College, with renewed athletic drive Bruno was quick to set new Canadian records in the 100m and 200m track events, and in the shot put and long jump events in the field. He was named Ontario's Disabled Athlete of the Year in 1990.

After record performances at the 1990 World Championships in the Netherlands, Bruno secured his spot on the 1992 Paralympic Team and sprinted to three gold medals and two world records in Barcelona. While unfailingly fluid on the track, Bruno's road to success was stilted at times by physical and cognitive challenges that accompany acquired brain injury. His setbacks made him more determined but a seizure at the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta appreciably hampered his movement, ultimately bringing his athletic career to an end.

Since his retirement from world-class competition, Bruno has dedicated himself to helping others living with acquired brain injury by raising funds and promoting awareness. He is an organizer of the annual Judy Smith Memorial Basketball Game in support of the Brain Injury Association of Toronto. His motto: "Do it for yourself, by yourself and because of yourself."

Olympic Hurdler Realizes Paralympic Dreams

Faye Blackwood's running career started early. She ran more seriously in high school and eventually competed with the University of Waterloo track team. In 1984 she was ranked third in Canada in the 100m hurdles. Her focus was on qualifying for the 1984 Olympic Track and Field Team competing in Los Angeles. Her Olympic dreams were shattered when she fell during her qualifying race and broke her wrist. Deep disappointment did not deter. She went on to win a silver medal at the 1985 Pacific Conference Games in the 4x100m women's relay and reached the semi-finals in hurdles at the 1986 Commonwealth Games. She retired from the National Team after the Olympic trials in 1988.

Blackwood's drive to excel is balanced with her compassion for others. Throughout her athletic career she worked full-time at Variety Village and Sport for Disabled Ontario (now ParaSport® Ontario). Upon her retirement as an athlete she focused on coaching athletes with disabilities, and coached at a number of World Championship and Paralympic Games. At the 1992 games in Barcelona, she was the Ambulatory Coach for athletes with cerebral palsy. It is possible that between 1992 and 2000, Blackwood worked with every competitive runner with cerebral palsy in Canada in one way or another.

Blackwood was inducted into the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Association Hall of Fame in 2011. She believes there is very little difference between able-bodied athletes and athletes with disabilities. "They both want the same things; they want to be the very best that they can be. Winning is great, but not as important as being the best that you can be. Sport is a way of life for life."

Third Time a Charm for Marathon Swimmer

At the age of eight, Carlos Costa joined his elementary school swim team and was terrified by his own ambition. No one else looked like him; he felt out of place but found the strength to dive in and swim his way onto the team. In 1994, after two unsuccessful attempts, Costa became the first person with a disability to swim across Lake Ontario, a grueling challenge that covered 51 kilometres and took over 32 hours to accomplish. Costa is a double below-the-knee amputee.



Boarders' Dream Comes True

Para snowboard began in 2005 when a group of riders made it their goal to make it a Winter Paralympic sport, which was realized in 2014 at the Sochi Paralympic Games. The sport included Banked Slalom, Snowboard-Cross head-to-head, Snowboard-Cross time-trials and Giant Slalom.



Thunder Bay Lawyer Wheels Across Canada

In 1997, Thunder Bay resident Dave Shannon wheeled 9,000 kilometres across the country in 197 days to promote social inclusion for all Canadians. Shannon was also the first adventurer with quadriplegia to reach the geographic North Pole, crossing the polar ice by sledge with his friend and fellow lawyer Christopher Watkins. He landed at the North Pole in 2009, exactly 100 years after the first successful expedition. "It was done on the century mark to show that all people can live up to their potential... whether you have a disability or any barrier in your life," Shannon explains.

For good measure, Shannon was the first "quad" to jump out of an airplane, a dangerous high-altitude skydive to raise awareness for people with a disability. "Whether you're going to the North Pole, the South Pole, or the moon, it's all about breaking barriers," he says. "We're pushing back the limits of what we think is possible."



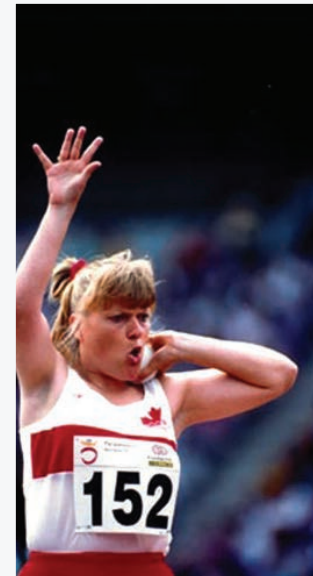
Raising the Bar for Parasport Excellence and Inclusion

Joanne Berdan (nee Bouw) set world records in shot put, discus and javelin events in the 1980s and '90s, while unwittingly pushing the Paralympic Movement forward as a role model for inclusion in sport.

Training with an intensity that raised the bar for fellow competitors, Berdan's desire for athletic excellence secured her spot on three Paralympic teams that included the 1984 Games in New York, 1988 Games in Seoul, South Korea, and the coming-of-age Paralympic Games in 1992 in Barcelona. In Seoul, Berdan won gold in the shot put, discus and javelin events. She repeated the triple in Spain four years later to mark her finest performance of her career.

Berdan retired from competition with the distinction as one of the world's most recognized and beloved athletes with a disability and the first to be a finalist for Canadian Female Athlete of the Year honours. That year she was also recognized in her professional life with the Ontario Pharmacist of the Year award. Her mantra: "Do not let your disability define you. It's a part of you, but only one part."

"Do not let your disability define you. It's a part of you, but only one part!"





Paralympic Runner Pushes for Change for All Para Athletes

Jason Dunkerley was born in Northern Ireland and moved to Hamilton, Ontario, when he was 13 years old. He started running in elementary school but it wasn't until high school that he became serious about competing.

He attended the W. Ross Macdonald School in Brantford for students who are visually impaired or blind where all students are encouraged to participate in sports. Dunkerley says he was born to run even though he was born without sight.

Highly successful on the international stage, Dunkerley competed in four Paralympic Games, winning five medals, with his long-time guide Greg Dailey. He also made five podium appearances at World Championships taking home four golds and a silver medal.

A decorated and passionate athlete, Dunkerley is also respected for his leadership and was invited to represent North American athletes on the World Para Athletics advisory committee. Dunkerley views this as not only an honour but an opportunity. "I'm excited about the opportunity to make positive changes for other para athletes." He says it's a chance to help increase the involvement of athletes with more severe disabilities, so they can get the support they need to flourish. Dunkerley believes that there was a real shift after the 2012 London Paralympic Games. "To see the venues packed in London and the intense media coverage and public awareness in the U.K. show that the games have come of age. The best is yet to come."



Greater Access to Sport and Play

In 2017 Canadian Tire Corporation committed an unprecedented \$50 million over five years to Jumpstart Charities to give Canadian kids with disabilities greater access to sport and play.

The Play Finds a Way movement includes funding for accessible playgrounds, infrastructure and programming. Funding is made available for retrofitting existing community centres, parks and arenas to help remove physical barriers that prevent children with disabilities from participating in sport and recreation.

The Parasport Jumpstart Fund received \$5 million over five years to provide kids with physical disabilities an opportunity to participate in adapted and integrated sports and recreation programs by assisting with the cost of program registration, equipment and transportation.

Invictus Games' Lasting Legacy for Ontario

The Invictus Games is an international adaptive multi-sport event, created by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, in which wounded, injured or sick military personnel and veterans take part in sports. The games harness the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for those who serve their country. The Invictus Games is about much more than just sport – it captures hearts, challenges minds and changes lives.

“The Invictus Games continue to be a support in my own recovery and help enable me to keep soldiering on,” says Master Warrant Officer Michael Fuentespina, a Team Canada competitor.

Toronto opened its doors and hearts to host the third set of the games in 2017. Some 75,000 people attended events during the eight days of competition and the games were covered worldwide. Building on the success of the games, Ontario 150 legacy funding made an \$820,000 investment to further develop parasport in Ontario.

“Ontario is proud to have hosted the 2017 Invictus Games for the first time and witness the healing power of sport,” said Eleanor McMahon, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. “Congratulations to the competitors on Team Canada who turned in inspirational performances at the games. You are the embodiments of dedication, perseverance and once more represented your country with pride. We are excited to build on this momentum to create a world-class parasport system in Ontario.”





Ontario is home to one of Canada's largest sledge hockey tournaments called The Cruiser's Cup. Held in Peel Region and hosted by Cruisers Sports for the Physically Disabled, clubs from Ontario compete against teams from across Canada.

Cowan is Youngest and First with a Disability to Swim Lake Erie

Ashley Cowan was just 15 months old when she contracted meningitis. To save her life, doctors had no choice but to amputate all four of her limbs. At the tender age of two, Cowan was fitted for prostheses and her journey to find her way in life began.

Born in Toronto, Cowan started her sporting career as a figure skater and was very successful, winning a number of medals. But she recalls a nagging feeling telling her to try something new. While at Variety Village, she learned of Vicki Keith-Munro's marathon swim across Lake Ontario. Cowan wanted a marathon swim of her own.

After boldly approaching Keith-Munro, Cowan, a tenacious eight-year-old at the time, began training under the coach's guidance and qualified for the Canadian national swim team that same year. Cowan medaled numerous times on the world stage but there was still one dream that needed to be fulfilled.

In September of 2001, Cowan became the youngest and first athlete with a disability to swim 18 kilometres across Lake Erie. Accolades from around the world poured in and her message when asked about her accomplishment remained maturely clear: "Anything is possible if you believe in yourself. Able-bodied or disabled, there are no limitations if you are willing to put your heart into it"

Today, Cowan still has big dreams. As an ambassador at Variety Village she inspires youth to follow their dreams and believe in their ability. Looking at more milestones, Cowan hopes to compete for Canada one day at the Paralympic Games and aspires to swim across the English Channel.



New Sport in Canada with Scandinavian Roots

Wheelchair sport dance finds its roots in Sweden dating back to 1968, pioneered by Els-Britt Larsson for recreational and rehab purposes. Wheel Dance Canada was founded in 2013. The sport includes group dance (athletes with lower body impairments), partners dance (with non-disabled partner) or single dance (wheelchair user dances alone) and three different styles of dance: Standard (waltz or slow foxtrot), Latin American (samba, rumba or jive) and Freestyle (hip hop, folk, ballet, contemporary, street dance). Wheel Dance serves as the organizing body for wheelchair dance sport in Canada.





Blind Runners Set Sights on Signature Event

Brian McLean, who is visually and hearing impaired, established Achilles Canada in 1999 to connect visually impaired runners with sighted guide runners to help them train and compete recreationally or competitively. Over the years, Achilles has developed specialized programs for children, teens, adults and veterans.

McLean and his dedicated volunteers and guide runners provide people with the opportunity to realize their abilities and develop their physical fitness and strength. McLean's signature fundraising event, the St. Patrick's Day 5K Run in Toronto, sees able-bodied runners and athletes with disabilities participate side-by-side.

Rio Paralympics Introduces Swim, Bike, Run

Para-triathlon athletes competed in their first Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016. The event included a 750m swim, 20K cycle and a 5K run which spanned over five disability classifications.



Wagner Araujo/ITU Dedia

CBC's Storyteller Scott Russell Supports Sport for All

As a multi-award-winning CBC Sports anchor for over 30 years, Scott Russell began covering the Paralympic Games in 2008 in Beijing and has consistently found ways to creatively elevate and strengthen the Paralympic Movement. To emphasize his vision and support of parasport Russell said, "I have always believed that the power of sport should be accessible to everyone." Russell often shares success stories of para-athletes to millions of Canadian viewers.





Cassidy Clocks World's Fastest Time at Boston Marathon

One of Ontario's most celebrated and decorated wheelchair racing athletes is three-time Paralympian Josh Cassidy.

His first love in sport was hockey with NHL idol Patrick Roy inspiring him to find an adaptive way to become a goalie himself. But it was in 2000 when Jeff Adams's performance at the Paralympic Games in Sydney inspired Cassidy to take to the track and ultimately the marathon course.

Eight years later Cassidy qualified for his first Paralympic Games in Beijing, China, in 2008, where he finished 10th overall. He won the 2010 London Marathon and recorded the world's fastest time ever at the Boston Marathon in 2012. He has held the Canadian Champion title 28 times and captured three silver medals at the 2015 Toronto Parapan Am Games.

Here We Row Again

Making its debut at the 2008 Paralympic Games, rowing grew to four different medal events in Rio 2016: mixed coxed fours, mixed double sculls, women's single sculls and men's single sculls. The sport integrates athletes with a variety of disabilities, all accommodated within a crew.



A Canadian First at Hawaii's Ironman Triathlon

Although active, Rob Buren had never defined himself as an athlete. All that changed at the age of 37 when a mountain biking accident left him with paraplegia.

Inspired by friends who were competing in triathlons, Buren decided to see if he could participate too, using just his arms. While in rehabilitation, he rode his first handcycle around the hospital hallways. From there, he taught himself how to push a racing wheelchair, and then learned to swim again. Eventually, he trained his body to do what his friends were doing – racing.

Many races later, Buren managed to do what no other Canadian paraplegic had done before – complete the famed and gruelling Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii (2016). Across the barren lava fields of Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii, Buren cranked his handcycle 180 kilometres, pushed his racing wheelchair another 42km and swam four more for bragging rights for the rest of his life!



Special Education Teacher Makes Waves for New Paralympic Sport

Some sports on the Olympic Games program are not included as a Paralympic event. While Canada has long supported skiing and swimming, it lagged behind when it came to paddling. Thanks to the efforts of Adrienne Skinner, the sport of canoe/kayak was included at the 2016 Summer Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Skinner, a special education teacher, lost her leg in an auto accident when she was three. As the western Ontario co-ordinator for the national program PaddleAll, she helped guide Canada's top canoe clubs in developing programs for people with any type of disability, whether physical or intellectual. Always sports-oriented, Skinner was one of two members of the Canadian National team at the European Canoe Championships in 2008 in Milan, Italy – the sport's first international competition for para-athletes. From there, she has continued to be a passionate advocate for canoeing and kayaking, eventually bringing it to the Paralympic stage. "It's a great sport for people who have mobility challenges," she says. "It gives a great sense of freedom."



Para Ice Hockey's Captain Canada

Every athlete has a sport that he or she is passionate about, and for Greg Westlake, it was always hockey. He became a bilateral below-knee amputee before his second birthday, and played road hockey, roller hockey and ice hockey growing up. At 15, Westlake began playing sledge hockey with the Mississauga Cruisers, and joined Team Canada as a seventeen-year-old.

Westlake appreciated the fast pace and physicality of para ice hockey, calling for a different skill set and superior upper-body strength. His retraining paid off with unparalleled successes. He was part of the gold medal-winning Paralympic Ice Hockey team in Torino in 2006, and as team captain, led his team to a bronze medal at the 2014 Sochi Paralympic Games. The 2017 World Para Hockey Championships in Gangneung, South Korea, marked his third world championship gold medal.

Since he started, para ice hockey has gone from being relatively unknown to one of the most popular Paralympic sports. Westlake has played a significant role in this hard-fought visibility. In addition to his hockey career, his advocacy and media work have reinforced his passion for strengthening the sport. His advice to athletes, with and without disabilities? "There's a sport out there for you. Never give up and play on."



Swim Ontario First to Dive in with Inclusion Model

One of the biggest game changers in the swimming world came from Swim Ontario, which set the standard for inclusion models for athletes with disabilities in sport. The work began in 1989 alongside ParaSport® Ontario (formerly Sport for Disabled – Ontario) to welcome swimmers with a disability into the Swim Ontario program. Since then, Swim Ontario has been able to adapt programs for swimmers with a range of different disabilities and provide pathways to national and international competitions.

Swim Ontario was the first provincial sport organization to provide opportunities for swimmers with disabilities to compete alongside able-bodied peers, opening up a new world of inclusion for para-swimmers.



Sport of Goalball Silences Audiences

Goalball players are happy to hear excited fans at their games... as long as they keep very quiet during the game. The game of goalball demands silence so players can hear the ball coming, and stop it before it goes into the net behind them.

A unique sport specific to athletes who are blind or visually impaired, goalball stands out from other parasports due to the unique atmosphere inside its venue. The object is to hurl the ball into the opponent's goal while opposing players try to block it with their bodies. The ball is equipped with bells inside to help athletes orient its direction and as such, the venue must keep silent to allow players to concentrate and react instantly to the ball. Spectators can applaud or cheer after a goal is scored of course.

Goalball was introduced to the Paralympics as a demonstration sport at the 1976 Olympiad in Toronto, and has been contested in every Paralympic Games since.





Small-Town Ontario Boy Becomes World's Best

With his ability to change direction on a dime, effortlessly wheel around opponents and an uncanny knack of hitting the net from practically anywhere on the court, Patrick Anderson has been christened the “Michael Jordan of wheelchair basketball.” Considered to be the best wheelchair basketball player the men’s game has ever known, he played a monumental role in making wheelchair basketball a fan favourite.

The Fergus-native credits much of his success to his father. Anderson lost both of his legs below the knee when he was just nine years old. His father built him a basketball net on the backyard deck. “I’d shoot around on my knees, in my chair; I always had a basketball in my hands,” says Anderson. “I wouldn’t have thought I was training, but that’s essentially what I was doing.”

Anderson joined the National Team in 1997, while earning a wheelchair basketball scholarship to the University of Illinois. He led Canada’s team to win Paralympic gold medals in 2000 and 2004, and the silver medal in 2008. Following the 2008 Games, having received countless awards, Anderson took a break from the sport and pursued other interests, including his love for music.

In 2011, Anderson returned to Team Canada to give the game another shot. He once again led Canada to Paralympic gold in London in 2012, where he topped the tournament in scoring. After London, Anderson took another hiatus from the team. But the irony was that the Canadian teams that did so much to raise the profile of the sport and the Paralympics, were now losing medals to international competitors. In 2017 he emerged from retirement again, to join a new generation of young players in pursuit of a return to the podium at the 2020 Tokyo Summer Paralympic Games, and a reclamation of their former glory.

Ontario’s Quest for Gold

The Quest for Gold program was established to provide financial support to Ontario athletes and coaches to enhance the performance and increase the number of Ontarians competing at the highest national and international levels.

Each year, Ontario Lottery and Gaming sends millions in proceeds to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for Quest for Gold. Since the program’s launch in 2006, it has provided Ontario athletes and coaches with approximately \$100 million in support.





Smith Moves CBC Sports to Report from the Paralympic Games

For 10 years, ending in 2007, Joanne Smith hosted and produced the popular CBC television program *Moving On*. Revolutionary programming for its time, the Gemini Award-winning lifestyle show explored social issues and solutions, discovered new adventures, and promoted positive attitudes.

"It was extremely important to have a show specifically targeting a population that is grossly underserved and underrepresented in the television landscape," Smith explained.

Smith was always more than the woman on television in the wheelchair. She guided the program in a refreshing direction, away from the typical portrayal of people with disabilities as victims or super-heroes. *Moving On* had an incredible run of ten years, almost unheard of in the television industry, and a milestone for the disability community: people with disabilities were being heard and valued.



From reporting for CBC Sports from both the 2000 Sydney Summer Paralympic Games and the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Paralympics, to an invitation to speak at Moshfest, the Moscow International Disability Film Festival, Smith created her own career highlight reel.

Team's Youngest Player Ever Leads a Legendary Run



Few competitive athletes, able-bodied or otherwise, have achieved Tracey Ferguson's remarkable success. In 1990, at age 16, she was the youngest player ever selected to the Wheelchair Basketball Team. Between 1992 and 2002, the Canadian women's team would win three successive Paralympic gold medals and three World Championship titles. Their incredible run stands as one of the most extraordinary winning streaks in the history of sports: ten years of official international competition without a single defeat.

Ferguson has been a member of seven Paralympic teams, winning gold medals in 1992, 1996 and 2000 and a bronze in 2004. Showing her competitive spirit, she also qualified for the Beijing 2008 Paralympics in wheelchair athletics.

For Ferguson, who retired from the team in 2017, it was

also gratifying to witness the growth in popularity of both her sport and the Paralympic Games over those years, and their appreciation by fans as nothing less than a sport and an international event for elite athletes.

Not surprisingly, Ferguson has won numerous awards, including the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award and the YMCA's Young Women of Distinction Award. She's also a four-time winner of the Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association's Female Athlete of the Year trophy. While honoured by the recognition, Ferguson is quick to share the credit with her coaches, teammates and family. "I'm always mindful of the fact that I didn't get there by myself," she acknowledges.



Gold Medal Champion Also First to Lifeguard

A two-sport elite athlete, Irene Wownuk parlayed her skills in wheelchair basketball into a Paralympic gold medal and her skills in the pool into the designation of being the first Canadian with paraplegia to successfully attain his or her lifeguarding credentials.



Durham Paralympian and Radio Personality is Still Tracking the Games

Known to many in the Durham Region for his sportscasting career, Rob Snoek is a three-time Paralympian, representing Canada in track and field for more than 12 years. The Orono-native, a sprinter and long jumper, competed at the games in 1992 in Barcelona, 1996 in Atlanta and 2000 in Sydney. He still holds the Canadian record for amputee long jumpers.

Snoek has achieved as much off of the track as on it. A huge proponent of the Parasport Movement, Snoek frequently speaks about the importance of physical activity, advocating for people with disabilities. A respected journalist, he has become one of the go-to broadcasters for CBC Television for both Olympic and Paralympic Games. "As an athlete, I was always about the

concept of personal best. Trying to get better every day," tells Snoek. That attitude has served him well in his broadcasting career as well. His involvement with CBC's Paralympic coverage allows him to push the boundaries and improve that coverage. "I'm always thinking of ways to cover the Paralympics better, represent Paralympic athletes better."

Snoek's high-profile work in broadcasting has certainly helped bring increased awareness to parasport. "It's no longer strange to see someone with a disability playing a sport or on TV," he notes. "If I've had any part in that, then it's been a worthwhile journey for me and I'm extremely proud." For his part in it, Snoek is a Canadian Disability Hall of Fame inductee.

Cranking It Up with a New Club

From weekend warriors to Paralympians, cycling is a sport for all abilities and ages. The Handcycling Club of Canada was founded in 2012, in Toronto, by Tom Proszowski to bring the benefits of cycling to enthusiasts with disabilities.

A life-long athlete, Proszowski has competed in local and international parasport events since 1976, a resume that includes medals in pistol shooting and power lifting from the Stoke Mandeville Games in England and the Parapan Am Games in Puerto Rico. His club's mission is to grow the sport of handcycling and expand his members' worlds with a means to venture beyond previous boundaries, be it recreationally with family and friends, or competitively.



Schaller Powers Participation Across the Province

As someone who participated in many different sports in high school and college, David Schaller has made a career of encouraging others to participate in sports and physical activities as well. He is the manager of community services at Pathways Health Centre for Children in Sarnia. Schaller received the National Achievement Award in Recognition of Performance in Amateur Sport in both 1983 and 1985.

In 1983, Schaller broke the Ontario record for bench press for amputees and the Canadian record in 1985. He was the winner in the Disability Class at the Toronto Bench Press Competition with a lift of 352 lbs (160 kg). Still participating in, and promoting inclusive bench press competitions, Schaller asks rhetorically: "Why should someone with a disability not have that opportunity to be healthy and fit?"



Greatness is Rare Campaign

As Canada's top Paralympians prepared to compete at the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea, the Canadian Paralympic Committee, in partnership with BBDO Canada, launched a Team Canada 2018 brand campaign called Greatness is Rare: Witness It.

With a goal of building awareness and support for Canada's Paralympic athletes heading to PyeongChang, the ads highlighted just how small a percentage of the Canadian population qualifies to compete at a Paralympic Games, and how competing on the world stage in sport or winning medals for Canada, is truly rare. The campaign was followed by unprecedented coverage of the 2018 Paralympic Games from traditional broadcasts to live coverage on social platforms.



Canada's first-ever blind five-on-five soccer match was contested in Paris, Ontario, during the 2017 Ontario Parasport Games. It's now a Paralympic sport.



Ontario's Most Decorated Paralympian

When Martha Sandoval Gustafson worked as a secretary in her home country of Mexico, she never envisioned that coming across a group of people playing wheelchair basketball would completely change her destiny. Once she started playing, she discovered she loved competitive sports, and wanted to compete in the ones she was good at. And she was spectacular at many.

Born in Tampico in 1950, she went on to win a total of twelve medals at the 1976 and 1980 Paralympic Games representing Mexico. She wanted more, but most importantly she wanted to compete at an even higher level. In 1981 she moved to Canada, and began training at Variety Village, in Scarborough. It was – and continues to be – a perfect fit for Sandoval Gustafson to hone her considerable athletic talents.

Wearing Canada's maple leaf at the 1984 and 1988 Paralympic Games, she competed in athletics (both on the track and in field events), swimming and table tennis, bringing her Paralympic medal count to 19 (12 gold and seven silver) across four different disciplines. That ranks Sandoval Gustafson as Canada's second most-decorated Paralympian, tied with Yukon swimmer Stephanie Dixon, and just two shy of Quebec's legendary wheelchair track athlete Chantal Petitclerc with 21 medals.

With more than a whopping 200 medals from international, national and provincial events, she continues to be an active participant in parasport today. She still competes in athletics and swimming and has even found the time and energy to try two new distinctly Canadian sports – curling at the Peterborough Curling Club, and wheelchair rugby. A competitive field athlete into her late 60s, for Sandoval Gustafson it all boils down to a simple philosophy. "Compete against yourself and always try to do your best."

Evolution of Games Inspires Social Change

Ever since neurologist Sir Ludwig Guttmann organized what would be known as the first Paralympic Games in 1948, physicians have played a major role in its evolution.

For Dr. Gaéten Tardif, becoming involved in the games was a natural outgrowth of his role as Physiatrist in Chief and Medical Director of the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. As a member of the medical team, Tardif participated in seven consecutive Paralympic Games starting in Sydney 2000 through to Rio in 2016. He served as Assistant Chef de Mission for the Beijing 2008 and Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Games and was Chef de Mission for the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

Tardif believes that the increased media coverage of the games over these years created momentum to promote elite sport and good lifestyle habits in terms of being physically active. But the welcomed exposure has also come with controversy, with some media outlets deriding the super heroic portrayals of athletes as “inspirational porn.”

Tardif addressed the issue by writing “Inspiration will not always lead to motivation and action, but not appealing to our human emotions is doomed to fail. We all love good stories, and our Paralympians have many. So do our Olympians. I certainly hope that the inspirational story of Olympian Rosie MacLennan recovering from a concussion to win a gold medal motivated many to overcome similar obstacles, and that’s a good thing.”

He sees the Paralympics as hugely influential in social progress, creating good role models and pushing to have the right kind of facilities built within our communities. For Tardif, it’s all part of the evolution of the games that has changed perceptions of disability.



Wheelchair Curling Makes Paralympic Debut in
Torino 2006.



Multi-Sport Paralympian Bradley Bowden Among Elite Few

In a nation that’s full of great athletes, Bradley Bowden is considered one of Canada’s most accomplished. He is one of very few Paralympic athletes who can claim the impressive feat of winning a Paralympic gold medal in both the summer and winter games.

Bowden was a constant force up front for Team Canada in para ice hockey, a career which began in 1999. A four-time Paralympian in the sport (two gold, one silver and one bronze), his crowning moment came at the Torino 2006 Paralympic Games where Bowden scored the game-winning goal in the gold medal game. Four years later at the Paralympic Games in Vancouver he was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player.

Bowden also competed in wheelchair basketball at the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games, where Canada won the gold.

His greatest influence, he says, was his grandmother. His words: “I never wanted to get out of the house to try sledge hockey but she forced me to go. She knew me better than anybody.”

Golfer with Disability Tops Canada's Amateur Ranking

Reggie Millage started into parasports at age four. Born with limited mobility in one leg, he has played at an elite level in several sports including wheelchair basketball, lacrosse, sledge hockey, and golf most specifically. He competed around the world as a member of six Canadian amateur golf teams. He was named Rookie of the Year in the NCAA Division I Colonial Conference and twice, Conference Player of the Year. He was ranked the number one amateur golfer in Canada in 2000.



Merrigan's Lifetime of Dedication Makes Him the Unsung Hero

Dedication to their sport is not the domain of Paralympic athletes alone. Clarence Merrigan is a prime example of that. Three times a week, year after year, Clarence and his wife Julie Merrigan have risen at four in the morning to catch their ride to Variety Village in Scarborough to workout in the gym or on the court – a typical day at the gym includes swimming laps, lifting weights and playing boccia.

Both have many trophies and medals in all their different sports to show for it, but it isn't so much the desire to win that drives them as it is the sheer enjoyment of life. "Do the best you can," Clarence says. "Find something you enjoy, and do it." To which Julie adds, "Teach others. Help them learn how to enjoy life," a philosophy that this active couple lives every day.

In 2001 the Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association presented Clarence with its "Unsung Heroes Award" recognizing his dedication to striving to achieve and maintain his personal goals and serving as a role model for other athletes in cerebral palsy sport. A participant as far back as the 1978 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, Clarence, and Julie, are still competing on the boccia court today.



Maxville's Big John Takes Gold at Canadian Masters

In the Canadian Masters Power Lifting Championships' first integrated event, John Baxter of Maxville, Ontario, won the gold medal with a total of 660 kilograms (1,452 pounds). In racking up his winning total, the blind lifter had a squat lift of 250kg (550 pounds) and a deadlift of 260kg (572 pounds) to go with his record bench press of 150kg (330 pounds). For competitors age 40 and over, it was the first time that blind and non-blind athletes were integrated in competition. "I think it was a good thing," said the veteran lifter. "You're only as handicapped as much as you think you are."

Skinner Passes the Torch After 32 Years of Leadership

After 32 years at the helm of ParaSport® Ontario's board of directors, Brian Skinner took his leave in 2014. He guided the organization through three decades of remarkable change for athletes with a disability.

His tenure began in the early 1980s. As a City of Toronto Parks and Recreation employee, Skinner was asked to co-chair the 1984 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled. Overwhelmingly inspired by the athletes and volunteers, he subsequently accepted the invitation to chair the ParaSport Ontario Board of Directors (then known as Sport for Disabled – Ontario). "Things have come a long way since then," noted Skinner, "particularly the recognition of ability over disability with respect to our athletes."

Skinner witnessed the coming-of-age for not only his organization but for all Ontario athletes with disabilities. He attributes that change to the work of another man. In 1986 Rick Hansen wheeled into Toronto as part of his Man In Motion world tour and Skinner heeded the appeal of his Executive Director Joe Ross for a decorous celebration. Sport for Disabled – Ontario hosted the Rick Hansen Tribute Gala and raised \$750,000 for the cause in the process. The affair was another testament to ability over disability.

Upon reflection, Skinner describes the organization's biggest challenge and biggest accomplishment over his years as chair as one and the same. "Integration," he maintains, "was the biggest roadblock for many years. Bureaucrats and volunteers who didn't see the world any differently than 30 years ago were a problem." The breakthrough, he applauds, came from Swim Ontario which did see the virtue of including swimmers with a disability with their able-bodied counterparts. "It revolutionized the development of high-performance athletes with a disability," Skinner shares.

Skinner left his post thanking the legions of volunteers who gave of themselves to forward the Parasport Movement in Ontario, maintaining that he left his position no less inspired than he was during his first days as the Board's chair.



Synchronized Swimming made its Paralympic debut at the Rio de Janeiro Games in 2016 with two medal events: women's duet and the women's team event. It's one of the few sports that does not differentiate between physical or cognitive disabilities. The Toronto Synchro program is recognized as a leader in innovation and opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

Fueling Para-Athlete Dreams for Two Decades

Suncor, with its Petro-Canada brand, has been fueling the dreams of Paralympians through its support of the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) since 1999. Proud to have been one of CPC's first corporate partners, Petro-Canada – “Canada's Gas Station” – has contributed to the growth of the Paralympic Movement with support to Paralympians and coaches at the elite level, and to young, aspiring athletes with a disability at the grass-roots ranks.

One of Petro-Canada's key initiatives – Fueling Athlete and Coaching Excellence (FACE) – provides equal funding to developing Olympic and Paralympic athletes and their coaches. Petro-Canada has also done its part to ensure that young Canadians are aware of the accomplishments of para-athletes and the value of sport for people of all abilities through its Paralympic Schools Program, in partnership with CPC.

In 2014, in association with the Sochi Paralympic Games in Russia, Petro-Canada was one of four presenting partners of the Canadian Paralympic Broadcast Consortium. The program brought Canadians the most comprehensive Paralympic Games coverage ever offered with more than 93 hours of broadcasting and 350 hours of digital streaming.



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Chatham's Wright Makes Karate History

Patricia Wright was labeled “intellectually impaired” at a young age. Despite having a seizure disorder (epilepsy), she didn't let it hold her back from doing what she loves: Karate.

In 2010 Wright was struck by a vehicle, suffering a traumatic brain injury and a stroke. After the accident she began to look at life through a different lens – the eyes of a para-karate athlete. Even though faced with many hurdles, her ascent to international success was swift and ground-breaking.

Through her training at Zanshin Dojo Karate Club in Chatham, Ontario, and with a network of support in the Legacy Shorin Ryu Karate Jutsu Association, Wright won gold at the Karate Canada National Championships just six years after her injury.

Five times she has competed at the Canadian Para Karate Championships and in 2016 Wright realized her Team Canada dream by qualifying for Karate Canada's Senior Para-Karate National Team. It was on that team, at the World Karate Federation Championship in Linz, Austria, that Wright made history by becoming Canada's first Karate World Champion.

In 2017 Wright became the first Canadian female to win gold in the Para Pan American Karate Championships. She defended her champion status the next year. Now, as a certified coach with the Canadian Coaching Association, Wright takes great joy in passing on her passion for karate to the next generation, with a special focus on students with special needs.



Thirty-Year Tour for Travel Team

Zak and Jean Sheikh spent three decades with Paralympic teams. The husband and wife team managed the travel needs of Canada's Paralympic teams from 1977 to 2006 as the official travel agents, accompanying the teams wherever they went as well.

The couple had a front row seat as they witnessed recognition for Paralympic athletes grow, with Canada leading the Paralympic Movement worldwide. When the duo first began with the national teams most athletes were making their own arrangements to get to and from the games. The Sheikhs stressed that it would be much more beneficial to travel as a team. In 1984 team travel was instituted as the new norm. The Sheikhs also sparked the first organized packages for spectators traveling to Paralympic Games.



Strategist Nurtures Parasport Growth Over Four Decades

With more than 35 years in amateur sport Blair McIntosh, a respected leader and strategist, has guided Ontario's Parasport Movement as the Ministry Manager of Sport Action Plans, Director of Games and Sport Tourism, the CEO of the Sport Alliance Ontario, VP of Sport at the 2015 Pan and Parapan Am Games in Toronto and Chef de Mission for Team Canada at the 2010 Paralympic Games in Vancouver. He's been involved in hundreds of bid evaluations at the provincial to international level and has been the Chef de Mission at eight Canada Games. Always an advocate of parasport and Paralympic ideals, McIntosh has nurtured, influenced, and impacted the evolution of sport opportunities for athletes with a disability across four decades.



Paralympics Ontario (once Sport for Disabled – Ontario, and now ParaSport Ontario) hosted its first Ontario Winter Championships in 2006 in Huntsville featuring wheelchair curling, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, swimming, sledge hockey and, alpine and nordic skiing.

Ottawa's Hancock Champions the Canadian Paralympic Committee

What started as a summer student placement culminated with leading an organization to become what is known today as the Canadian Paralympic Committee.

Linda Hancock first became aware of sport for people with disabilities while in university. She was hired by the Ministry's Department of Fitness and Amateur Sport to put together a book called "Yes You Can" – a compilation of Canadian projects designed to integrate people with disabilities in fitness and recreation programs initiated during the 1981 International Year of the Disabled.

Seven years later, in 1989, Hancock left the government to assume the role of Managing Director of the Canadian Federation of Sport Organizations for the Disabled (CFSOD). CFSOD, at that time, was an umbrella organization for all associations working towards inclusion of people with disabilities in active living opportunities and sport, like the Canadian Amputee Sports Association, Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association, Canadian Blind Sports Association and the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Association.

It was a monumental time for parasport all around the world. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) was being formed and many pioneering Canadians, such as Dr. Robert Steadward, were leading the



movement with the vision that Paralympic athletes should be considered equal to Olympic athletes. "In Canada we worked in parallel with that vision," remembers Hancock. "CFSOD was providing all of the leadership and support to the IPC in the early years. Slowly we were moving from a disability-first system to a sport-first system."

Under Hancock's direction, things were morphing in Canada too. Strategically, CFSOD evolved into the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC). "It was an important step in setting Canada up for future growth and better support of Paralympic sport in our country and internationally," she states. "Next, was a strategy to bring on sponsors." To that end, Hancock established a corporate sponsorship program, welcoming CPC's first corporate partners.

One of her proudest moments, she explains, came at the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. "Part of my responsibility was to host CPC's first-ever team of corporate sponsors including Don Sancton who was Director of Corporate Affairs for Pfizer Pharmaceuticals at that time. It was rewarding to share the Canadian experience, with this group, all of the pride and excitement of seeing our awesome Canadian athletes excel on the world's stage." Pfizer remains as a primary CPC partner more than two decades later.

Equal Access was the Gold Standard for Colborne

It would have been hard for Jenny Colborne to imagine where an invitation to coach with the Windsor Bulldogs Disabled Sports Club would lead. She was a Human Kinetics student at the University of Windsor at the time, in the summer of 1983. With no coaching experience, Colborne was promised that she would learn on the job. And she did just that, with coaches like Doug Wilton and Anthony Clegg as her mentors.

Wilton trained his protégé to be a classifier for athletes with cerebral palsy, a skill set that Colborne took to Variety Village in Toronto after graduating. It was there where her concerted efforts for underserved athletes and junior competitors took shape. "My vision was to provide equal access to anyone who had the desire to participate and compete."

With that mantra firmly in hand, Colborne led the organizing of the first Junior National Indoor Games, and what would become an incubator for future Paralympic athletes. She started a wheelchair tennis

program at Variety Village, and developed track and field opportunities for athletes with cerebral palsy at the facility.

In everything she did, it was about mentoring and guiding, at a time when "sport psychology" wasn't part of the parasport vernacular. For Colborne it was important to instill feelings of belonging, individuality and self assuredness in her athletes, always encouraging them to follow their own path.

"I wasn't a high-profile coach working with accomplished athletes," she says. "Instead, I worked behind the scenes to ensure equal access. I was more concerned about an athlete's self-esteem and confidence than I was with medals."



Recovery and Reward in Riding for Toronto's Jody Schloss

Jody Schloss embodies what describes, but not defines, many parasport athletes. A story of trauma, of overcoming, of gravitating to sport as a vehicle for recovery and reward, is Schloss's story too. She was severely injured in a car crash in her mid-twenties, losing the ability to walk after emerging from a three-month-long coma. She returned to horseback riding as a means to recover from the traumatizing ordeal.

Her reward? Schloss has advanced her passion to the equestrian world's biggest stage as a member of Canada's Paralympic para-dressage team in 2012 in London. "I have been riding since I was 11. It's in my blood," Schloss told CTV News through an electronic speech-generating device. "Riding is a feeling of freedom," she said. Schloss's coach Jessica Rhinelandt added, "determination is one of her biggest and best qualities."

The para-equestrian was also rewarded with the honour of carrying the Parapan Am torch as part of the ceremonies that led into the TORONTO 2015 Parapan Am Games. "I'm continuously surprised by how many fortunate opportunities I have had because of my love for my horses," said Schloss.

To her point, during the Parapan Am Games, Schloss took part in a play with other para-athletes called PUSH! which documented the lives of six Paralympic athletes, weaving together their individual journeys to paint an exceptionally diverse picture of what it is to be a world-class athlete.



Sudbury's Kitler Receives Coach of the Year for All

Sudbury's Patti Kitler groomed the course for para nordic skiing in Ontario with the simple wish for people with disabilities to challenge themselves and enjoy winter in a way that everyone else can. She has championed adaptive skiing as a coach and mentor with her expertise with the Para Nordic Ski Team in Lively – a region within Greater Sudbury – sharing it across Ontario as the head coach for cross-country para ski athletes. Under her guidance, skiing as an inclusive sport for the community of para-athletes continues to progress. That growth has not gone unnoticed by the Sudbury Sports Hall of Fame which presented Kitler as its Coach of the Year in 2017 for her success in developing the sport of cross-country skiing for all.

Stoddart “Wheels Off” Plenty of Firsts

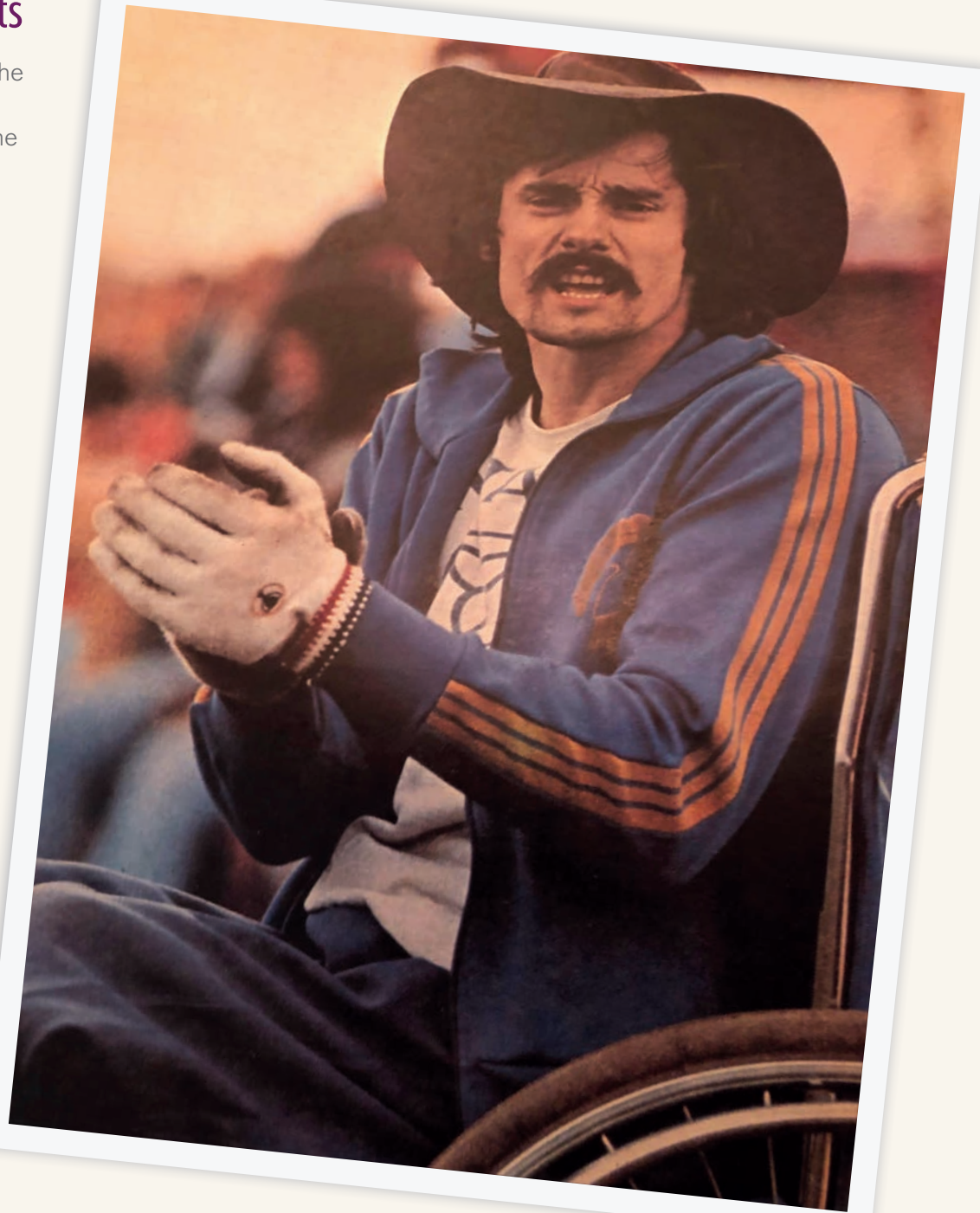
Chris Stoddart maintains that his unparalleled success on the track stems from the “new era of coaching” in the 1980s that included “goals of bettering disabled sport and not simply the ‘glory’ in helping the disabled.”

Stoddart remembers Graham Ward being Canada’s first coach to train his athletes with disabilities the same as his able-bodied runners on the Hamilton Olympic track team. Ward was at the forefront of creating a new breed of Ontario coaches – Mary Ellery, Faye Blackwood, Anthony Clegg and Kelly McLeod for starters – that quickly rose to national and international attention.

The new approach served Stoddart well. In provincial competitions he managed a 66-9-1 gold/silver/bronze medal haul from the Ontario Games from 1975-1988, winning the 100m track event 18 years consecutively. Nationally, his medal count finished at 28-28-26. Internationally, Stoddart won medals for Canada from 1976 to 1987.

Stoddart notes that one of the sport’s most important milestones during his early wheeling years was when ribbons for the athletes’ efforts were replaced with actual medals, and at about the same time the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled welcomed athletes who were blind and those with cerebral palsy for the first time... “a feather in ParaSport Ontario’s cap for sure,” he adds.

While often the smallest racer among his class of competitors, Stoddart was the first to wheel under 7:00 in the 1500m and later the first to go under six minutes in Canada. He retired with a personal best of 4:20. He was the first to go under 19 seconds in the 100m, and the first wheelchair athlete to enter the Toronto Marathon, winning five of the next six years he entered. And on the basketball court, Stoddart was an original member of the Toronto Thrush Thunderbolts, the first team in Ontario and only the second in Canada to be granted inclusion in the NWBA. That was 1972. In 1974 he was a member of the Ontario team that won its first basketball medal at the National Games.





Standing Up for Amputee Hockey

There's something special about Canada versus the rest of the world when it comes to our country's hockey teams. Regardless of whom is wearing our maple leaf, the tradition of Canadian hockey success is always understood.

The Canadian Amputee Hockey Committee (CAHC) is our country's best-kept hockey secret. Led by Ontarians Don Wade and James Reilly, a Paralympic track and field athlete, the national team has been a true powerhouse – the winners of six consecutive World Championships.

This Canadian team is something to watch too. Slick-skating leg amputees whiz around the ice at tremendous speeds. Sharp-shooting arm amputees turn goaltenders inside out with incredible stick-handling and then net unstoppable shots with just one hand. "And there's nothing like standing on the blue line with your teammates and hearing Canada's national anthem," shares Wade.

The CAHC was established in 2001 for the purpose of promoting ice hockey for all amputees regardless of age, gender, race or physical ability. Their success has gained international recognition, and has been featured on CBS Sports showcasing their skills, grit and success.

The CAHC's mission is to develop Standing Amputee Ice Hockey in Canada for recreational participation at both the junior and senior levels, and the development of a National Team Program to compete at all International Standing Ice Hockey Federation (ISIH) World Championships.

Amputee hockey began in Russia not that long ago. In 2000, an American doctor read about a small group of players who started a team. Some had lost limbs to land mines in the Russia-Afghanistan war. A year later, Canada and the United States had teams too. And a year after that, the Canadian Team won the first Amputee Hockey World Championship.

The Canadian Amputee Hockey Team consists of players from across the country, coming together at weekend training camps to practice as a team and then returning to regular leagues where they compete with able-bodied players.

Gold medals are not the only goal of the CAHC. "We want to encourage more kids to join us at our camps," says Wade. "We help them develop hockey skills and serve as role models for them so they set their goals high in all things they do in life."



Wheelchair Curling Finds its First House in Ontario

Wheelchair Curling in Canada began in 2001 when the Canadian Curling Association (CCA) asked Curl Ontario to head up a pilot project. The CCA had accepted an invitation to send a team from Canada to the first World Wheelchair Curling Championship. The project involved recruiting a coach as well as finding and training athletes to represent Canada in Switzerland in 2002. The start to finish timeframe was 20 weeks. At the time there was no grassroots program for wheelchair curling in Canada.

Wheelchair Curling's first Team Canada was made up of Ontario residents, four of whom had never curled before being recruited. The team returned home from the 2002 World Wheelchair Curling Championship with a silver medal.

The Ontario Curling Association began hosting provincial wheelchair curling championships in 2005.

Benoit Dominates the Court as World's Best

As a 17-year-old prospective diver, Chantal Benoit received a bone cancer diagnosis but not in time to prevent losing her leg at the hip. Shortly after discharge from the hospital Benoit was introduced to wheelchair basketball by a group of friends who invited her to a demonstration game at the Jeux du Québec.

She fell in love with the game and joined a local wheelchair basketball team. Just one year later, Benoit was on the 1984 National Team.

Benoit, now a resident of Vaughan, Ontario, went on to compete in the most-ever Paralympic Games by a Canadian wheelchair basketball athlete with seven appearances (tied with Tracey Ferguson). A member of Team Canada for 27 years, she was a leading scorer during the squad's dynasty years which included three Paralympic gold medals from 1992 -2000. She has been coined the "Michael Jordan of Women's Wheelchair Basketball" and is quite possibly the greatest player to have ever played the women's game.

She attributes her success in wheelchair basketball to her passion for the sport and her persistent need to improve every time she gets on the court. In 2000, she received the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation's highest honour, the Gold Medal Triad Award, which is presented to an individual who has contributed in an outstanding manner to the growth of wheelchair basketball both on the national and international level. Benoit has also been appointed to the Order of Canada (2018).



We have come a long way since 1948 when only 16 competitors took part in the first Stoke Mandeville Games, in England, for athletes with physical disabilities. The games, the brainchild of Sir Ludwig Guttmann, was a nod to the tremendous therapeutic value of participation in sports for individuals with physical disabilities.

Originally designed as a national-level event, the games took on international status four years later. Numbers of competitors increased steadily, with more than 400 at the 1960 Games in Rome and in 1972, at the games in Heidelberg, West Germany, competitors reached the 1,000 mark. That number jumped to a whopping 1,560 when the 1976 Olympiad for the Physically Disabled opened at Etobicoke's Centennial Park with athletes from 40 countries descending on Toronto to compete for gold, silver and bronze medals.

The "Torontolympiad" set the stage for the development of regional and provincial games for Ontario's athletes with physical disabilities, with highwater marks to include "Mel Lastman's Games" – the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled in North York – and of course Toronto's hosting of the Parapan American Games in 2015.

GAMES

“A Time to Be Together”

Toronto Olympiad 1976

In 1976, an advertisement appeared in Toronto newspapers promoting an unprecedented event – the 1976 Olympiad for the Physically Disabled. Featuring a photo of a wheelchair athlete, the opening lines of copy bluntly highlighted the lack of recognition for Paralympic athletes. “In Montreal this month, athletes at the Summer Olympics are enjoying a billion-dollar extravaganza. In August, 1,700 Olympic athletes will compete in Toronto. They don’t expect that kind of attention.”

As it turned out, the athletes did get a lot of attention, thanks to what proved to be a winning combination of media coverage, public curiosity and political drama.

The games originated with Dr. Robert Jackson, an orthopedic surgeon who is credited with fathering the Canadian Paralympic Movement. Watching the second edition of what we now call the Summer Paralympics, in Tokyo in 1964, he noted the lack of Canadian competitors in these games. After co-founding the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association several years later, he went on to accept the responsibility of organizing the Toronto Olympiad.

The organizing committee for the Toronto Olympiad established two goals. The first was to conduct games of the highest quality for those dedicated athletes who had earned the right to represent their country in international competition. The second goal was to take advantage of this unique event to make some worthwhile and lasting contributions to the well-being of Canadian citizens with disabilities.

Along with being the first-ever Paralympic Games in North America, the Toronto Olympiad was unique in being the first multi-disability games to include events for blind athletes and amputees. Previous editions of the Paralympic Games had only included wheelchair athletes.

Global politics also created controversy around the event. In 1975, Canada authored a United Nations resolution condemning apartheid in South Africa. Although the South African team was a multi-racial one, the Government of Canada withdrew \$500,000



There is another Olympiad.
By being there,
you can make it a success.

In Montreal this month, athletes at the Summer Olympics are enjoying a billion dollar extravaganza. In August, 1700 Olympic athletes will compete in Toronto. They don't expect that kind of attention.

But what they do need — and hope for — is your support. You can provide that support by going to Centennial Park in Etobicoke to cheer their achievements.

Thanks to the corporate generosity of several major companies and grants from the Province of Ontario, the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, as well as your private donations... There will be a 1976 Olympiad for the Physically Disabled.

A time to be together. To bring people closer. To create a bond of friendship that transcends race, politics and distance.

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It is the third largest athletic event in the world. A week of events featuring skilled, intense athletes who want desperately to win. Utterly dedicated, they have trained long, grueling hours for these Games. They are the best in the world.

These athletes deserve your support. You'll be aware only of their abilities... not their disabilities. You'll forget the wheelchairs... and see performances that not many, able-bodied people could duplicate.

- A man named Kozuch from Poland has run 100 metres in 11.6 seconds... he is totally blind.
- A man named Jon Brown from the U.S. is the strongest man in the world... he has lifted 562 lbs. in the bench press. He lives in a wheelchair.
- A Canadian named Arnold Boldt set a world high-jump record of 5 ft. 8-1/2 in. He has one leg.

The athletes of the Torontolympiad are proud of their abilities and they want you to witness their achievements.

Do come to this very special celebration. You'll be surprised at how much you'll get involved.

Tickets available at Centennial Park in Etobicoke; all local Borough Offices; and Eatons Attractions Ticket Office.

TORONTOLYMPIAD
a time to be together!
 1976 Olympiad for the Physically Disabled
 Centennial Park, Etobicoke, August 3-11
 For more information call 622-8630.

Opening ceremonies August 3rd, 7:00 p.m. at Woodbine Racetrack.
 Athletic Events August 4th - 11th, Centennial Park.

- Track and Field
- Swimming
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Wrestling
- Archery
- Rifle Shooting

For full daily television coverage tune in cable channel 10 — your Torontolympiad network.

in funding from the games. Inclusion of the integrated team was not acceptable to the governments of some other countries as well, and the South African athletes were unfortunately obliged to forego participation. Fortunately, the provincial government at Queen's Park and Metropolitan Toronto stood by their promises to contribute \$500,000 each, with the Province eventually helping to cover the deficit for the \$2.2 million games... a major international amateur sporting event that year, second in size only to the Montreal Olympics but on a mini budget.

The federal government also withheld its Department of National Defence band, scheduled to play at the opening ceremonies, because the UN resolution called for no moral support. Next, the Department of Transport trucks and personnel hired by the Olympiad to transport athletes' luggage from the airport were cancelled. Then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau withdrew as honorary patron.

The United States won a total of 155 medals, placing first in the games, while Canada came in sixth. The high-caliber of competition boosted attendance – double the anticipated audience. Extensive newspaper coverage also helped ticket sales, with entire pages of sports sections devoted to the games. After CTV and Global declined to televise the games, a consortium of cable providers did.

The Toronto Olympiad would be later known as the 5th Paralympic Games. People, not money, made these games a success. The unexpected public interest and media coverage paid off, highlighting the need for an international body to organize a multi-sport and multi-disability Paralympic Games. When the copywriter of the original ad wrote, "The athletes deserve your support. You'll be aware only of their abilities... not their disabilities," they could not have realized how prescient they were.



Sports Headlines...

Excerpts from select articles published by Toronto's major newspapers.



Thousands Cheer Stars at Olympiad Opening

By Bob Mitchell, *Toronto Sun*

The Olympiad for the Physically Disabled opened last night at Woodbine Racetrack with more than 19,000 people cheering the 1,500 blind, amputee and paralyzed athletes as they paraded in front of the grandstand.

Each nation, proud in its team uniform, followed volunteer Boy Scout flag-bearers past the grandstand where Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon, games founder Sir Ludwig Guttmann and Olympiad chairman Dr. Robert Jackson stood at attention. Britain, the founding nation, had the honour of leading the parade.

It was a satisfying finale to a totally

unsatisfying day filled with political rumors and bickering. As with the 21st Olympic Games in Montreal, politics raised its ugly head here last night prior to the opening ceremonies. Jamaica followed in the footsteps of Yugoslavia and Kenya by withdrawing from the games because of South Africa's participation. The team was instructed by the Jamaican government not to participate, and so, its athletes watched from the stands as spectators.

The large crowd however, gave the South African team a fairly resounding ovation with a standing ovation reserved for the 88-member Canadian team.

They Gave Us Something Special

By Bob Mitchell, *Toronto Sun*

Thanks for the memories. Those words were on the lips of many last night as the Olympiad for the Physically Disabled ended at Etobicoke's Centennial Stadium with 15-year-old Kevin Page of St. Catharines moving spectators and athletes with a song he wrote in tribute to the games.

These were special games and the youngster's chorus said it all:

*"You've shown it matters little,
The absence of limb or sight.
It's the true state of mind that gives man
A will to do things right, win the fight."*





Disabled Golfers Amaze at their Show

By Joe Taylor, *Toronto Star*

For what it's worth to your ego as a golfer, even blind players take their "eye" off the ball.

Dave Wall of Regina hoisted out into the parking lot yesterday during a demonstration of disabled golf at the Olympiad for the Physically Disabled, and explained that he lifted his head.

"You have to visualize the ball mentally, and keep your eye on it while you swing. Just the way you do when you have full vision," he said. Wall was one of four disabled golfers who participated in the demonstration. It was an amazing performance. Ed Membry was firing them out near the 200-yard mark using only one arm. A polio survivor, he supported himself with his golf cart and a cane.

Former CFL halfback for Montreal and Saskatchewan, Karl Hilzinger, who lost both legs above the knees in an auto accident, was called out of the crowd and hit a few for distance as well.

The purpose of the demonstration was to prove that golf is an ideal sport for the handicapped and should be included in the 1980 Olympiad.



A New Generation

By Christie Blatchford, *The Globe and Mail*

The athletes participating in the Toronto Olympiad at Centennial Park are a new generation, long removed from the disabled of 1952, the year Sir Ludwig Guttman instituted the Stoke Mandeville Games.

They have, partly thanks to sport and the confidence that competition brings, discovered pride, and you can see the pride in a dozen ways. You could say, without great exaggeration, that the disabled have, in recent years, come out of the closet.

For instance, until 1967, there was no such thing as wheelchair sports in Canada. And now, just nine years later there are more than 80 disabled Canadians wheeling around Centennial Park. And they do wheel around; if they're not competing they're doing wheelies in their chairs even if sometimes they fall out of them. All this is a long way of saying that North America's disabled have learned that there is no need for them to be outcasts or non-participants.

The problem is that people who are not disabled, commonly called "walkers", have a great deal more trouble understanding this fact than do the wheelchair athletes.



Wilma Was Here

Wilma Rudolph-Eldridge, who was the toast of the 1960 Rome Olympics when she won triple gold, was with us during the past two days.

Her special interest in our Olympiad arises from the fact that she herself triumphed over disability. As a young girl she contracted polio and wore braces until she was eight.

Go for the Gold!

By Dan Proudfoot, *Sunday Sun*

At first there seemed something highfalutin' about these games of the 1976 Olympiad for the Physically Disabled. They are so high-minded and purposeful that they are almost hard to take. The aims, for example, sound arid dry. "The 1976 Olympiad will demonstrate to Canadians, particularly potential employers, that an individual with a disability can lead an almost normal life." That blurb from the promotional material isn't going to make anyone tingle with excitement. But then you listen to the athletes themselves and the focus changes and it all begins to make an exciting kind of sense.

Chris Stoddart, a decorated wheelchair racer from Willowdale, puts it this way: "People have two assumptions. One, that you're in constant pain. And two, that you're living the life of a martyr. Well, I'm in no pain, and I can live it up with the best of them, and I do."

So perhaps the best way to gain a sense about these disabled games is through the athletes. The games are big, bigger than the Winter Olympics, big enough to be clouded already by politics and big enough to inspire weeks of newspaper coverage. Chris Stoddart is a track specialist, and whether he wins medals or not, his efforts say more about the games than does anything else.



The athletic capabilities are bound to draw a lot of headlines and attention on television. The athletes will prove to be people leading "almost normal lives", except they'll be competing at a world level. Our Olympiad is the largest in the 25-year history of international games for the disabled. Its slogan – A Time to be Together – is commemorated by Canada Post with a 20-cent Olympiad stamp.

With a detailed training program prepared by his coach Graham Ward, Stoddart's racing style looks ef-

fortless. Each stroke starts with his hands back behind his shoulders on the rear-most part of the tire and ends with his hands a few inches above the ground... about 30-35 strokes every 100 metres. "I don't know anything about my opponents," he says. "I don't care who's there and how fast they go. When I have my Canadian uniform on, no one is going to beat me." Stoddart is outspoken, relentlessly critical of obstacles that stand in his way, and never shy about voicing his opinion. The only way he wants to be known is as the 800-metre gold medal winner.







1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled

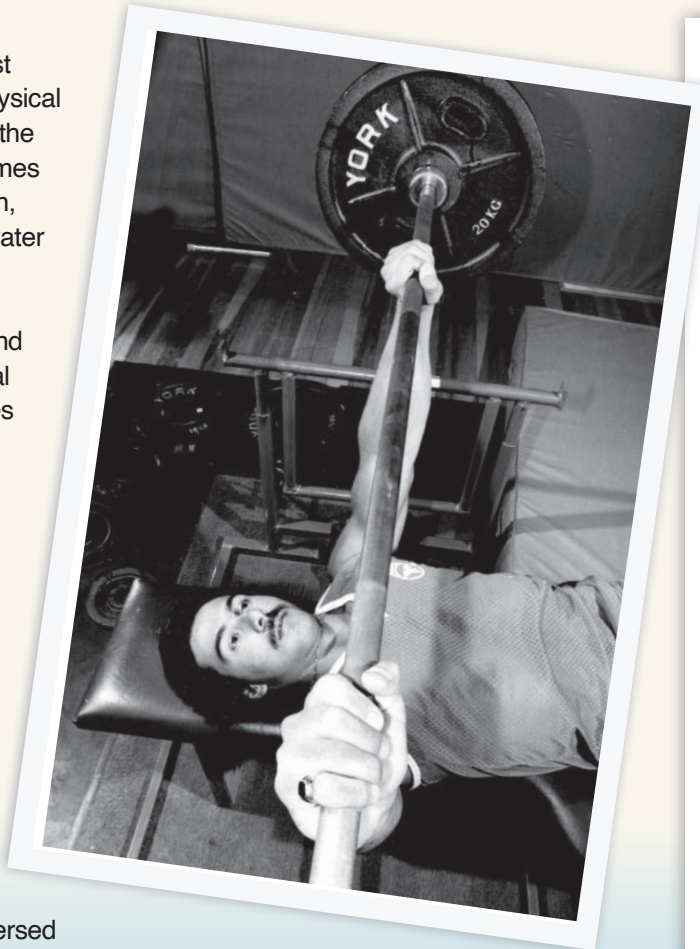
“Best Ever” Games Proclamation Still Stands

The 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled may be the best offering for Ontario athletes with physical disabilities ever. And it may be that the tradition of self-proclamation by games organizers was not only factual then, but still stands as the event’s highwater mark today.

Tremendously organized. Well appointed with volunteers. Pomp and pageantry. Special guests. Financial success. Unprecedented pre-games promotion. Unparalleled spirit. Ample media coverage – print and cable TV predominantly. And more records broken than ever before.

One distractor however, as pointed out by athletes and media alike, was poor public response. Not only were there comparatively few people in the spectator stands throughout the event but, worse still for the participants was the fact that a good part of the large crowd that had gathered for the Duke and Duchess of York’s attendance dispersed immediately thereafter... an indication to athletes of the public’s lack of interest in the event in a very direct fashion.

Notwithstanding the attendance, North York hosted a formidable games experience for the athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and their friends and family. The likes of these games, arguably, have still not been approached by its successors.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR • CITY OF NORTH YORK

A Message from Mayor Lastman

The City of North York is pleased to be hosting the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled. Our corporations and community have given us double-barreled support for these games. There is an important reason why North York has chosen to get involved in such a big way.

As Mayor, I feel that we have a mission to accomplish. There have been 11 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled up until now. Yet, for some unexplained reason, the general public hasn’t caught on to the excitement of disabled sports. People generally don’t know about the athletic action they have been missing.

North York intends to raise the awareness of disabled sports to a new, all-time high. We want spectators to jam the game sites for these incredibly exciting three days of great sports.

In the past, these games were largely unsung. We hope to change all that by tuning people into the fact that disabled sports are competitive and thrilling to watch and that our games will be a fun event for the entire family. I am certain we will see existing records broken as the athletes reach new pinnacles of achievement.

You will marvel at their athletic prowess, their strength, skill and determination.

As Honorary Chairman of the games, I am appealing to all cities and towns across Ontario to come to North York this July to support their athletes, cheer them on and make this competition their most memorable to date.

Cordially,

Mel Lastman
Mayor



**NEWS RELEASE
COMMUNIQUÉ**

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND RECREATION
MINISTÈRE DU TOURISME ET DES LOISIRS

RELEASE: Immediate

**NORTH YORK TO HOST 1987
ONTARIO GAMES FOR THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED**

NORTH YORK, May 4, 1987 -- The 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled will be hosted by the City of North York, Ontario Minister of Tourism and Recreation John Eakins and Elinor Caplan, MPP for Oriole announced today at a news conference to kickoff the city's promotional campaign.

"I am pleased that the Ministry and the City of North York are supporting this opportunity for Ontario's physically disabled to participate in a major competition," Caplan said. "Amputee, blind, cerebral palsy and wheelchair athletes compete in a wide variety of athletic events and will improve their ability to compete on a national and international level."

Approximately 400 athletes, coaches and support staff will participate in the Games, which run from July 16-19. The 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled follow Regional Games in Cornwall, St. Catharines and Windsor.

In support of Games for the Physically Disabled, the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation is contributing \$90,000 to the Provincial Games and \$45,000 to Regional Games. The balance of funding for the Provincial Games will be raised by the North York Organizing Committee through corporate sponsorship and fundraising.

"North York was selected for its excellent facilities and planning for the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled," Eakins said during a ceremonial cheque presentation to North York Mayor Mel Lastman. "With the help of many volunteers, I am optimistic the four-day event will be a success."

North York Students Create 80-Metre Mural Tribute

Mix 60 panels of half-inch plywood, 40 pots of paint, dozens of paint brushes plus copious amounts of paper towels. Add over 70 students, masking tape and photo film. The result – an 80-metre mural depicting the spirit of the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled.

The larger-than-life mural, themed "Watch Us Now", involved nine North York schools with students ranging from Grade 4 through to 13. With a grant from the Ministry of Culture and Citizenship, John Mergler, Coordinator of Visual Arts for the North York Board of Education, managed the organization of the mural, and two local artists, Ken Bray and Denis Clift, were commissioned to supervise the creation.

Students familiarized themselves with the athletes through an orientation. Films from prior games were shown and the students participated in sport demonstrations for a better understanding of the concept of different disabilities. Students then translated their thoughts and experiences to the installation.

The completed mural hung on the south wall of the North York Civic Stadium for the duration of the games, and then was transported to North York's Centennial Arena for permanent display.



Athletes of the 1987 Games

AGINCOURT: Robert Fenton; AJAX: Tom Callahan; BARRIE: Ed Doerksen; BELLEVILLE: Jeff Butcher, Sarah Thompson; BATTERSEA: Kevin Burns; BRAMALEA: Jennifer Boag; BRAMPTON: Wayne Bell, Jeff Adams; BRANTFORD: Rod Barkley, Steven John Kato, Brian Kelly, Al Slater, Justine Best, Patrick Page; BROCKVILLE: Nicole Robertson; CAMBRIDGE: Brian Shopf; CAMPBELLFORD: Debbie Van Huizen, Christine Nicholas; CHELMSFORD: Vantha Chik; CLAREMONT: Jeffrey Card; CORNWALL: Karen Ball, Robert Asselin, Jeffrey Hutt, Glenn Whitford; DON

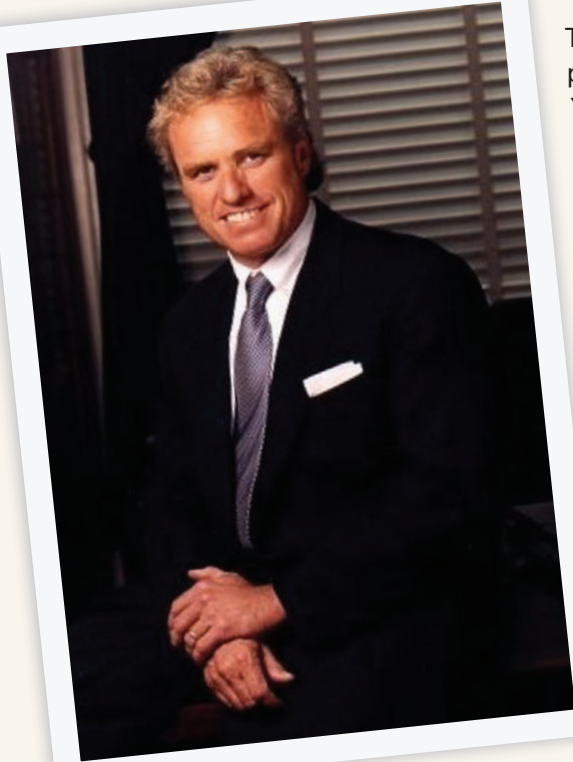
MILLS: Jeremy Ein, Romi Walsh; DOWNSVIEW: Cyril Stickney, Martha Gustafson; DRYDEN: Terry Robinson; EDWARDS: Dan Jansen; ETOBICOKE: Walt Balenovich; FAUQUIER: Joseph Huet; GEORGETOWN: Laurie Philips; GLENBURNIE: Nicole Normand; GLOUCESTER: Denis Seigny, Michael Meagher; HAMILTON: Phil Mindorff, Tami Boccaccio, Jane Britnell; HANNON: Kim Morgan; HEARST: Rick Matte, Irene Hampton; KINGSTON: Nancy Sparks, Marion Hawkins, Stephen Lalande, Bryon LaRabie, Mike

McDonald, Glenda Petrie, Alan Skinkle, Helen Belmore; KITCHENER: Ron Van Elswyk; LAKEFIELD: Melissa Hague; LIMOGES: Rick Ethier; LINDSAY: Mike Hannah, Sarah McDermott; LONDON: Theresa Lloy, Jackie Reid, Mark Quinton, Debbie Willows, Joanne Sharp; LYN: Gordon Smith; MARATHON: Eleanor Ferguson; MARKHAM: Tracey Ferguson; MASSEY: Kim Toulouse; MAXVILLE: John Baxter; MISSISSAUGA: Mike Bentley, Ellis Silliker, Jason Denham, Lisa Chisholm, John Mandrow, Alfredo Sales; MOUNT HOPE: Jim VanderKolk; NEPEAN: Brad Dawdy, Cindy

Jolicoeur, Shauna Petrie, Chris Windover, Kevin McTavish; NEWMARKET: Kevin Avery, Kevin Horlings; NIAGARA FALLS: Ron Carrie, Rob Lamb, Darren Rhodes; NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE: Jeremy Rempel; NORTH BAY: Mike Johnston; NORTH YORK: Brett Toleck, Clarence Merrigan, Jerry Nutakor, Debbie Robinson, Dawn Coyle, Clyde Coyle, David Lash; OAKVILLE: Martin McMahon, Melanie Veenaman; OLDCASTLE: Michael Reaume; OSHAWA: Wayne Boudreau, Blair Crawford, Paul Rehel, Jeff Simpson; OTTAWA: Jim Enright, Alan Farough, Huan Min Chu,

Lastman's "Going for Gold" Gala Raises \$250,000

Toronto Star, March 1987



The show was a dazzle of colour and music, and the house was packed. Billed as the "Gala Event of the Year", the guest list for North York Mayor Mel Lastman's Going for Gold \$250,000 fundraiser for the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled read like a who's who of Ontario... from Premier David Peterson, Lieutenant Governor Lincoln Alexander, *Toronto Sun* Publisher Paul Godfrey to Canadian Olympians and Argo SUNshine girls.

But when headline speaker Joseph Patrick Kennedy missed the VIP cocktail party, despite the flashy stage show and the \$300-a-plate striploin beef dinner, the seldom ruffled North York Mayor began to look ruffled. So did his wife Marilyn, the event organizer.

"I was getting pretty worried when I thought he wasn't going to make it," Lastman remarked as the rookie Massachusetts Congressman strode into the Sheraton Centre ballroom. Kennedy, 34, the eldest son of slain Senator Robert F. Kennedy, arrived on the arm of Baton Broadcasting owner Douglas Bassett.

Kennedy lauded Canada's heroes with disabilities – Rick Hansen, Steve Fonyo, Terry Fox and all athletes with disabilities for "raising the consciousness of a nation" and "paving the way for those who are disabled to be recognized as equals."



Russell Cecchini, John Shaw, Angelo Gavillucci, Herve Lord, Brian Major, Arthur Barrett, Treena Guy, Darl Pratt, Lori Mercer, Michel Morias, Rick Richardson, Murielle St. Pierre, Jeff Willbond, J.J. Simard, Brian McDonald, Celine Pateau, Katie Paialunsa, William Powell, Michael Schultz, Judith Zelman; OWEN SOUND: Doug Helm; PETERBOROUGH: Sonja Atkins, Racquel Head, Barb Robinson, Lori-Lynn Chamberlain, Roy Henderson; PICKERING: Sonny Lee, Chris Maley; POINT EDWARD: Donald Bell; QUEENSTON: Lesley Ann Pollock; ROCKWOOD: Krista Manten;

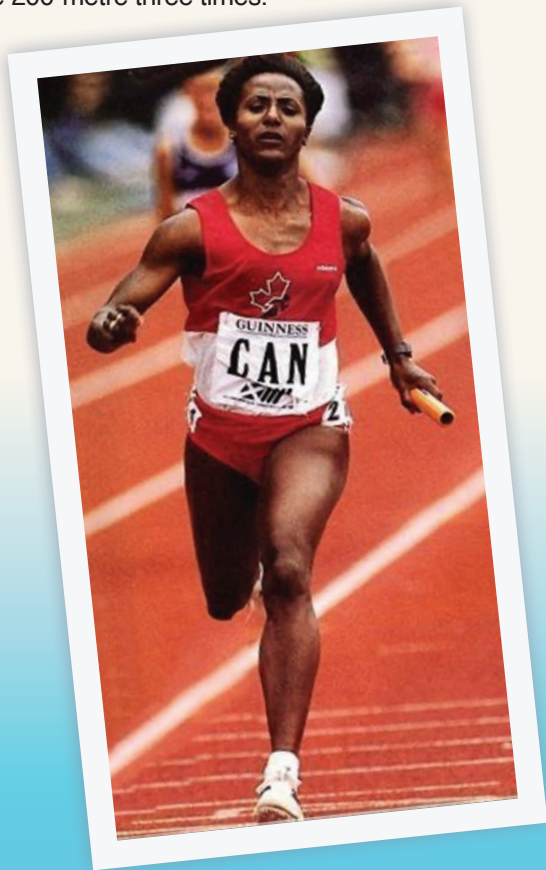
SARNIA: Shelley Ross, Dave Reeve; SCARBOROUGH: Sheril Barrer, Gino Vendetti, Marjorie Lynch, Walter Butt, Gord Hamilton, Robert Bahry, Vera Buckner, Brian Halliday, David Henderson, Mubina Jaffer, David Skuja, Chee Lau; SIMCOE: Kristy Russell; SCOTLAND: Adrian Peirson; SMITH FALLS: Susan Elson, Elwood Batist; ST. CATHARINES: Nicole Longe, Rick Gronman, Robert Mearns, Jason Santry; ST. CLAIR BEACH: Sandy Dale; ST. CLEMENTS: Clifford Voll; ST. GEORGE: Gary Howard; STRATFORD: Gerald Aubertin, Timothy Roth; STRATHROY: Peter Absolon;

STOUFFVILLE: Mark Ludbrook, Keith Brettell; SUD-BURY: Judy Smith, Jacqueline Belanger, Jacques Belanger, Gilles LaFrance, Richard Mantha, Roxanne Tremblay; TERRACE BAY: Shawn Prince; THORNHILL: Robert Martin, Wally Romer; THUNDER BAY: Peter Lunn, Ken Bjorn, Bill Swallowell, Linda Cairns, Mavis Hayes, Randy Sponchia, Robert LaBate, Cyndy Raby, Tami Saj, Ronnie Yantz; TIMMINS: Ray Villeneuve; TORONTO: Tony Ojo-Ade, Paul Lane, Kim Harnois, Andrew Clacken, Greg Mainville, Laura Misciagna, Dean Dwyer, Van Sandras Jr., David Burgess, Evan

Clarke, Cheryl Fitzgerald, Jason Gauld, Chris Stoddart, Jacqueline Hurd, Frances Tanner, May Rance, Barry Dalrymple; TRENTON: David Howe; UXBRIDGE: Mark Zillmann; VINELAND: Ed Batt; WATERDOWN: Tepi Hughes, Susan Chick; WATERLOO: Michael Tyrrell, Greg Dillard; WELLAND: Tony Wills; WEST HILL: Ian Johns, James Treuer; WHITBY: Darryl Taylor; WINDSOR: Jeff Tiessen, Daniel O'Connor, Susan Neveu, Brian Arthur, Alan Connors, David Uhrin, Rick Krumes, Joanne Bouw, Grant Porter, Jeff Allen, Bradley Allen, Carol Dobson, Maria Tost

Olympic Sprinter Quick to Support Games

Angella Taylor-Issajenko, world-class Canadian sprinter, brought her enthusiasm to the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled. She, and her internationally-acclaimed coach Charlie Francis, were on hand at the North York Civic Stadium to cheer on the athletes. With over 43 Canadian records since 1979, in distances ranging from 50 yards to 600 metres, Taylor-Issajenko was an inspiration to all Canadian athletes, able-bodied and those with disabilities alike. She won an Olympic silver medal in the 4x100-metre relay in Los Angeles in 1984. Between 1979–1987, she was ranked inside the world's top ten in the 100-metre event six times, and in the 200-metre three times.



Royal Guests Attract a Crowd

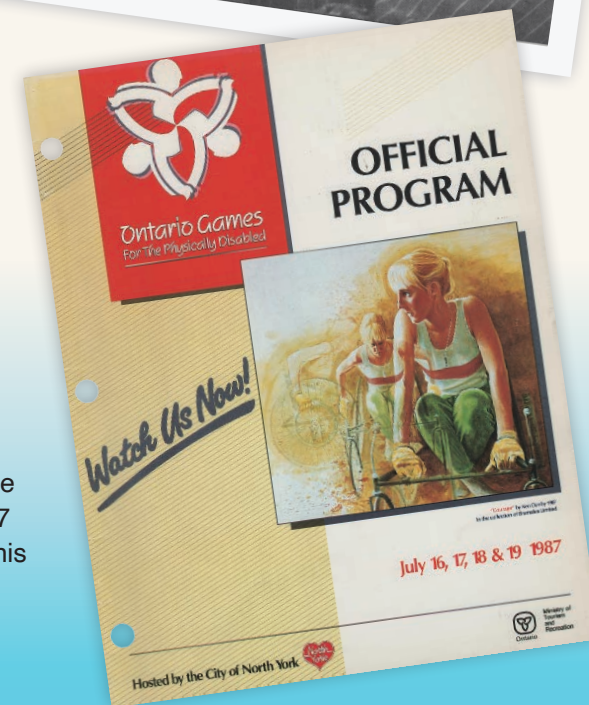
As part of an eight-day visit to Ontario, the Duke and Duchess of York visited the 1987 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled.

Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson made a brief visit to the games at North York Civic Stadium where they took in a wheelchair slalom event, the high jump event for amputees and the long jump competition for blind athletes. More than 3,000 spectators flocked to the venue to join them. The Royal couple was treated to the starter's pistol, each commencing a track event, and then presented medals to a fortunate group of athletes.



Courage Collection Captures the Spirit of the Games

Guelph's Ken Danby was one of six top Canadian artists chosen to depict their interpretation of courage – part of the "Courage Collection" – created to raise money for the 1987 Games. Danby featured top athlete Amy Doofenbaker as his model for his painting which was selected for the Games' poster and as cover art for the Souvenir Program.



GAMES



Largest Ever Parapan Am Games Makes History



ParaPan Am
TORONTO
 2015



The largest Parapan Am Games in history crossed the finish line in Toronto in August of 2015, but the legacy of the Toronto 2015 Parapan Am Games will be felt for decades to come.

The Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Organizing Committee (TO2015) estimated that between ticketed events, municipal activations and free PANAMANIA festivities, there were close to a quarter million visits to games venues. After the first weekend of the Parapan Am Games, more than five million Canadians (14 percent of the population) tuned in to watch the unprecedented coverage on CBC TV/ICI Radio-Canada.

Buoyed by a large and enthusiastic home crowd, Team Canada had its best showing ever at a Parapan Am Games, winning 168 medals, including 50 gold. The team finished second in the medal standings behind Brazil, the ensuing host country of the following year's Paralympic Games. Some of the biggest stars included Brazil's Daniel Dias, known as the "Michael Phelps of para-swimming", who won eight gold medals. Nineteen-year-old Canadian swimmer Aurelie Rivard was the most-decorated female athlete of the games, winning seven medals while smashing the world record in the 100-metre freestyle event.

Other historic Parapan Am Games performances included Cuba's track athlete Omara Durand clocking the fastest 100-metre ever by a female para-athlete and also notching a new world record in the 200-metre for visually impaired sprinters. Amputee Jarryd Wallace of the United States defended his 2011 Parapan Am gold medal on the track in the 100-metre with a world



record time of 10.71 seconds, and the debut of wheelchair rugby, formerly known as “murderball”, saw rivals Canada and the United States showcase the sport in front of sold-out crowds.

“The Toronto 2015 Parapan Am Games truly captivated and transformed our imaginations,” said Saād Rafi, chief executive officer, TO2015. “Witnessing the athletes’ focus, determination and willpower inspired us to dream big and reach for new heights. The athletes defeated challenges and set new records, the crowd cheered loudly and proudly, and our community demonstrated that we embrace diversity and inclusion.”

With more than 300 medal events, the full stands and cheering crowds made the Parapan Am Games a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many athletes. By the end of the last day TO2015 sold more than 90,000 tickets to the Parapan Am Games.

In the digital realm during the games, Toronto2015.org averaged more than 85,000 visitors and 230,000 page views every day. On Twitter, there was an average of 19 million daily impressions of the TO2015 hashtags, and games-related Facebook posts reached more than 750,000 people.

The success of the games was a testament to the work and dedication of an enthusiastic army of volunteers and Chevrolet, the presenting sponsor of the volunteer program. The 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games saw one of the largest peacetime volunteer recruitments in Canadian history. Clad in their bright orange shirts, designed and manufactured by Joe Fresh as part of Loblaw’s Premier Partnership with the games, more than 23,000 friendly faces supported the games at sport venues, the CIBC Pan Am/Parapan Am Athletes’ Village, cultural events, official functions, Opening and Closing Ceremonies and other places across the games footprint.



Province of Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne remarked, "After the massive success of the Pan Am Games, we kept the momentum going with the Parapan Am Games. These Parapan Am Games were the most accessible games ever, and included extensive live coverage that made them the most widely broadcasted Parapan Am Games in Canadian history." Said City of Toronto Mayor John Tory, "With the close of these games, a new generation of future athletes have been inspired. Thank you to the athletes, volunteers, visitors, residents, businesses and partners who embraced the games and have shown the world what our great city has to offer."

Chief Bryan LaForme noted that the Aanii, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, were thrilled to be the first-ever Host First Nation of the Parapan Am Games. "Canada was the first country to acknowledge the importance of its indigenous peoples to this major sporting event," he commended. "We hope that by recognizing the ongoing relationship First Nations share with their traditional territories, Canada has opened the door for other countries to honour the rights of their own indigenous peoples. We applaud the 1,600 athletes who participated in 15 sports."

"These have been brilliant games in Toronto," summed José Luis Campo, President of the Americas Paralympic Committee. "The Toronto 2015 Organizing Committee has raised the bar and set new standards for all future Parapan Am Games organizers, and helped take the Americas' Paralympic Movement to new levels. These games will not only leave a great legacy here in Toronto but also in all 28 of the competing countries... as athletes continue to push the boundaries of possibility."



Evolution of Games Inspires Social Change

By Jamie Millage

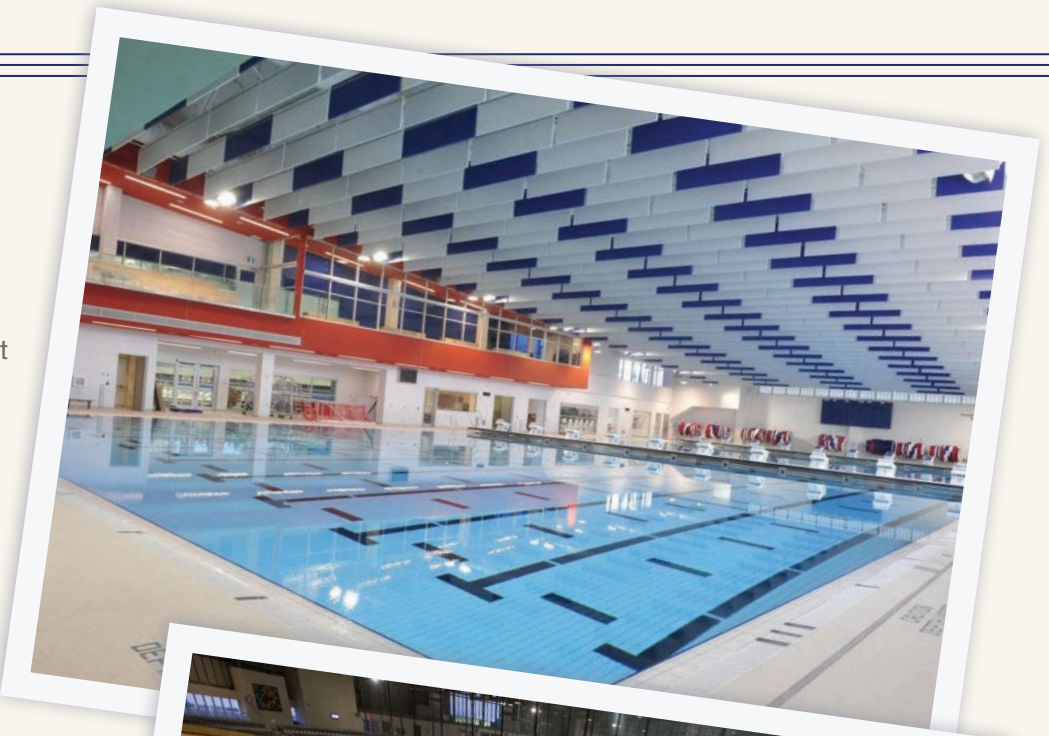
Stretching 5,300 square kilometres across Toronto and the Golden Horseshoe, the 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games were the largest multi-sport event ever held in Canada.

The games were about the athletes, and first and foremost the games' legacy was vividly remembered in the performances of the competitors, and the young athletes they inspired. The profile and exposure that the Parapan Am Games provided was a fantastic platform for athlete recruitment.

There were also lasting changes to the landscape that included housing, transportation and education, and state-of-the-art athletic facilities. In total, there were 28 venues used to host events for the Pan Am Games, and 12 venues for the Parapan Am Games, which saw improvements and renovations for accessibility, or were built from the ground up to serve the games and all people of Ontario.

For example, the University of Toronto Scarborough Tennis Centre hosted six days of wheelchair tennis, and now the eight new accessible acrylic courts serve all ages and abilities as a legacy of the games. One of the most unique sporting facilities in Canada – the Cisco Milton Pan Am/Parapan Am Velodrome is the only facility in Canada which meets the most stringent requirements set by the International Cycling Union, a beacon for elite cycling in Canada. Located at York University, the CIBC Pan Am/Parapan Am Athletics Stadium not only hosted the Opening Ceremonies, but is the home of a 400-metre track and a new infield capable of hosting a variety of field events.

And perhaps the crown jewel of Pan Am/Parapan Am venues is the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre, co-owned by the City of Toronto and the University of Toronto Scarborough. This facility is 312,000 square feet, equipped with two Olympic-sized, 10-lane swimming pools, a 25m diving tank, four gymnasiums built to international standards, a 200m indoor track, double-story fitness centre, a 41-foot-high climbing wall and four teaching studios. The facility was announced then as the largest venue being built for the 2015 Games and represents the largest federal investment in amateur sport in Canadian history.





Let the Games Begin A Snapshot of Five Decades of Provincial Games for Ontario's Athletes with Disabilities

Well before the first race is run or swum, first leap long or high, ball tossed toward basket or jack, or first field implement thrown, a committed team of organizers have, like the athletes themselves, spent countless hours preparing for the event.

Planning for provincial games often begins several years ahead of time, particularly in the areas of community fundraising, sponsorship generation and the securing of accommodations. Traditionally, Ontario communities interested in hosting these games prepared and presented a bid proposal to ParaSport® Ontario (formerly Sport for Disabled – Ontario) to host its sporting property – the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled. Sport for Disabled – Ontario (SDO) would then make recommendations to the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation (later, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport) to assist in the decision as to which community would host the next games. Although the community that was awarded the games was supported financially by both the Ministry and SDO, it was expected to generate additional capital with a lens on legacy funds for that community post-event.

Once awarded the games, the host community goes to work to enlist a team of volunteers to create first, an organizing committee, and then a network of subcommittees to manage areas such as administration, volunteers, ceremonies, finance, fundraising, promotions, publicity, protocol, awards and special events, media, transportation services and sports technical areas... no small undertaking by any stretch, and all in the tradition of hosting the "Best Games Ever!"

Much has changed over five decades of provincial games for Ontario's athletes with physical disabilities. But what hasn't changed is that the games are still all about the athletes.

Athlete's Oath

"I accept the challenge of competition because it provides the opportunity to test and demonstrate my abilities against my fellow athletes. My rewards are the recognition I receive for my achievements and the companionship and friendships I establish during the competition. My involvement in these games will increase my understanding in all areas of competitive sports, while encouraging others to take an active part in similar activities."

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THROUGH THIS COMPETITION WE ALL WIN.

The true competitive spirit is no better exemplified than through the dedication and determination of physically disabled athletes. Their performance ensures that the real winners of this competition are all of us. Both disabled and able-bodied competitors and non-competitors alike.

Come out and join us as we cheer on some of Ontario's finest athletes, while they compete in preparation for the 1988 World Paralympics.

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NOVEMBER, 10/10/10, 1987

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ONTARIO SUMMER GAMES SITES

(1975-2003: Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled)
 (2004-2007: Ontario Paralympic Summer Championships)
 (2008-2019: Ontario Parasport Summer Games)

Cambridge: 1975; London: 1976, 2006; Brantford: 1977;
 Windsor: 1978, 1985, 1994; Oshawa: 1979, 2000; Sault Ste.
 Marie: 1980; Burlington: 1981; Sarnia: 1982, 2003, 2007,
 2011; Brampton: 1983; Toronto: 1984; No Games: 1986,
 2001, 2010, 2012, 2017; North York: 1987, 1988;
 Ottawa: 1989, 2015, 2016; Etobicoke: 1990, 2004;
 Hamilton: 1991; Sudbury: 1992; Thunder Bay: 1993;
 St. Catharines: 1995; Peterborough: 1996; New Liskeard:
 1997; Variety Village (Scarborough): 1998, 2008; Kitchener:
 1999, 2002; Essex: 2005; Woodstock: 2009; Kingston:
 2013; Northumberland: 2014; Durham Region: 2019.



ONTARIO WINTER GAMES SITES

(2010: officially named Ontario Parasport Winter Games)

Sault Ste. Marie: 2000; Huntsville: 2006, 2012; Collingwood:
 2008; Kingston: 2010; City of Brantford & County of Brant: 2017.



As all athletes know
 it's going the extra mile,
 everyday,
 that can make dreams
 come true...

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU!



Guts....



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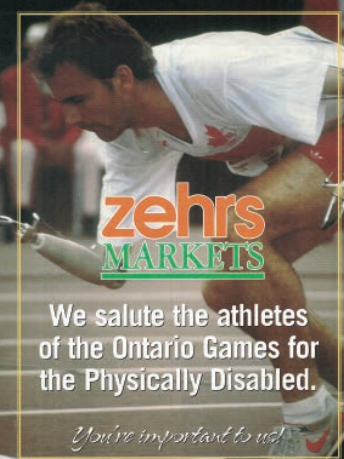


REAL WINNERS.

TSN proudly salutes the achievements of all the athletes and volunteers who make the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled happen. You're all winners.




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We salute the athletes of the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled.

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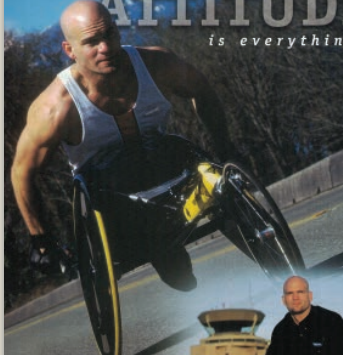


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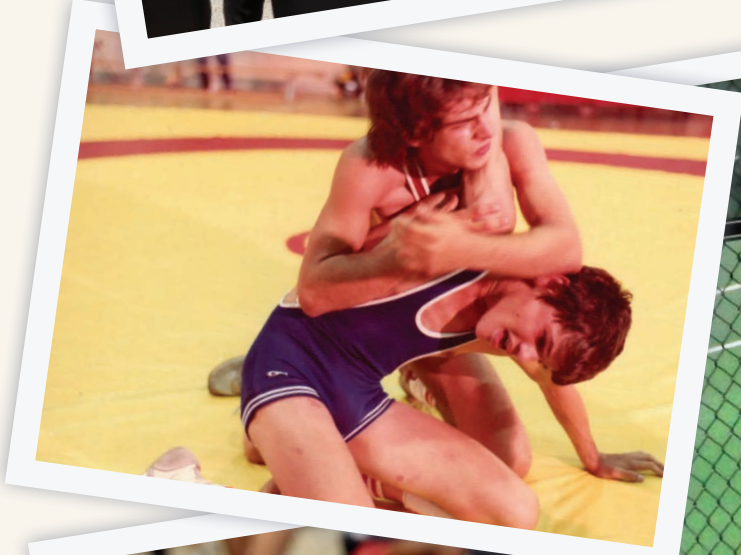
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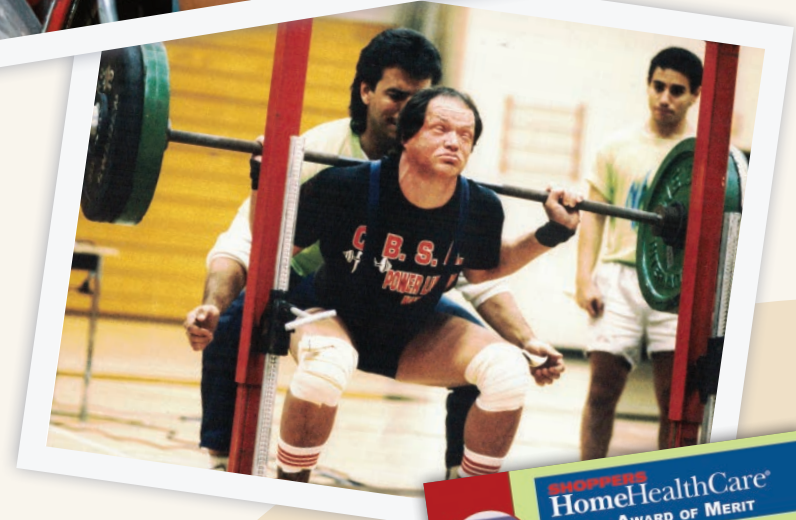
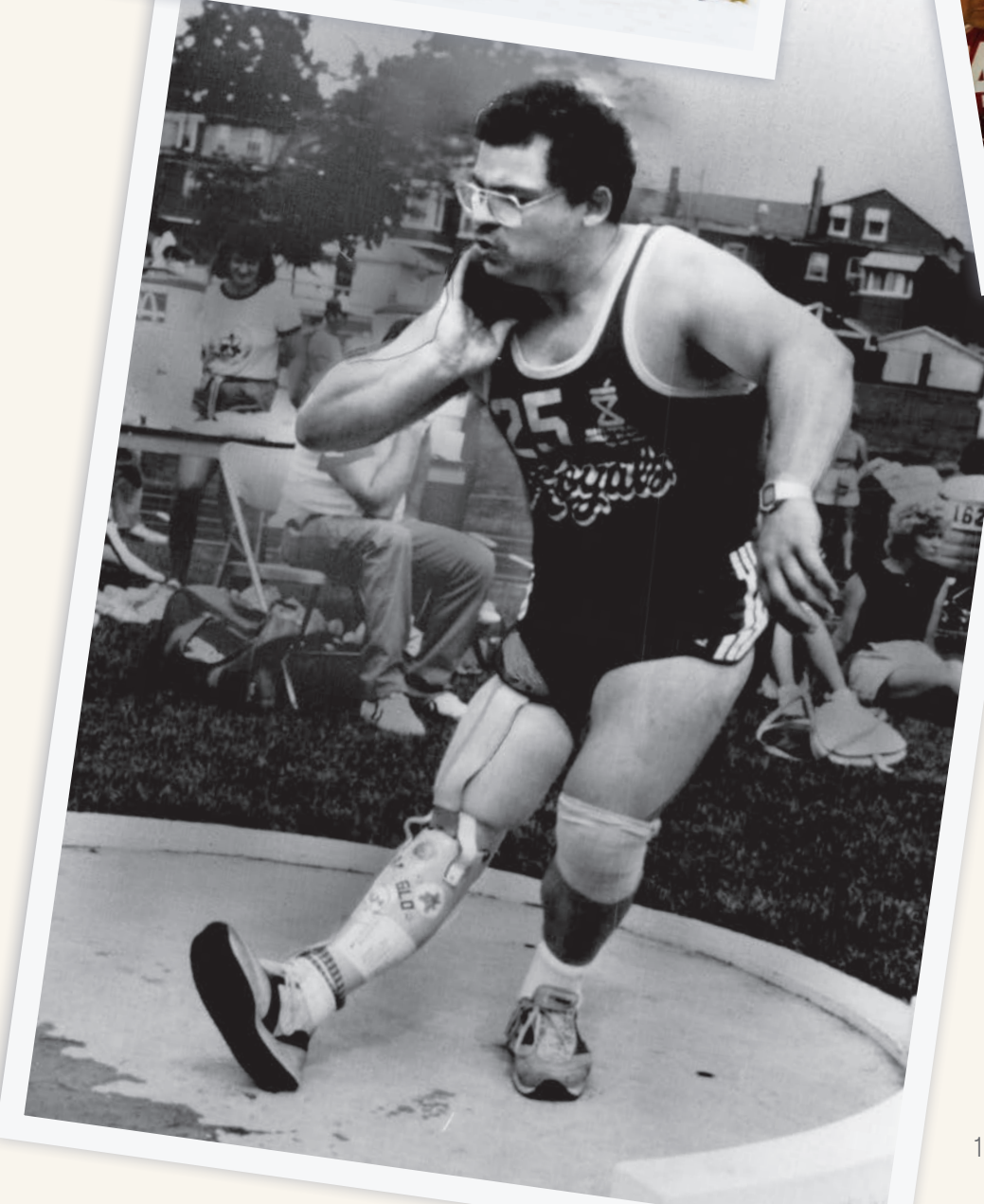
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Weetabix proudly supports the 2014 Ontario ParaSport Canada taking place in our hometown of Calgary and the athletes who give 100% every day to reach their goals. We're a partner with CPD organizations, and we're always the first to bring these athletes the best cereal choice. **87% of daily whole grain meals.** **Only 5g of sugar.** **High Fiber.**









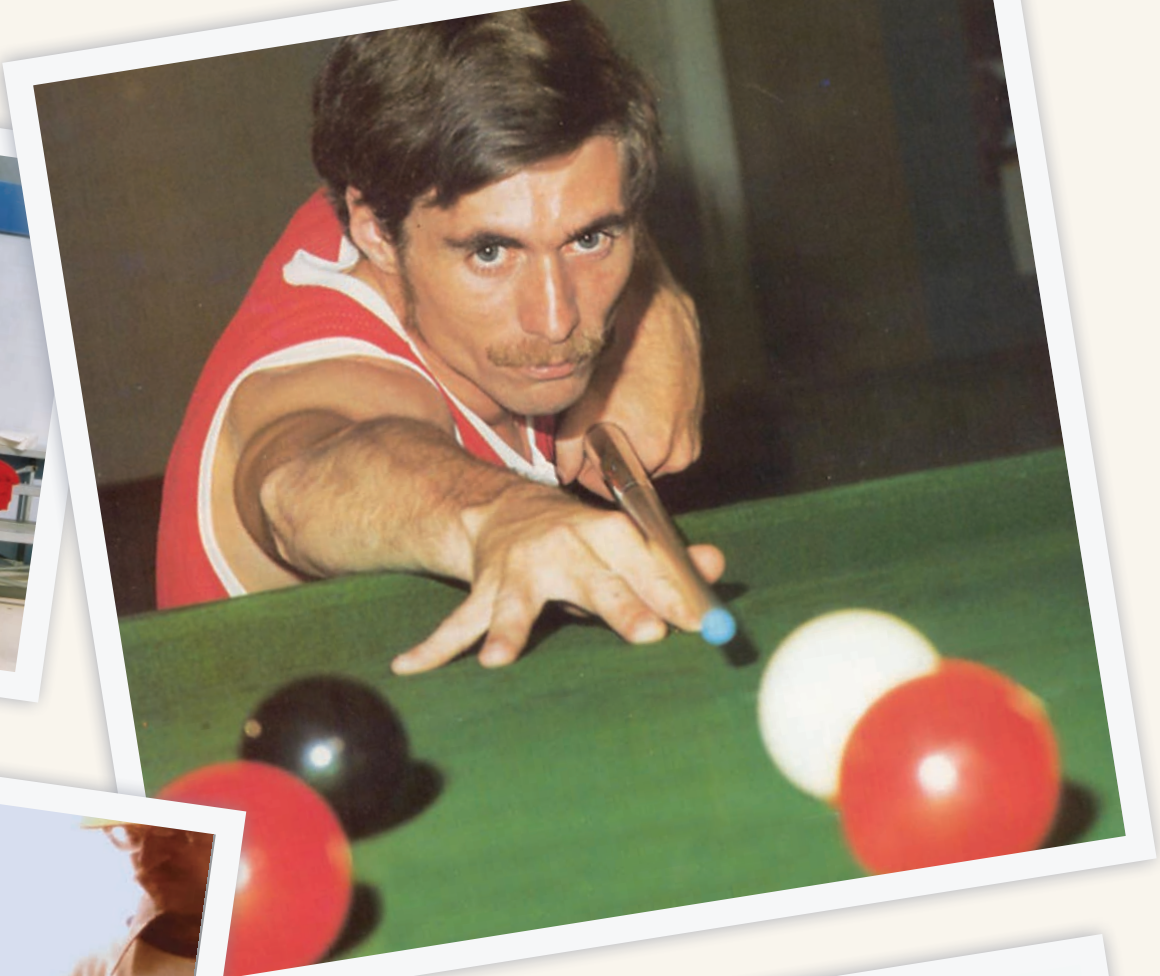


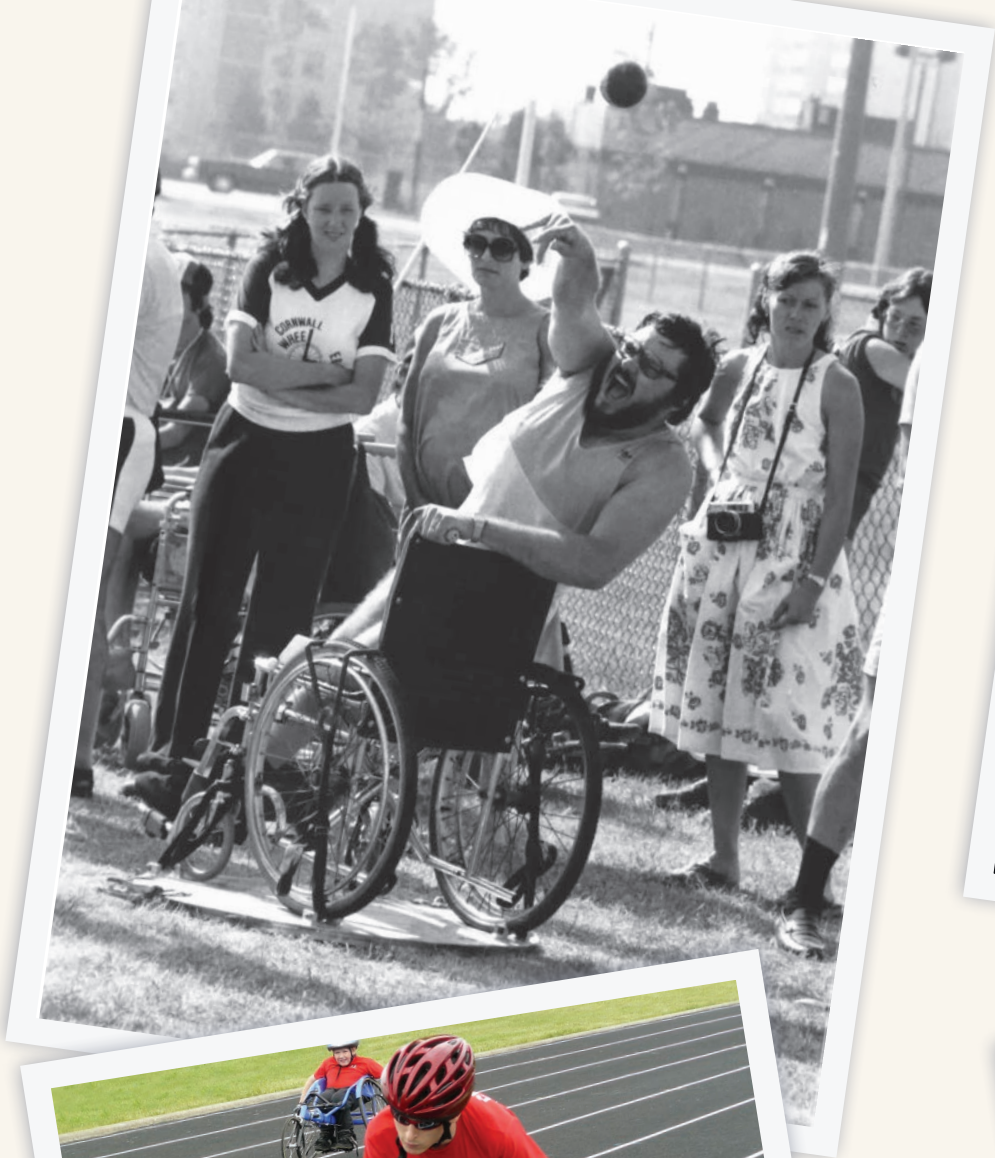




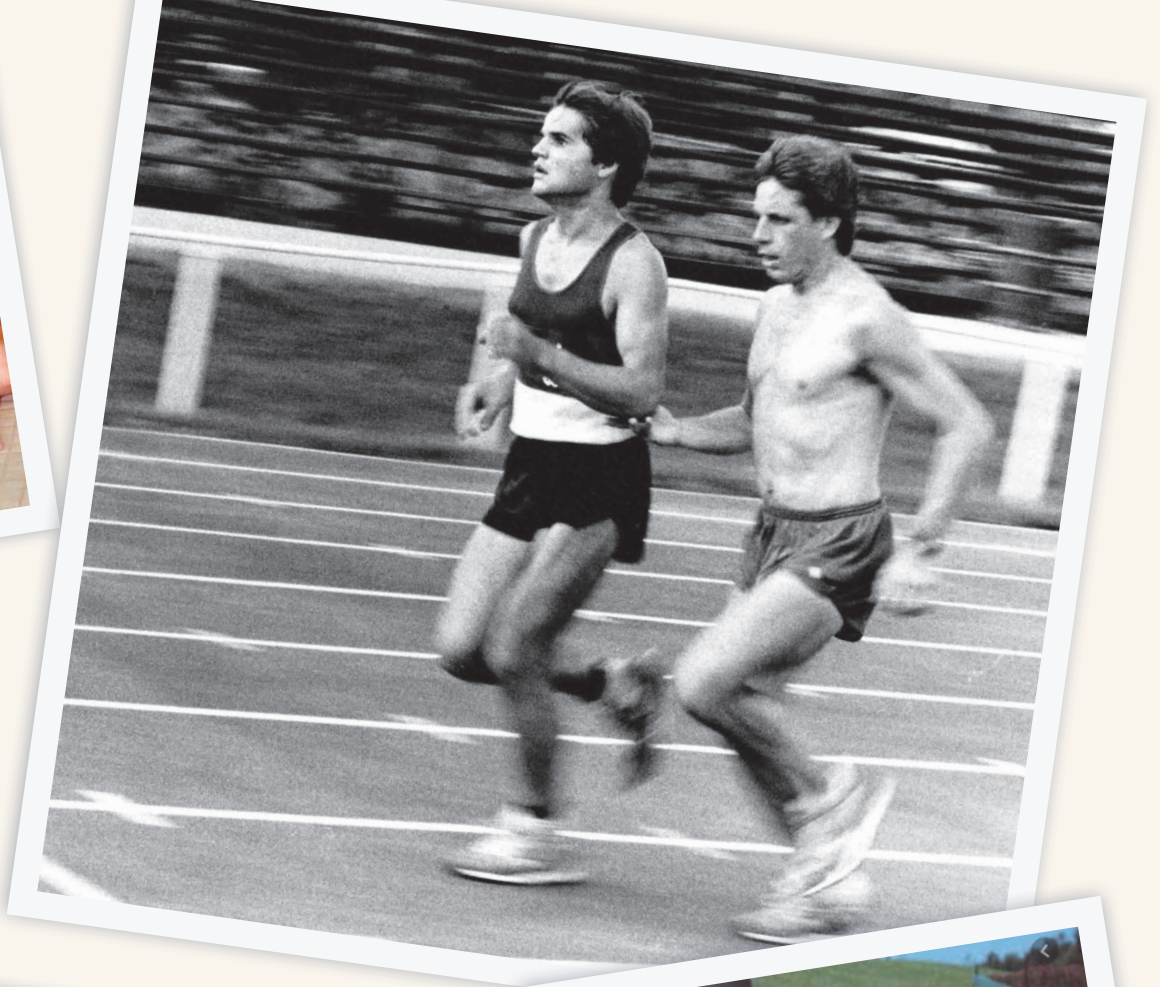




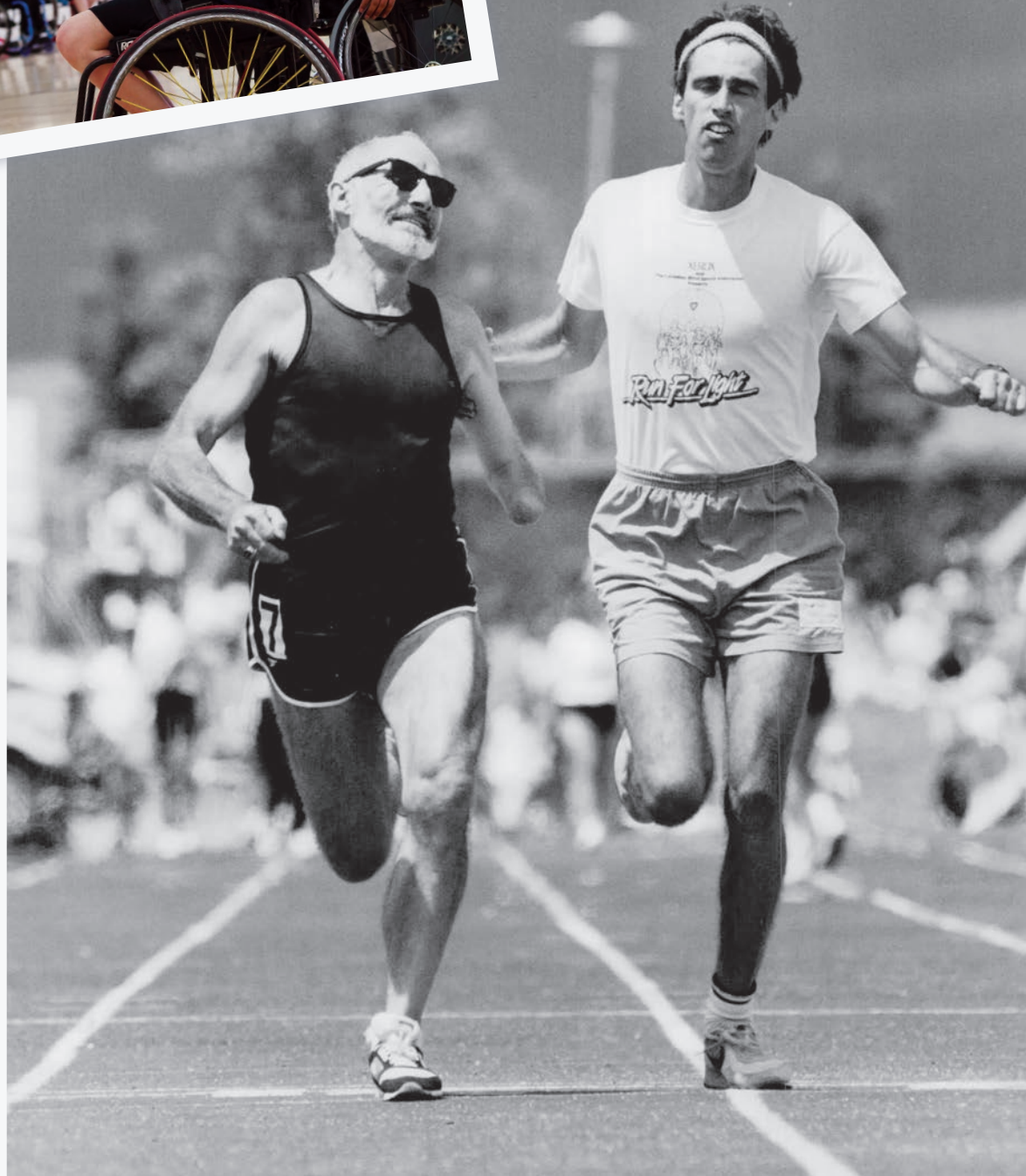
















ABOUT THE BOOK

A pioneer's path is rarely a straight one. It's a meandering course. And characteristically, settlers prosper in a land far removed from the trails traversed to get there. Such is the case with the Parasport Movement in Ontario.

Ontario's Parasport pioneers were paramount in charting a revolutionary new course for athletes with a disability not only in the province, but in the country and internationally.

Not only in boardrooms, but in backyards, locker rooms, on rehab mats and bleacher seats is where the machinations for change were first voiced and sculpted by these visionaries. Hardly could they have imagined what the Parasport Movement looks like today.

Weaving through many obstacles, their achievements serve as the fabric and cornerstones of the movement we know today, paving the way for new generations of parasport participants and athletes. Their heroic stories, many previously uncelebrated, are lauded in *The POWER of PARASPORT: Celebrating Five Decades in Ontario*.

Supported in part by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and our family of corporate sponsors, this legacy publication will educate and motivate. It is sure to inspire others to lead, compete, volunteer and advocate to ensure the continued growth of parasport opportunities for Ontario's youth and adults with disabilities.

With thanks for the support of the following:

