



Adia Froehle-Baker:

EXPLORING NEW PASSIONS



Adia's mother found her name in a baby book. Adia (Ah-dee-ah) is a Swahili word meaning "gift." So perhaps it is no coincidence that when Adia reflects upon her experiences with the Loppet Foundation's nordic ski program at Anwatin Middle School, she repeatedly mentions how much she appreciates that the program is free to families. She feels gratitude for having been a part of the middle school ski team, a team that Adia notes, her mom would not have been able to afford.

Adia Froehle-Baker was on the lookout for a new winter sport when she learned about the Anwatin Ski Team in sixth grade. A basketball injury convinced her to try something new. There were few options for girls, and her mother could not cover the expense of hockey. The ski team at the North Minneapolis school, however, was available at no cost to all boys and girls in sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

The team gave Adia the opportunity to gain new skills and to join a group of young athletes who quickly became a cohesive team. A highlight of that first year was a trip to Maplelag Resort in Callaway, about 4 1/2 hours northwest of Minneapolis.

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"We went on a winter field trip to Maplelag Resort, which is this really fancy ski resort that had unlimited cookies. I love that resort. There are a bunch of trails, and they are out in the woods, this far away from the trees" -- she shows a narrow space with her hands -- "so you could ski through the woods."

Next up: Loppet Adventure Camp

Sixteen-year-old Adia recently wrapped up her second season on the ski team at South High School, the largest public school in Minneapolis. She speaks fondly, almost wistfully, about her experiences as a middle school ski team member. She progressed from the winter program to attending the summer mountain bike program and several Loppet Adventure Camps, which allowed her to expand her skill set to include roller skiing, trail running and canoeing.

Adia was even able to earn a bicycle through regular attendance at practices and races and volunteering. It was the first bike she owned, apart from a kiddie bike that she had at age 5, and she still uses it for transportation.

She delights most in describing an experience playing capture the flag at Loppet Adventure Camp: "I was a really fit little kid," she says. "I was playing so hard that I didn't even know I had gashed my leg. It was a cut about as long as your pen. I didn't even notice until the game was over. It is really fun to play capture the flag because you have all the trees to hide behind. I loved playing that game."

'I will keep skiing'

All of this experience gave Adia a leg up for high school sports. "There were a lot of kids in high school that didn't know how to ski, and I was put right away in the middle group," she explains. She is planning to ski as a junior and senior. "I like skiing," she says. "I will keep skiing."

With research pointing to the value of quality out-of-school time for academic and personal success (for details, visit <http://afterschoolalliance.org>), the Loppet Foundation is doing its part to make that experience accessible for many youth like Adia.

"The Loppet gives an opportunity to kids that might not otherwise have it, because it is free and most of the [related] expenses are paid," says Adia. She remarks that the program's strengths lie in supportive coaching and in the variety of experiences it provides.



The Loppet Foundation provides opportunities and creates passion for year-round outdoor activities and adventures in the Minneapolis area, especially among inner-city youth.