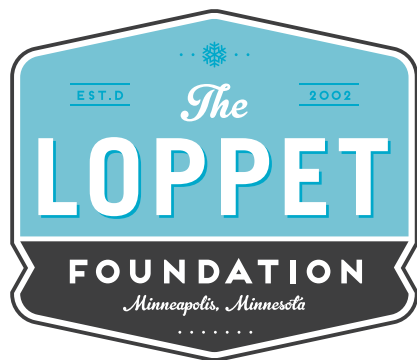


# THE LOPPET FOUNDATION 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Mission Statement

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

## Loppet Foundation Continues Rapid Growth

In 2013-2014 the Loppet Foundation strengthened organizational capacity to extend the reach of our existing events and programs, raise awareness of our mission-driven work and position us for growth. And grow we have - in each of our four focus areas: Events, Adventures, Stewardship and Loppet Nordic Racing (LNR). This report highlights the tremendous efforts undertaken by the Loppet team over the past year. Efforts include running the largest and most successful Loppet Festival to date, adding a new middle school ski and bike team, launching a new spring Loppet event and the Age Gap Relays, and winning the Junior National Championships for LNR.

## Investment in Staff and Resources Pays Dividends

Over the past year we have dedicated significant time and resources to strengthening our internal infrastructure through various capacity-building efforts. We have expanded our use of our customer relationship management system to facilitate and bolster our connection to, and communication with, our event participants, volunteers, members, donors and individuals who participate in LNR programs or Loppet clubs.

With the help of our audit team and a new financial manager, we have fine-tuned our financial controls and processes, enabling us to better track all of our programs. We have changed our fiscal year to align with our programming cycles. In August 2014, the Charities Review Council, an independent organization that co-created benchmarks of nonprofit governance, finance, fundraising and public communication, certified that the Loppet Foundation meets its rigorous Accountability Standards®.



## The Loppet Foundation

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## CORE STAFF

Margaret Adelsman  
**Data Manager**

Piotr Bednarski  
**Head Coach**  
**LNR Director**

Mike Erickson  
**Operations Director**  
**Race Director**

John Munger  
**Executive Director**

Allie Rykken  
**Head Program Coach,**  
**Anwatin Middle School**  
**Adventure Camp Director**  
**Design Coordinator**

Kristen Spargo  
**Director of Advancment**

Anthony Taylor  
**Adventures Director**

Kelly Underkofler  
**Sponsorship Coordinator**  
**Head Program Coach,**  
**Northeast Middle School**



The Loppet Foundation relies on many key part-time staff to advance our work:

Joanne Guillery  
**Special Events Coordinator**

Reid Lutter  
**Assistant Head Coach**

Jon Miller  
**Head Program Coach,**  
**Nellie Stone Johnson**

Nancy Nelson  
**Volunteer Coordinator**

Jenni O'Link  
**Registration Coordinator**

Kim Rudd  
**FAST KIDS Coordinator**

Megan Trumper  
**Administrative Assistant**

Our new Advancement department helps us to tell our story more effectively. We have raised awareness of our mission with people who previously only recognized us through our events. Increasingly, people know that we work in North Minneapolis elementary and middle schools, getting underserved youth outdoors and active year round and know that we collaborate with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) on stewarding Theodore Wirth Park, improving trails, planting trees and planning for the future. This year our stronger storytelling and dedicated development team helped us attract support from new funders including Allina Health, the General Mills Foundation, the Langwater Foundation and the Riverway Foundation.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Events

Each year nearly 15,000 people participate in our large-scale community events; tens of thousands more attend, and millions more experience a small piece through the media. People plan their year around them, staying active every day to prepare for the next Loppet event. Trails initially created for our events are now part of an unparalleled urban trail system. And it all started with the City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival in 2003.

This past year the Loppet Ski Festival found a new home on the banks of Lake Calhoun; between bad winters, construction projects and an experiment with a Hennepin Avenue finish in Uptown, a new Loppet Village site was the fourth finish area in as many years. Overall the event drew 11,000 participants across 21 events - from cross country ski races of varying distances and a snow sculpture contest to the first-ever Minneapolis dogsled race and, of course, the Luminary Loppet. For the first time the festival was spread over three days, featured a central festival area, had separate skate and classic days and included a full marathon course. Dedicated volunteers faced the "polar vortex" with fortitude throughout the weeks leading up to the Loppet and during the weekend itself.

While the Loppet Foundation originated in the snow, with the addition of the Salomon CITYTRAIL Loppet in the spring, we now have an event in every season. The new part-trail, part-path running event from downtown Robbinsdale to the iconic cherry and spoon in Minneapolis attracted nearly 500 runners for the inaugural race. Based on the response this year, we expect this event to grow rapidly in the years to come. By comparison the first Trail Loppet attracted 150 participants; the 2014 Surly Trail Loppet sold out for the third year in a row - with a record attendance of 1,729.

This year's Surly Trail Loppet also saw the first-ever Age Gap Relay, a new feature of Loppet events, that provides the chance for adults and youth to partner and compete together (see side bar on page 3). The Age Gap Relay offers an outlet for our middle school youth and mentors to build connections and work toward goals together. This effort builds on the Paddle Partner aspect of the UCare Tri-Loppet, which continued to be one of our most enjoyable and family-friendly events.

## Adventures

Thanks to generous funding from UCare, the Loppet Foundation started a third middle school ski and bike team at Northeast Middle School, with Kelly Underkofler, a three-time U.S. Paralympian, as the head coach. The addition of a third team sparked increased opportunities for the athletes to compete against their peers, instead of against older high school students; 2014 marked the first-ever All-North ski race at MPRB's Farview Park.

We also added Minne-Loppet programs at Elizabeth Hall International and Park Brook Elementary, thanks to new funding from General Mills and Allina Health, increasing the number of 2014 Minne-Loppet schools to seven. Our work with Park Brook Elementary was particularly rewarding as we piloted a Loppet Family Day that brought 125 family members to Theodore Wirth Park on a Saturday to ski, snowboard and use the tubing hill.

Winter was not the only area where we expanded our Adventures work. We ran eight weeks of Loppet Adventure Camp, up from five, including our first-ever all-girls week. As in years past, roughly one third of the campers participated through Loppet-funded scholarships. Thanks to the generous support of the Pohlad Family Foundation, we also hired North Minneapolis counselors and bike mechanics, as part of our efforts to create youth employment opportunities for Loppet program alumni so they can build valuable work experience and skills that will serve them well into the future.

While much of the growth in Adventures centers on our youth programs, we also have increased the numbers of adults in Loppet clubs to bring people together to ski, mountain bike, skijor and run trails. We also launched several successful member events including a solstice paddle in June, an apple run in October and a nighttime ski in December as well as increasing the number of the highly popular Waffle Loppets.

## Stewardship

The Loppet Foundation and MPRB are partnering to further improve the trail system in Theodore Wirth Park with future trails that will better position the park as a site to host national and international competitions such as the Masters World Cup, Junior Nationals and U.S. Nationals, and regional events like the state high school ski meet. We recently submitted a bid for the 2017 Masters World Cup.

## EVENTS spotlight

### Adults, Kids Team Up For Glory and Fun in Age Gap Relays

The 2014 Surly Trail Loppet kicked off the start of a new racing format for Loppet Events: The Age Gap Relays. Designed as a fun way for adults and youth to work together to achieve a goal, the Age Gap Relays will be featured at all of the large-scale and many of the smaller Loppet events. Youth partner with a parent, friend, mentor or other adult partner to complete a race together, usually a relay. The adult starts first, so kids experience all of the finish-line glory!

The inaugural Age Gap Relay at this year's Surly Trail Loppet was a huge success. Featuring a 1K course with hay bales to jump, the event had roughly 60 pairs of racers - 25 youth from the Loppet's middle school programs as well as 35 other parent-kid combos.

Part of the inspiration for the Age Gap Relays came from the UCare Tri-Loppet Paddle Partners program, where youth partner up with adult mentors to complete the paddle, run and mountain bike combo of the event.

Paddle Partner Bill Dossett explains part of the reward behind his experience doing the UCare Tri-Loppet with his partner, Melanie, this past June. After surviving a very windy and wave-filled paddle and a bonk-inducing run, Bill and Melanie were poised at the high point of the mountain bike course and about to head downhill. Below them, Bill says, there was a traffic officer stopping traffic for the race.

"[Melanie] looks over at me and she says, 'I feel like a real athlete,' because the cop was stopping traffic for her. So...for me it was an awesome experience, and Melanie was an incredible trooper."

We are all looking forward to seeing more of the Age Gap Relays! Look for the inaugural skiing Age Gap Relays at the Loppet!



Melanie and Bill cruising through the mountain bike section of the UCare Tri-Loppet



# ADVENTURE spotlight

## Jezeir Bradley Comes of Age in Loppet Adventures

Jezeir Bradley, a sophomore at Robbinsdale Armstrong High School, recalls how his involvement in the Loppet began.

"I started off skiing for Anwatin Middle School, and then they introduced me to it."

By it, Bradley means the whole host of Loppet Adventures that he subsequently embraced. After starting to ski with the Anwatin program, Bradley continued with the team's summer practices. Over the years, he has learned how to mountain bike and paddle, and he consistently participates in Loppet Adventure Camps, the Surly Trail Loppet and the UCare Tri-Loppet, as well as loads of other Loppet activities.

Bradley says he participates in the Loppet summer programs because, "It's a great place to be. You can get in the loop of the Loppet, and [if you're a parent], you can have your kids go somewhere in the summer so they can get outside, and they won't be in the house all day."

Still avidly involved in the Loppet, this past summer Bradley worked on the Loppet's fleet of mountain bikes as a bike mechanic.

What Jezeir likes most about the Loppet is that, "It's one big family. Everybody's together, everybody's working hard together. It's one great group." Bradley adds, "I like that you always have something to do. You're never slouching around, there's always an event. There's always something you can do to become closer to the Loppet." The Loppet, he says, has changed him, by getting him out more.



Jezeir Bradley interviews for the new Loppet Adventure Camp video.

In addition to our ongoing efforts with MPRB to maintain and improve the trails in Theodore Wirth Park and around the city, the Loppet Foundation worked closely with MPRB staff on the operation of winter recreation at the park, a collaborative effort we expect to expand upon during the 2014-2015 winter season. The aim is to have winter recreation activities operational as early as possible to maximize opportunities for people to enjoy winter activities in the heart of Minneapolis.

Every year the Loppet Foundation partners with MPRB and Bachman's to plant trees in Wirth Park. Despite relatively poor weather at our past two tree plantings, volunteers planted 125 trees across the fall and spring events. We invite you to see our tree-planting handiwork along Theodore Wirth Parkway as you head north from Highway 55. We also organize an annual Trails Day with REI so we can ready the trails for winter to provide a positive skiing experience for Theodore Wirth Park visitors.

## Loppet Nordic Racing

When LNR started in spring 2012 Head Coach Piotr Bednarski and Assistant Head Coach Reid Lutter set their sights on winning a national championship within five years. Less than two years later, in 2014, LNR swept the national championships at Junior Nationals winning the top spot in men's, women's and the overall club competitions (see sidebar on page 5). LNR was the first Midwest club to win this honor.

LNR athletes compete in both cross country skiing and biathlon, though the numbers competing in cross country are much higher. In 2014, LNR worked with more than 180 Junior athletes providing many opportunities to experience high-level racing around the Midwest and nationally.

LNR is also building a cohort of up-and-coming skiers through its FAST KIDS program, the youth arm of LNR. Led by accomplished athlete and coach Kim Rudd, FAST KIDS is where youth 8-13 years old enjoy outdoor activities throughout the year - mountain biking, orienteering, adventure running, relay races, strength/agility and cross country skiing. Under Kim's leadership the program has grown rapidly. Today there are 70 of youth regularly participating in FAST KIDS. While the youth compete in races, the focus is on general physical and athletic development and fostering a love of lifetime outdoor activities and adventure.

Increasingly, adults who love outdoor activities are pursuing the competitive training programs that LNR offers throughout the year for athletes who want to improve their cross country skiing.

All of these opportunities to train are increasing the need for strong coaches. LNR is leading the Foundation's efforts to partner with Central Cross Country (CXC) and the United States Skiing and Snowboard Association (USSA) to increase the number of CXC/USSA Certified ski coaches in the region, offering training and certification programs in the Twin Cities and encouraging all Loppet-related coaches to pursue the designation. This expanded collaboration will continue to raise the level and number of people who ski in Minnesota and beyond.



## FINANCIAL POSITION:

October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2014

### Current Assets

Cash	\$129,159
Accounts receivable	\$21,100
Property & Equipment	\$59,101
Prepaid insurance	\$6,675

**Total Assets** **\$216,032**

### Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$31,615
Deferred Revenue	\$28,329
Petty Cash	\$160
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$43,291
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$32,169
Net Income	\$80,466

**Total Liabilities** **\$216,032**

### Revenue

Events Registration	\$467,116
LNR Registration	\$341,531
Adventures Registration	\$73,255
Membership	\$34,231
Grants	\$168,764
Sponsorships	\$146,147
In-Kind Sponsorship Revenues	\$219,170
Donations	\$59,510
Events Income	\$36,324

(Merchandise/Food & Beverage)

**Total Revenue** **\$1,546,047**

### Program Expenses

Events	\$715,525
LNR	\$269,688
Adventures	\$301,886
Membership	\$34,027
Stewardship	\$53,755

**Total Programming Expenses** **\$1,376,881**

### Support Activities

Administration	\$146,554
Fundraising	\$15,540

**Total Support Expenses** **\$162,004**

**Total Expenses** **\$1,538,885**

**Change in Net Assets** **\$7,163**

LEFT: (Top) Spotted! Happy skiers sporting their trail passes, cruising through the Theodore Wirth Skyline Trail. (Bottom) Saysetha Philaphandeth learns some new kayaking tips as a part of a collaborative event between Loppet Adventures and Hoigaard's.



## STEWARDSHIP spotlight

### Discouraging Weather No Match for Loppet Tree Planters

This summer's stewardship activities helped demonstrate the dedication and perseverance of Loppet volunteers when a scheduled day of tree planting at Theodore Wirth Park dawned cold, wet and muddy.

In June 2014, Loppet volunteers braved the rain to plant 50 trees. Organizers questioned whether they would have any volunteers with the dim weather forecast. A small crew turned up at the designated 9 a.m. start time.

As the day progressed, more and more weather-hardened Minnesotans came out and muddied their hands (and everything else) in the tree-planting effort.

Finally, with a strong and determined force of volunteers, the tree-planting mission was a success! The crew planted a series of oak trees on the north side of Theodore Wirth Parkway in front of Mortenson's, as well as evergreens in a grove on the golf course a bit further north.

A huge thank you to Bachman's and the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board for supporting this important effort, and an even bigger thank you to the Loppet volunteers!



UPPER LEFT: (Left) Kaitsy Baker and Henry Hall bring it to the finish at the Midwest Junior Championships. (Right) Raequan Wilson dueling with gravity. ABOVE: Sudie, Henry and Andy Hall tough out the rain for Bachman's Tree Planting Day.

## LNR spotlight

### LNR wins National Championship

In only its second year, Loppet Nordic Racing exploded to national prominence in the junior racing ranks. Prior to LNR, no Midwest club had ever won an overall national title, and it was rare for a Midwest club to win the gender divisions. However, in its first year, LNR won the Midwest division; and in its second year, it took home the men's, women's and overall title at the 2014 Junior Nationals.

"When we started LNR, we thought we might one day be able to contend for the title," said LNR Head Coach Piotr Bednarski. "Little did we know it would happen so quickly!"

Twenty-three LNR athletes qualified for the 51-person Midwest team, and 16 LNR athletes finished in the top 30 to score points in the club competition. As a testament to the rising level of Nordic racing in Minnesota, the second place team was St. Paul-based Endurance United, finishing with 608 points to LNR's 1353.

Racers competed in four races over the course of the week: a classic sprint, a distance classic race, a distance mass-start skate race and a relay race. Some of the notable results include 15-year-old Amanda Kautzer's National Championship win in the classic sprint, as well as podium finishes by Zak Ketterson in the U16 division, Vivian Hett in the U18 division and Ian Torchia in the U18 division.

However, the main strength of LNR does not lie with just a few racers.

"We did not have just one star out there—we had many strong competitors," said LNR coach Reid Lutter. "That more than 40% of Midwest athletes were from our club and more than 70% of our team scored points demonstrates the strength of our program and the talent, dedication and work ethic of the LNR Juniors."