



CITY OF LAKES

# Nordic Ski FOUNDATION

YOUTH . EVENTS . TRAILS

## LOPPET MENTORING

*By John Munger*

The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation works with over 600 North Minneapolis youth each year. The Foundation teaches elementary school children to cross country ski by providing ski equipment and coaching through the Minneapolis Public Schools and through day camps over the holiday break. In the summer months the Foundation provides outdoor adventure opportunities including mountain bike trips, overnight camping and week-long day camps where the kids mountain bike, rollerski, play capture-the-flag, go orien-

*Loppet Mentoring continued on page 4,*



*Anwatin skier Jezir Bradley presents the first place award to Russian athlete Roman Petushkov during the flower ceremony at the Paralympics. Photo: ©David J. Owen*

## GO! TRAINING AND MINNESOTA VALLEY COME UNDER LOPPET UMBRELLA

*By John Munger*

Over the past several years there has been a growing consensus that the balkanized nature of the Twin Cities ski community is counterproductive to the development of skiing in the area. New skiers are left confused by all the options. There is no obvious progression from younger skiers through middle school and into the high school and college-age ranks. Any skiers wanting to pursue higher-level training were largely on their own. And there is little sense that there is one big ski community that we are all a part of.

That general feeling has manifested itself

*Umbrella continued on page 6,*

## THE SIX STAGES OF LOPPET LOVE THE STORY OF MY FIRST YEAR WITH THE NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION

*By Ingrid Remak*

May marks my one year anniversary with the Nordic Ski Foundation. I wasn't expecting flowers or candle lit dinners. Our relationship is more woodsy than rosy, our dates consisting of volunteer pizza and beer. When I begin to doubt our relationship, our longevity, or begin to wonder if we were really made for one another - psychologists point out that I'm just going through what most partners experience, and in my case: the six stages of Loppet LOVE.

**Attraction** - For many years I was secretly courting the Nordic Ski Foundation from afar. My parents diligently sent Loppet clip-

*Loppet Love continued on page 5,*

## NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*By John Munger*



The truth is that it is difficult to summarize where the Foundation is right now because there are so many things happening all at once.

Best to start with the more mundane. Financially, the organization is stable, but there are a few storm clouds on the horizon. Obviously, this tough winter was not ideal for the Foundation. Registrations for the Loppet were down, and the last-minute move to Wirth Park was costly. Fortunately, our investments in snowmaking and our pre-existing sponsorship relationships helped dull the pain and the organization made it

*Director Notes continued on page 8,*

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## LOPPET VOLUNTEERS PLANT TREES

*By John Munger*

For the second year in a row Foundation volunteers planted trees in the park. This year the Foundation planted 55 maples and birch. The idea is to provide a non-buckthorn understory to the park, beautify the space, and, at the same time, shut down old trails that are no longer used.

Baillie's Nursery provided the trees at a reduced rate, the Foundation paid for the trees and supplies, and a passel of great volunteers did the planting. Voila! Three hours after starting work all 55 trees were planted and three sections of trail - one in the Erickson/Eloise Butler section of trail, and two in the Norm Oakvik/Quaking Bog section - were closed off. Thanks to Surly, the volunteers finished the evening happy and satiated!

*Anwatin skier Liam Wulfman and his father David get their hands dirty planting trees in the Bog. Photo: Ingrid Remak*



# IPC NORDIC WORLD CUP - A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

By Ingrid Remak

So when do most people join the Paralympic Team?" I asked two US athletes as they took a break for lunch. "About three to four years after you get injured," replied US Ski Team member Sean Halstad with a nonchalant shrug. Halstad, who was injured in 1998 in a helicopter training mission, said it takes athletes several years to deal with the mental trauma of their injury before they turn to the world of sports.

Over the next three days, Halstad and 17 members of the US Ski Team were joined by nearly 200 athletes and staff representing 13 countries, for three days of competition in Theodore Wirth Park, with the option to stay on and compete in the City of Lakes Loppet. The Nordic Ski Foundation teamed up with the U.S. Olympic Committee to bring the IPC Nordic World Cup to Minneapolis, the first time the U.S. has held a major Nordic Ski competition in seven years. "It is not often these events take place in urban locations," said Competition Manager Max Saenger. "It is still a big deal to travel to the United States. The athletes are really excited to be here."

The skill and strength of the athletes was awe inspiring as they double poled up steep inclines, balanced on classic skis using only one or no poles, and whipped around tight corners trusting a guide to verbally reveal the technicalities of the course. Nels Dyste, Chief of Course for the Paralympics worked to design a course that met competition standards. Most surprising to him was "sprucing the course"; lining the course with evergreen sprigs to create definition on the sides of the trail for the visually impaired skiers to follow.

Kids involved in the Loppet Youth Programs had front row seats to the event. The Anwatin Ski Team handed out awards during the flower ceremony, and 20 kids from the Nellie Stone Johnson Minne-Loppet program came to cheer on local favorite Kelly Underkofler, who had visited their class the previous day. "How do you open a pop can?" asked the kids, noticing that Kelly had lost one of her forearms. "How do YOU open a pop can?" she playfully responded. The kids learned that even though Kelly might do some things differently, she can still do it all. Kenija Wallace, a fifth grader who suffers from transverse myelitis, an injury that affects the stability in her legs, was inspired by the outing. "Sometimes it's hard for me to use my legs and it's hard to keep going." But the skiers showed Kenija a different side of their story. "There are all kinds of different people skiing, and they all believe in themselves."

The event impressed all in attendance. "I realize that in my life I am never around people with disabilities long enough to "stop seeing their disability," said volunteer and spectator Bruce Remak. "But when you are around these competitors for days, it erases that filter, and you start seeing the person, not the disability." Skiers who had never seen paralympic athletes before found themselves racing side by side with them in the City of Lakes Loppet. It was the coolest racing experience I've had," said Erik Hendrickson recalling how he jockeyed for

position with a Russian skier throughout the race. Skier Dana Henry thought he got lucky to be standing near a skier with "Guide" written on the back of his bib. "I knew I wouldn't get lost and I joked with him, "Oh cool- I'll follow you", to which the guide responded, "I don't speak English." Henry laughed, "I didn't realize there was a blind skier behind him! I couldn't keep up with them for a second."

*Hometown favorite Kelly Underkofler sprinted to the finish under waving flags and cheers from her biggest fans - the students at Nellie Stone Johnson.*  
*photo: David J. Owen Photography*



*Loppet Mentoring  
continued from  
front page,*

*Right: Olympian  
Caitlin (Compton)  
Gregg shares her love  
for skiing (and roller  
skiing) with Farview  
Ski Team member  
Wauneen Nieves.  
Photo: John Swain*

*Below: Nellie Stone  
skier Lagarius Munn  
races for the first time  
with encouragement  
from Coach Andrew  
Magill  
Photo: Jessie Wuollet*

teering and paddling, and enjoy nature hikes. The Foundation also runs year-round bike and ski teams for middle school aged youth.

The Foundation's goal is to use these outdoor opportunities as a way to truly change the trajectory of these kids' lives. The hope is that their newfound passion for outdoor activities and the work ethic that comes with endurance sports motivates them to be active for the rest of their lives.

To make that happen, however, the Foundation has recognized that we need to do more. Many of these kids lack a strong support structure at home. Their parents are not able to attend races or practices. They lack the strong bond with an adult who cheers just for them. And on a basic level they are lacking in transportation options to get to and from practices and events.



Theodore Wirth Park is a stone's throw away from most of these youths' households.

As skiers, we tend to feel that our quality of life, especially during what many consider the depressing and cold winter months, is extremely high - and we want to spread this message. The idea here is to harness that feeling by creating a mentor system that would match passionate skiers with children who share the same interest but might need a strong adult to help them achieve their goals and to, indeed, through outdoor activity and their mentorship, change the trajectory of their lives.

The Foundation is not planning to reinvent the wheel. Bolder Options has a similar model - match active adults with troubled youth and have them train together for a race or other event. The plan is that the Loppet Foundation would work together with Bolder Options. The Foundation would recruit the mentors through its Loppet network. Bolder Options would help with training and managing the matches. The Loppet Foundation already provides meaningful activities, including cross country skiing, mountain biking, camps and competitions, like the Tri-Loppet, where the youth and mentor would paddle together as a team. These activities would form the basis of the match relationship - with the goal being to provide self-esteem, build passion for outdoor activities and change the trajectory of the lives of both the mentor and mentee.

Interested in exploring a mentor relationship based on a mutual passion for outdoor activities? Call or email Outreach Coordinator Ingrid Remak at 612 604-5334 or [remak@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:remak@cityoflakesloppet.com).



*Loppet Love continued from front page,*

pings to my New York address. They would get posted on the fridge, reminding me of my Minnesotan roots. My roommates were confused with the skiers in sports bras- but I knew the feeling. I'd curl up in my bite size Brooklyn bedroom dreaming of the day I could stamp out my Nordic return with a hometown Loppet. In the fall of 2010 I purchased a one-way ticket back to the motherland, ready to ski the streets I loved.

**Romance** – At first glance of the Loppet, I fell in love. I was hired for part-time work in the month preceding the event and let myself be swept along in Loppet flurries, riding the coattails of everyone else's hard work. I was behind the scenes, meeting the Loppet greats, hearing firsthand how the event had persevered through Mother Nature's merciless tricks. The event surpassed my wildest dreams, and I continued to swoon in Loppet la la land. Summer time was as good as skiing time, and I continued to be enamored with the community. I perfected my paddling strokes, ran the trails, and dreamed of the great skier I was sure to become. I assumed a full time position in May and settled into my very own corner office.

**Disillusionment** – But then the rains came. In May a tornado ripped through Theodore Wirth Park, toppling hundreds of trees and ripping countless homes in North Minneapolis. I tried to find my voice as "Outreach Coordinator" by submitting stories about our youth programs to local newspapers, but to no avail. My first stabs at grant writing were heartlessly rejected. And to make matters worse I was still scared of mountain biking. Perhaps I would not turn out to be the great skier I thought I would be.

**Power** – To salvage my unraveling confidence, I decided to return to my inner self. I sloshed Loppet blue on the walls of the office. I pounded out Loppet-bib curtains from old ski bibs. I set-up a compost bin out back. I made the Anwatin Ski Team do water relays an hour longer than I said we would. I was in charge, and it felt good.

**Stability**- Soon the greenery of summer turned into dark and cold days of fall. The Nordic Ski Foundation programs began to fall seamlessly into the cadence of winter. Adult clubs began to convene, new youth programs were launched, and a month long cycle of events, including the Pre-Loppet, Mayor's Challenge and Paralympics were executed successfully. The narrow ribbon of ski trail at Wirth held its own through the relentlessly clear skies and even as the phone lines sizzled with Loppet angst I answered cool and confident as a winter's day, "The race will go on."

**Commitment** – One week before the event the Loppet locomotive came to a screeching halt. With not a speck of snow to spare orders echoed through the ranks: "Everything at Wirth." With unwavering confidence and



steadfast courage- volunteers and staff poured themselves into a week of focused energy to reroute a year of planning into 3.3 kilometers at Wirth. Everyone stretched themselves to make the 2012 Loppet an event for the history books. Flirting with disaster like that has only strengthened our Loppet love and commitment to one another.

Just like in any relationship, there are a few things you should know if you ever fall for a Nordic Ski Foundation: lunch breaks are ski breaks and it's expected that you will take them, better to just keep your ski boots on- you never know when you'll need them, spandex is not a punishment, its a privilege, Olympians will come into the office- play it cool, important meetings take place on the trail, a name like Ingrid will get others to believe you more than they actually should, skiers are like farmers- you just can't worry about the weather, friends and family get to help- a lot, shovel brigades are done best at the bewitching hour, "If you Lopp-it than you should have put a ring on it", and it's ok to talk with your boss in smelly polypro and a dripping nose – he does it too.

However - there is one part of our relationship that most people can't understand. "What do you do in the summer?" Let me tell you, summer is the best. That's because here at the Nordic Ski Foundation we get to think about winter, all summer long...

*Ingrid Remak (left) and Foundation member Becca Blumenshine bask in 80 degree March temperatures while enjoying the ski trails radiating from Bearskin Lodge on the Loppet Ski Club trip.*

*Photo: Tony Mommsen*

*Umbrella continued  
from front page,*

in a few ways. On the St. Paul side, the Sisu Foundation has begun to work closely with Kevin Brochman's club to form one big Sisu organization. On the Minneapolis side of the river, the leadership of organizations like Go!Training and Minnesota Valley concluded that it would be better to be part of a larger organization that could offer "cradle to grave" programming. When they looked around for a solution, the Nordic Ski Foundation seemed to be a good fit.

For the Foundation's part, the idea of merging with Go!Training and Minnesota Valley has obvious advantages. Piotr Bednarski and Reid Lutter, the leaders of Go!Training and Minnesota Valley, have worked closely with the Nordic Ski Foundation for years. Bednarski was one of the founders of the organization, has been on the board from the beginning and has lent his expertise and leadership throughout. Lutter has also been



*Top Right: Reid Lutter  
announcing during the  
2011 Junior Olympics.  
Photo: Bruce Adelsman  
Skinny.com*

*Center: Go!Training  
Coach Piotr Bednarski  
giving video analysis at  
a rollerski workout.*

a long time supporter of the Foundation and was the primary initial cheerleader behind the idea of bringing the Junior Olympics to town. He went on to raise more than \$45,000 to pay for the necessary trail improvements and was the Chief of Competition for our very well-received event. Lutter's Podiumwear company has been a long-time sponsor of the Foundation's youth programming as well.

The plan is for both Bednarski and Lutter to play important roles within the Foundation going forward. The Foundation has operated youth programs with great coaches, but has been lacking in an experienced leader who could provide a philosophy and a common language around the Foundation's coaching efforts. Arguably, Bednarski is the most experienced and credentialed coach in the area. He will be the new Head Coach for the Foundation, bringing a new level

of quality to all that the Foundation does. This will mean coaches' training for Minne-Loppet and Loppet Youth Ski League coaches, for Loppet Ski Club coaches and facilitators, for Loppet Skiwerx program coaches and for the high school (junior) coaches that come along with Go!Training and Minnesota Valley. And as the Foundation partners with local high schools it will mean better training and coaching for the high school teams as well.

"As a long-time Youth Ski League, Silver Skis and now

Skiwerx coach, I'm really excited to have [Bednarski] coming on as the Loppet's new Head Coach," commented Craig Rudd. "This is really going to up the level for everyone involved."

For his part, Lutter will continue to lead the Loppet's Hyland training group (formerly the Minnesota Valley program) and will work with Bednarski on hiring and training coaching staff. He will also provide special leadership for Loppet juniors pursuing the Junior National Team. "I'm really excited to be working directly with the Loppet," says Lutter. "Minnesota Valley has had some great success, but moving under the Loppet umbrella will allow our kids to be part of a bigger club system - one they can be with their entire lives."

# THE LOPPET OPPORTUNITY PIPELINE

By John Munger

The Loppet Foundation is improving and expanding its programming through two mergers and a new emphasis on providing lifetime opportunities. Go!Training and Minnesota Valley, two long-time training programs, led by Piotr Bednarski and Reid Lutter, respectively, are joining the Loppet Foundation ranks. Piotr becomes the new Loppet Head Coach and Reid brings his Hyland-based programming into the fold.

The big idea is to create one club that will eventually provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. This means greater partnering with the Minnesota Youth Ski League (MYSL) and area high school programs. It means a direct link between existing Loppet programming, the Youth Ski League, the Skiwerx (middle school age) programs at Wirth, Hyland and French, high school programs heretofore run by Go!Training and Minnesota Valley, and post-high school programming that will start in four or five years, as the youth of today start graduating from high school. It means more and better adult programming - with direct connections to the youth programming efforts - so that everyone feels like they are part of one big club.

The story may be easiest to tell through a vignette...

*Bjorn and Marit are young five-year-old skiers. Bjorn enters the Wirth branch of MYSL and begins progressing up the MYSL ladder. Marit lives in North Minneapolis and attends Nellie Stone Johnson Elementary School, where she is introduced to skiing through a Minne-Loppet program.*

*Marit is so enthusiastic about skiing that she is quickly paired with a Loppet Mentor (see article on new Loppet Mentors program). Marit's Loppet mentor starts bringing Marit to Youth Ski League sessions to augment her Minne-Loppet experiences. Bjorn and Marit meet at the Youth Ski League and through Loppet Ski Camp.*

*In the summer months, both Bjorn and Marit enjoy occasional mountain bike trips to Wirth Park and when they are nine they both participate in their first Loppet Adventure Camp. With their new passion for skiing, Bjorn and Marit sign up for Loppet Skiwerx programs (for 10-13 year old youth) - Bjorn at French Park and Marit at Wirth. Marit augments Skiwerx by joining the Nellie Stone Johnson Ski Team and skiing and biking with her mentor. Bjorn skis with his parents.*

*Once they graduate to high school, Bjorn continues in Loppet programming at French Park (programming that was formerly part of Go!Training) with a goal of making his section team at Armstrong High School. Marit is obsessed with skiing, she participates in the five-day/week Loppet programs and she and her men-*



*Students in the Bryn Mawr Elementary School take a moment to bask in the sun and smile on the trail.*

*- photo: Margaret Adelsman*

*tor travel to Junior National Qualifier races with the hope that she qualifies for Junior Nationals. She also competes in her high school races at South High, but Piotr and the South coach work out a more limited race schedule so that she does not overtrain.*

*When Bjorn and Marit graduate from high school Marit is still obsessed with skiing. She joins the Loppet's Post-High School Team while Bjorn goes on to ski at the University of Minnesota, where he continues to train with the Loppet Ski Club. Over the years Marit moves up the ranks, with the Loppet Foundation continuing to provide the support she needs to realize her dreams. Bjorn is a lifelong Ski Club member, who attends citizen races and regularly attends Loppet workouts. When Marit makes the Olympic Team, Bjorn is so excited he travels with Marit's mentor and hundreds of other Foundation members to Norway so that they can all cheer her on.*

*After her Olympic career is over, Piotr retires and Marit becomes the new Loppet Head Coach. Marit and Bjorn marry and have kids, who participate in the local Youth Ski League and go on to a Loppet Skiwerx program and beyond. For their part, Marit and Bjorn continue to play a part in the Loppet Ski Club through their golden years. They race, volunteer, participate in hikes, runs and skis throughout the year and they mentor up-and-coming youth, passing down their love for year-round outdoor activities.*

Note that the Olympics is not the important part here. The Loppet's Opportunity Pipeline will not be judged based upon the success or failure of the athletes - but instead on (1) the Foundation's ability to provide an opportunity for athletes of all ages to reach their goals, and (2) on the Foundation's ability to knit the community together through cross country skiing and year-round outdoor activity generally.

through the winter without immediate losses.

But the worst problem with a winter like the one we just had is the next year. The fear is that sponsors lose interest and skiers become shy of pre-registering. The wisdom in the industry is that it takes two to three years to recover after a cancellation. Our hope is that the fact that we did not cancel will buoy registrations and sponsorship. And that is the real silver lining of this past winter - we actually held a high-quality event despite the lack of snow and cold. In that regard, the Foundation is, hopefully, stronger than ever.

But there are other financial clouds... Our growth requires new investments. For instance, the Foundation's database has grown so large and complex that we now need to invest in a customer relationship management (CRM) system to manage our data. With the success of our youth programming we need better transportation



*"Minne-Loppet participants from Pillsbury Elementary school move en masse to the start. One third grade student remarked, "It's amazing how times flies when you are doing something fun!"*

*Photo: Ingrid Remak*

- meaning significantly increased costs for the purchase of a van, insurance and ongoing maintenance. The poor snow year also meant fewer season pass sales for the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board - and that translates to less revenue for the Nordic Ski Foundation (our fee for consulting with the Park Board is tied to season pass revenue). Finally, as we mature and grow as an organization, our labor costs continue to increase. So - while we are currently financially stable, we have to maintain a concern for the bottom line, especially as we enter this post-bad-winter year.

Qualitatively the organization is going through a metamorphosis. We used to be an event organization that did some programming on the side. That has slowly changed and now has outright reversed. Changes this spring include:

- Local training clubs Go!Training and Minnesota Valley come under the Loppet umbrella. (See separate article).
- Piotr Bednarski becomes Head Coach of the organization, establishing a coaching philosophy, providing coaches' training and generally raising the bar for the organization.
- Establishing an "opportunity pipeline" so that Minneapolis area residents with an interest in skiing have a place to pursue their dreams. (See separate article).
- Partnering with Bolder Options on a new Loppet Mentoring Program - to ensure that enthusiastic inner-city youth can fully take advantage of the opportunities within Loppet world. (See separate article).
- As our programs expand, for the first time purchasing a van in order to provide better transportation options for inner-city youth who would not otherwise be able to get to practice.

While the Loppet and our other events will always be a huge part of what we do, the core of the Foundation will change. If we are successful, the hope is that we become a lifelong club for people with an interest in skiing and outdoor activities in the Minneapolis area.

In this regard the only missing piece is a physical location that the club can call home. We are, of course, closely associated with Wirth Park, but we are not quite where we need to be... The golf chalet is just that - a golf chalet. Eight months out of the year the chalet is not really available for anything other than golf. During the other four months the chalet is grossly deficient. One high school ski team overwhelms the space. It is not open consistently and is, in the end, not designed for winter uses - where in general the crowds arrive all at once rather than on a schedule, as they do in golf. Even on the outdoors side there is not a good space for year-round activities; once ski season is over the entire space reverts to golf - running, biking and even circuit training are not necessarily compatible with the golf uses of the park.

All this will hopefully change soon. The long-running Wirth Park Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) recently completed their meetings and will be recommending a plan that includes a new 17th and 18th fairway, a new Welcome Center, event mountain bike trails in the summer, a new stadium for skiing in the winter and biking in the summer, and additional snowmaking. There are several steps remaining before these changes become reality. First, the CAC will host an open house. Then the Park Board has to ratify the CAC's recommendations, thereby creating a master plan for the park. Finally, the biggest hurdle: funding. It is not clear where the funds will come from for this





*The densely packed mob of skiers infused Wirth's 3.3 kilometer competition loop with color and energy. Over 1,000 competed in Sunday's marathon event to the cheers of hundreds of spectators. Photo: Irfan Khan*

project. But suffice it to say that it is likely the Nordic Ski Foundation will be working on this project over the next few years...

With all these changes happening at one time the organization is re-examining its branding. (See Tom Camp's separate article). Look for a new brand language that will reflect the organization's new direction. The City of Lakes Loppet brand will probably not change much, but the umbrella brand - the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation - and the sub-brands for programming and trail development - will likely undergo some changes to reflect the year-round club that we have become.

The staff is looking forward to the changes and the growth of the organization. But our minds are spinning a bit... with many things to wrap our heads around at one time. More than ever, we will need the help and support of the Foundation members. Members help shape our programming. Members provide the positive energy and enthusiasm for the cause that get us through winters with no snow or cold. Members provide leadership in putting on events, planting trees and accomplishing the little things that keep the organization running. And the financial support of our members allows the Foundation to flourish year after year.

This year we are hoping to double membership in order to have an ongoing source of support for our new Loppet Mentors and transportation programs. So - please renew your membership, tell your friends and spread the word... With the Great Ingrid Remak in charge of member benefits, being a Loppet Foundation member is the coolest ticket in town!

## PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY

The Nordic Ski Foundation partners with numerous community groups to make the goals of the cross-country skiing community come to life. Examples include:

- In partnership with the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Foundation runs Minne-Loppet programs at six elementary schools.
- Through the after school programs Beacons and Minneapolis Community Education, Nellie Stone Johnson and Anwatin youth can participate on middle school ski and bike teams.
- Major Taylor cyclists joined the Loppet Ski Club for a winter of instruction and chaperoned the Nellie Stone Ski Team winter training trip.
- New Glenwood Avenue bike shop Venture North will be setting up a mobile mechanics unit at the Loppet Adventure Camps this summer.
- With training from the Courage Center, the Nordic Ski Foundation will offer adaptive inclusive cross-country ski programs for the first time this upcoming year.
- Under the guidance of Bolder Options, the new Loppet Mentoring program will begin this spring.
- Ongoing support from the Uptown Association brings the Loppet to life.
- Kids from North Minneapolis' Farview Park go skiing and mountain biking throughout the year.
- An intricate relationship with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board keeps the tracks laid for thousands of skiers of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to enjoy cross-country skiing in Wirth Park every year.
- Skiwerx kids learn to ski through a partnership between the Minnesota Youth Ski League and the Foundation.

These are just a few of the Foundation's many partners. Others include our funders, our sponsors, our volunteers, Foundation members, Ski Club participants, and the parents of all the skier kids in the community.

# THANKS TO THE DONORS AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY OF LAKES NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION.

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# FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIPS

Membership runs from June 1 to May 31. To avoid a lapse in membership, please renew your membership now. Note that all contributions to the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION JUNE 1, 2012 – MAY 31, 2013

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Club/affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Join the Foundation in order to support youth programming and trail development in Minneapolis.

**Basic Level** - Member entitled to newsletters, attend and vote at Annual Meeting, free high-resolution photo file, 5% discount at Finn Sisu and 10% discount on clothing at Gear West.

**Premium level** - Newsletters, Annual Meeting, discounts, free high-resolution photo files, plus \$25 stone grind and thermo-bag treatments at Hoigaard's (\$70 value).

### Memberships:

Basic Individual	\$30	\$ _____
Basic Family	\$50	\$ _____
Premium Individual	\$70	\$ _____
Premium Family	\$100	\$ _____
Business	\$100	\$ _____

### Tax-Deductible Contributions:

Youth Programming	\$ _____
Snowmaking/Trail Development	\$ _____
Athlete Development Fund	\$ _____
General	\$ _____
<b>Total Amount of Payment:</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

(make checks payable to COLNSF)

### Please return this form to:

City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation  
1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway  
Minneapolis, MN 55422

Call 612 604-5330 or email [info@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:info@cityoflakesloppet.com) for more information or to volunteer.

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# 2012 LOPPET: THE LAST THREE WEEKS

by John Munger

Most everyone knows how the 2012 Loppet turned out. What people do not necessarily know is how we arrived there. Here is a timeline of highlights...

- Setting the stage... To start, it was a horrible winter with no snow and warm temperatures. The luminaries, the ice depth and the snow depth were all issues.
- **Friday, January 13** (Loppet ("L") - 22 days) - Luminary Team hard at work
  - Luminary buckets filled
  - Ice-henge "caskets" started
- **Saturday, January 14** (L - 21 days)
  - 1,200+ Luminaries hatched
- **Wednesday, January 18** (L - 17 days) - Temperatures around 0 F
  - Snowmaking begins at south end of Lake of the Isles
  - Ice-Cropolis "planted"
- **Saturday, January 21** (L - 14 days)
  - Snowmaking complete
  - Ice-Cropolis forms drained
  - Day 1 - Tour de Twin Cities/Mayor's Challenge
- **Sunday, January 22** (L - 13 days)
  - Ice-henge starts to sink - water comes up through crack in the ice
  - Day 2 - Tour de Twin Cities/Mayor's Challenge
- **Monday, January 23** (L - 12 days)
  - 2" of snow falls
  - Attempt to hold up the ice beneath Ice-henge
  - Forecast calls for sub-freezing temperatures through the Loppet. Plan formulated to use the snowmaking loop and the lakes, and shovel a direct connection between them
  - Foundation rents plows to wind-row snow on Lake of the Isles
- **Tuesday, January 24** (L - 11 days)
  - All day plowing - crews work through the day on Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake
  - First shoveling crews start work - shovel from Par-3 crossing to Bassett Creek lagoon on Front-9 (Skyline Trails) side of the road
- **Wednesday, January 25** (L - 10 days)
  - Foundation rents snowblower unit from Park Board to blow snow across trail around Lake of the Isles more evenly than plows can accomplish
  - Multiple shoveling crews work through the day
  - Tour de Twin Cities SuperTour Sprints Prologue at Wirth



Members of the Luminary Team brought down the half ton slabs of Ice Henge a week before the event was moved to Wirth. Volunteers spent a week moving over 1,200 luminaries from their home on Lake of the Isles to the woods of Wirth. Photo: John Munger

- **Thursday, January 26** (L - 9 days)
  - Temperatures reach upper-30s F with sun.
  - Shoveling crews connect from Par-3 crossing to Wirth Beach
  - Wax trailers and tent for Paralympics World Cup arrive, set up begins in earnest
- **Friday, January 27** (L - 8 days)
  - Course Chief Craig Rudd inspects course after Thursday's warmer-than-expected temperatures. Does not like what he finds. Lagoon that had perfect snow Thursday morning is now a pond. Significant deterioration of conditions throughout the course, including on the Chain of Lakes.
  - Revised forecast shows temperatures expected to be above freezing for several days before the Loppet.
  - Luminary crew examines plans to move Ice-henge to avoid it sinking through the lake.
  - Emergency meeting of Loppet organizers results in decision to move everything to Wirth Park.
  - Loppet secures tubing hill for Loppet weekend
- **Saturday, January 28** (L - 7 days)
  - Formal announcement that moving entire event to Wirth Park.
  - Plans start in earnest...
  - Meet and plan Park Nicollet Luminary Loppet course.
  - Meet and plan Penn Ice-Cycle Loppet course
  - Meet and plan Loppet Kubb Tournament
  - Post announcement of change on website
- **Sunday, January 29** (L - 6 days)
  - Begin changing website to reflect changes
  - Begin formulating transportation plans
  - Final preparations for International Paralympic Committee Paralympic World Cup
  - Loppet organizers hold emergency planning session
- **Monday, January 30** (L - 5 days)
  - Temperatures hover in upper-30s
  - Paralympic World Cup athletes arrive in Minneapolis
  - Staff and volunteers scrambling to put pieces together, find parking, and communicate plans as they emerge

- **Tuesday, January 31** (L - 4 days)
  - Temperatures continue hovering in upper-30s/low-40s
  - Paralympic World Cup training day/course inspection
  - Luminary crew experiments with cutting and moving pieces of Ice-Henge and formulates plan for mobilization and movement of 1,200+ luminaries from Lake of the Isles to Wirth Park
- **Wednesday, February 1** (L - 3 days)
  - Day 1: Paralympic World Cup races
  - Luminary crew moves pieces of Ice-Henge and replants columns on pond near new stadium
  - 200 hay bails arrive Wirth Park for Luminary Loppet course
- **Thursday, February 2** (L - 2 days)
  - Day 2: Paralympics World Cup races
  - Volunteer crew preps Luminary Loppet course
  - Volunteers rescue 1,200 luminaries from 6" of water on Lake of the Isles and transport to Wirth Park - some 12,000 pounds of ice
- **Friday, February 3** (L - 1 day)
  - Trailers for Paralympics World Cup removed, tent village for Loppet erected
  - Final parking arrangements made
  - Volunteers erect stadium and banners
  - Staff finalizes plans for bus transport from North Minneapolis, new spectator guide finalized and printed
- **Saturday, February 4 - Loppet Saturday**
  - The day goes well. People enjoy tubing and all the Loppet events.
  - 6:30 p.m. - Crew realizes that using a narrow path in the Luminary Loppet was probably not a good idea. After first few hundred people pass through, path turns into an ice skating rink... Straw on the trail does not help much. But Bike Patrol does!
- **Sunday, February 5 - Loppet Sunday**
  - The Laps Loppet
  - 11:33 a.m. - Wave 3 and 4 run into stragglers in wave 5 and 6. Major traffic jam going down Sledding Hill Trail.
  - 12:33 a.m. - Course crew devises a new plan. They ask the wave 3 and 4 skiers at the top of Sledding Hill trail to pull to the side long enough to allow the wave and 1 and 2 skiers to pass through unimpeded.
  - 3 p.m. - Giant sigh of relief - 23 days of turmoil come to an end.

So after sleepless nights, a little crying and lots of panic, we know a few things... We know that we have tremendous volunteers, full of energy and resourcefulness. We know that we can do an all-Wirth event if we need to. And we know that even the worst of Minnesota winters cannot defeat us anymore. We have our plans in place now - and the next time Mother Nature deals us a pathetic hand we will pull out our playbook and make the best of it.



## EXPLORING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

by Jennifer O'Link

Ten years ago the City of Lakes Loppet was the one big event of the year for the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation (COLNSF). Now, that event has turned into a well-known Twin Cities weekend festival, and our calendar includes other major events, such as the UCare Tri-Loppet, Surly Trail Loppet, and Mayor's Challenge (Tour de Twin Cities), not to mention hosted competitions like the Junior Olympics and Paralympics, adult training groups, youth mentoring, and ski trail infrastructure improvements.

With this exciting growth, it has become apparent to the Foundation that it is time to invest in an up-to-date database to manage event, member, participant, volunteer, sponsor, donor, and organizational data more effectively. We have recently been exploring Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, with plans to implement new technology this summer and have it in full use by winter.

CRMs were originally developed as a sales and marketing tool, but today such systems have capabilities far beyond that, offering a solution to categorize, organize, and improve data accessibility to staff via one integrated software package. Our new system will be customized so it functions to suit our needs. We will be able to modify and add "apps" to it as those needs, and technology, change.

Processes our CRM will initially integrate include event registrations, memberships, participation data, expanding donor options, organizing volunteers, and tracking sponsor opportunities. While those outside the Foundation office may not notice significant external changes after implementation, we expect the system to make our "behind the scenes" operations more efficient. There is no doubt that this significant investment will ultimately save time and money, and give us the ability to continue our growth.



*Even without snow, the magic of the icy inukshucks delighted viewers and captured the magic of the first "hiking" Luminary Loppet. Photo: David Bryan*



## MINNE-LOPPET REVIEW

*By Margaret Adelsman*

Just before Thanksgiving, our Minne-Loppet coaching crew prepared itself for another great season of skiing with elementary students from six of our Minneapolis schools. After a year like the last one, we were definitely pumped to get the kids on snow as soon as possible. Winter always arrives eventually, right? Patience is a virtue, correct? Each week, we would look hopefully at the skies for some sign of a snowy gift, but the best we could muster was a small skiff of the white stuff, just enough to snuggle down between the grass blades and provide some slip for desperate skis. Not to be discouraged, we coaches took kids outside, skiing doggedly on first grass, then a half inch of snow and then back to grass. We ran relays on foot and on skis; we played one-footed tag and tried some classic ski drills, always reminding the kids that the Minne-Loppet awaited them in early February, in spite of the snow draught prior to Christmas.

At Bryn Mawr, where past classes routinely have skied in the wooded trails, students would come to class each week asking if they could go to the “big hill” as if some magical drift of snow had found its way within the woods but not outside of it. Each week we would remind them to do snow dances, and we would speculate that surely the next week would hold better skiing options for them. At other schools, coaches worked with any hill or bump they could find and any sheltered patch of snow that had landed and escaped the sun’s gaze. We all became familiar with the school’s gym supply closets, borrowing balls, and hula hoops, Styrofoam noodles and scooters, making up games and relays in an effort to keep class activities focused on skiing. Although we had introduced the basic techniques of Nordic skiing early on to our young athletes, few had an opportunity to actually test out their ability to herringbone or snowplow down a hill. Still, we were not concerned as the Minne-Loppet course was planned for the relative flats of Lake of the Isles and the street finish of Lake and Hennepin. Coaches encouraged the students to register for the event and plan on a snowy course in spite of what was visible outside the school window. Manmade snow on city streets would come to our rescue!

**14** As it turns out, manmade snow did come to our rescue but not

in the way we expected. With less than a week to go, Loppet World was turned upside down and an essentially brand new plan was established for the entire weekend of events; they would be relocated to Theodore Wirth Park. Our precious manmade snow loop that had supported countless ski races and training laps by skiers all season would now need to supply the desperately needed snow for Loppet events, including the Minne-Loppet. Schools were notified of the change in venue and kids began to prepare themselves for a ski trail that most had never seen before. Even riding the buses to Wirth that Saturday, students had difficulty believing there could be snow for them to ski on – until they arrived and saw the Lower Stadium waiting for them, complete with a marvelous Minnesota Youth Ski League SuperCarnival arena and actual white SNOW!

We coaches spread out around the course, realizing that some extra cheering and words of encouragement might be needed for our ambitious skiers. Completing two kilometers of flats is one thing, but working one’s way around the hills and valleys of Wirth’s 2K course is quite another thing altogether. We quickly realized that many of these skiers would need to dig into their memory banks for the basics of a herringbone and a little snowplow here and there. As we watched them weave through the course it was apparent that, as usual, these students step up to the challenge before them and put the most determined foot forward. We saw big smiles as kids navigated each downhill as well as each climb. One student kept saying to me: “Coach Margaret, you should have seen me on that downhill!” Imagine an ear-to-ear grin to go along with the phrase.

This year’s coaching experience turned out to be like none other I’ve experienced thus far, but great achievements were made, nonetheless. Coaches learned a few things about creativity, kids learned a few things about patience, and we all benefited from remaining as optimistic as possible. The rewards were especially great for the nearly 200 students from our program schools that attended the Minne-Loppet ski event of 2012, and I imagine they will have created some great memories along the way. “Do you remember the year when we skied on grass and it just wouldn’t snow...?”

# YOUTH PROGRAMMING UPDATE

By Allie Rykken

Same smiling faces, different season. Lookout people! The gloves come off and the helmets come on. The youth programming winter season ended rather abruptly. In fact, I believe winter itself decided to hang up it's towel right in the middle of the Midwest Junior Championships. I recall wading through quite a large puddle in the upper stadium to retrieve obstacle course markers. But a successful season nonetheless!

The Anwatin team was blessed with a number of exciting opportunities: a trip to Rainbow Resort for a weekend in December, two biathlon races, a half dozen big competitions, a ready supply of klister, and a 3.3k snow course that's not right outside their door as usual, but I'd say close enough.

The Nellie Stone Johnson team held a consistent crew of beginners as they launched their first-year program. They were at Wirth four times a week, thanks to the transportation help of Louis Oates. They have an even larger turnout for the mountain biking season and I think it's a reasonable idea to keep an eye out for some upcoming talent from that crowd.

The Farview Park team was out there cruising the trails twice a week and you can now see them out mountain biking twice a week also.

The Oak Park program was also new this year. They met once a week and honestly, I was a little concerned for them in the beginning weeks. They met during what I called "rush hour," or when hundreds of high school skiers flooded the trails. Then there were my four little girls, who got about 100 meters in 45 minutes and were often sprawled out in the middle of the trail, trying not to slide back down the first uphill. These kids are constantly proving me wrong though— by the end of the season, there were 8-9 regulars, all quite proficient, and even the most frightened girl was bombing "the Mountain" (tubing hill) with a smile on her face. I can't wait to see what these kids will do on real snow!

*Opposite Left: Kids from the Bryn Mawr Minne-Loppet program smile at the end of their race.*

*Photo: Ingrid Remak*

*Opposite Right: A Minne-Loppet Skier navigates the course. Photo: Steve Kotvis f/go Photography*

*Top Left: Tom exits the water leg of a triathlon.*

*Photo: Tom Camp*

*Top Right: Photo: Tom Camp*



## RE-GROOMING A GREAT BRAND

By Tom Camp

Unlike my wife, who recently completed the world's toughest cross-country ski race in Greenland, I wasn't born with Nordic genes. I'm from The South. I come from a long lineage of flip-flop wearers. But when [Foundation staff] asked me if I'd help out with the re-branding project for the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation, I jumped at the chance.

Three years ago at The Luminary, I clicked into a pair of Nordic skis for the very first time. It was cold out, but much to my surprise, neither my kids nor I suffered from hypothermia. Flickering candles in blocks of ice illuminated the path to an otherworldly winter carnival filled with ice sculptures, fire jugglers and steaming cups of hot cocoa. Three race seasons later, I've come to fully appreciate the power that cross-country skiing has to change the trajectory of lives. The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation has been the powerhouse behind this positive change by offering kids of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds a chance to learn valuable life skills through the sport of Nordic skiing, and by teaching grown-ups, too, that it's never too late to work hard and dream big.

As the Nordic Ski Foundation embarks on its exciting plans to expand its mission with new partners and new programs, we wanted to give the brand a make-over, too. After much deliberation, we landed on a name that the community already knows from what is, quite possibly, the world's most famous urban cross country ski race: City of Lakes Loppet. Loppet is a Scandinavian word that means "covering long, unspecified distances over varied terrain" -- which is exactly what this organization is getting ready to do. It almost sounds like a made-up, frolicsome, Dr. Seussian word that anybody can do. Even people with no trace of Nordic DNA in their veins. Welcome to The Loppet Foundation.

*Tom Camp is co-founder of Pocket Hercules advertising agency where he works on brands like Pearl Izumi, Shimano and Rapala fishing. He's the father of Zoe (10) and Cooper (8), and husband to Leslie Hale. He is still a knuckle-head skier but that doesn't seem to stop him.*



*Inset above and opposite page: New building sketches by Leo A Daly. Above: Concept Plan Map by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.*

## WIRTH PARK PLANNING PROCESS UPDATE

*By John Munger*

The long and rocky road of Wirth Park planning is gradually coming to a close. Thanks to strong new leadership, the Park Board has put together a master plan that should satisfy all but the most anti-change elements. Plan elements include:

- Two new fairways for the golf course - replacing the existing 17th and 18th.
- A new stadium area for cross country skiing in the winter and mountain biking and other active sport pursuits in the summer.
- A new Welcome Center building that is slated to contain a great room, a bike and ski shop, a restaurant or coffee shop, a weight room/yoga studio, and office space for non-profits, with a goal of attracting youth to the park. (This building would replace the existing par-3 building.)
- A new parking lot to the south/east of Wirth Parkway across from the current par-3 parking lot, with a ski and walking bridge connecting the two sides of the road. (Note that this parking lot would replace the existing par-3 parking lot. The

old or existing parking lot would be squarely in the middle of the new stadium.)

- 1.5 kilometers of additional snowmaking, stretching to the west of the existing stadium area and adding needed flatter terrain.
- New mountain bike/event trails in the area vacated by the 17th and 18th fairways and to the north of the Chalet parking lot to the west of Wirth Parkway. These trails would allow for mountain bike racing events, including high school mountain bike racing, and would probably also allow for cyclocross, a mountain bike learning area and an adult exercise course. (Note that the existing MOCA trails are not conducive to racing as they are not designed with racing in mind.)
- New Minneapolis Off-Road Cycling Advocates (MOCA) trails connecting from Brownie Lake through the west side of the park to the existing MOCA system.
- A new bridge over Wirth Parkway just to the north of the Quaking Bog parking lot.
- A re-designed Front-9 of the golf course, that would include a driving range before the first tee.

While there are many details yet to be determined, there are only a few big-picture items that are not yet ironed out. The location of a new tubing hill, the treat-



ment of the snowboard hill and what to do with the “historic” maintenance building are chief among the issues. The Nordic Ski Foundation believes that the treatment of the old maintenance building is the chief problem. In our view the highest use of this dilapidated structure is as a supplemental building for winter recreation and biking in the summer months. In the winter the building would be a perfect waxing structure - with plenty of ventilation, power and garage doors for easy access. It could also function as a storage and rental facility for tubes, cross country ski equipment and snowboards. In the summer months it would be a perfect augment to a retail bike shop space in the Welcome Center building. Extra bikes could be built and stored here. It is a great space for working on bicycles and could house bicycle repair stands and rental space. All without spending literally \$1 million on renovating

these issues have been ironed out. And it is important to note that even if the tubing hill and old maintenance building issues were not addressed to our satisfaction, the overall plan is excellent. Ten years ago Wirth Park was a remote area whose most notable use was as a place to dump bodies. The ski trails were not well laid out and were not well-maintained. There was no mountain biking.

Contrast the present. The park literally saved winter in Minneapolis this year. It has hosted a Paralympics World Cup and the Junior Olympics. In a few years it might be home to one of the greatest urban year-round active sports centers in the world. It will host World Cup ski races. It might host World Cup mountain bike races. It will house a Welcome Center that will act as a Gateway to the Outdoors. People from across the region, including North



the structure.

From a ski stadium and trails perspective, the better tubing and snowboard facilities use the existing 18th fairway area running down toward the existing (old) maintenance building. This location does not require crossing trails to reach the tubing and snowboarding and the tubing and snowboarding do not encroach on the homologated trail loop or the new stadium. And this 18th fairway location is better for tubing and snowboarding as well. The 17th fairway location for tubing (in the Park Board’s current plans) is a minimal hill that our course crew calls “pathetic” and “a sure loser...” The run-out from that location impinges on ski trails and the new stadium area. And it requires two trail crossings to go from the new Welcome Center to the tubing hill - not a good situation.

Hopefully, by the time this Newsletter is published

Minneapolis, will be welcome. And the golf course will be a better place as well...

Make no mistake though. The process is not at the end, but the end-of-the-beginning of the process. The Advisory Committee recently finished its work. The next step is an open house. If, after that, the Park Board approves the plan, it will become the Master Plan for the park. And then the truly hard part comes - funding. The Nordic Ski Foundation will likely be continuing to work to find funding, including through private sources. Please contact Fundraising Chair Bill Blazar at 612 860-1494 if interested in helping with the fundraising efforts.

# JIBRIL LEARNS TO SKI

By Lindsay Tsakistos- Physical/Health  
Disabilities teacher at Nellie Stone Johnson



Jibril is in third grade; has muscular dystrophy; uses a power wheelchair for mobility; and has participated in the Minne-Loppet Ski program at Nellie Stone Johnson.

When we heard the Nordic Ski Foundation would be running a cross-country skiing unit at Nellie Stone Johnson for our third graders, Julie Ellingson, the Physical Education instructor, and one of our Special Education Assistants brought it to my attention. Margaret Adelsman, the Program Coordinator for the Nordic Ski Foundation, had offered to bring a sit ski for Jibril to use during the unit which we thought would be a neat idea.

Julie and I (his case manager) asked Jibril and his parents if he would like to participate. His protective mother was hesitant at first, as she was afraid he'd get cold. However, his father immediately said yes and Jibril concurred. We decided to have Jibril try the sit ski.

Margaret had the sit ski ready for Jibril on the first day of the program. Everyone, including Jibril, was a little awkward and yet very excited on their skis for the first time. It took some creativity for the ski to work perfectly for him. Due to his muscular dystrophy, he has very limited control of his trunk and neck muscles, along with all the other muscles in his body, so he needed a head rest and some chest supports. With some creativity, we used a life jacket to support his trunk, and a new contraption to support his neck and head. Jibril was asked if he wanted to continue with the ski unit and his response was "YES!"

Jibril's peers have been witnessing him do "everything" that they do all year, so seeing him in a sit ski wasn't that remarkable to them. They certainly thought it was cool and were very glad to have him with them outside for skiing. On the day the Paralympians came to talk to Jibril's class about being a Paralympic athlete, one of the adaptive program coaches from Elm Creek brought 6 sit skis

*Skiing on grass? Program Coordinator Margaret Adelsman pulls Minne-Loppet participant Jibril Jama in his first sit-ski experience. Jibril and his classmates participated in the City of Lakes Minne-Loppet at the end of the program. Photo: Michelle Thoemke*

for the Nellie Stone Johnson students in our Physical/Health Disabilities class to try out. Many of Jibril's "able bodied" peers tried the sit skis as well.

When I met up with Jibril at the Cook County Minne-Loppet last weekend, he arrived with his mother and two brothers. There was a team of three teachers waiting and ready with Jibril's sit ski. Because Jibril's cab ride was late, we had to hurry to get him out of his power chair, into the sit ski, and to the beginning of the race with the rest of the kids. At the start line, I asked Jibril how he was feeling. His response was "a little nervous". I assured him that many of the students that day were feeling nervous too. Propelled by the power of three devoted teachers, Jibril began the race with a very big smile on his face and searching eyes for his mother and brothers. Along the race, Jibril was often shouting "Run! Run!". When the race was over, his brothers ran up to him and were speaking to him in Somali. His response to them was "it was awesome".

On the Monday after the Minne-Loppet, the students from Jibril's class shared what the experience was like. Jibril shared his favorite memories too, just like everyone else. This experience is exactly the goal of our Physical and Health Disabilities Program at Nellie Stone Johnson; to allow our students to participate in everything their peers do, even if it has to be done a different way.

*The City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation just received a grant from Hennepin County to purchase sit skis, allowing us to offer inclusive sports programming for the first time.*

# LOPPET JUNIORS

By Allie Rykken

It sure feels like summer and the Loppet Juniors are acting like it! The Anwatin and Nellie Stone Johnson middle school teams are keeping Wirth Park and themselves busy by rollerskiing, running, and of course, mountain biking 2-3 times a week.

With Anwatin meeting Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, and Nellie Stone Johnson meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays, one might wonder if there's room on the trails for anyone else. Well to them, I'd say check this out: We also have Farview Park coming out Mondays and Wednesdays for an evening mountain bike ride with Louis Oates and the Boys & Girls Club doing the same on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Brian Gregg. The energy on the trails is ramping up and ready for summer!

To wrap up the Spring, the Anwatin and Nellie Stone Johnson teams, aka Loppet Juniors, will partake in an adventure race at Wirth Park on May 4th, as well as a three-day canoe & camping trip on the Brule River over Memorial Day weekend.

Once summer arrives, the Juniors will join up with Piotr Bednarski and the SkiWerx all-stars on Mondays for some rollerskiing, work on dryland training on Wednesdays and end the week on a high note with mountain biking on Fridays.

Due to the enormous popularity of mountain biking among Loppet Juniors, there will be six time trials and short track course races at Wirth every other week starting in May, open to the public starting in June. With a couple of the Summer Mountain Bike Series races, including the Single Track Attack at Elk River, and Border Crossing at River Falls, as well as the infamous Tri-Loppet, they should be rearing to go by the end of the summer! Add in a week of Loppet Adventure Camp and a week-end biking trip in August and they just might be unstoppable.



## FOREVER YOUNG - LOPPET SKI CLUB

By Ingrid Remak

The Loppet Ski Club is your LIFELONG ski community. We encourage adults of every age and ability to grow and develop their skills and passion for skiing equal to that of any young athlete. With nearly 200 Loppet Ski Club members skiing this past year, we have expanded our adult programs to include recreational, intermediate and high level training options. While some prefer to ski in a social setting, others enjoy finding the hardest hill workouts of the trail. Our goal is to provide and facilitate the most positive skiing experience for everyone.

Beginning this summer, the Nordic Ski Foundation will break into smaller groups, with the option for informal larger group activities on the weekend. Ski training happens year round and we encourage you to stick with a training group during the dryland season to reap the greatest rewards on snow.

While the various Loppet Ski Club groups share a common interest in skiing, we share an even larger appetite for food! Potlucks, doughnut holes and Waffle-Loppets are all part of the Loppet Ski Club experience. We embarked on our first Club trip to Bearskin and Golden Eagle Lodges this winter, and we are looking forward to an upcoming season filled with several ski outings, more doughnut holes, and endless hours on the trail. Join us!



*Top: Power of the poles... Coach Marc Beitz exhibits the body position and vigor of pole hiking before leading a group into the woods*

*Left: Rockin' the roll... Coach Gene Kay explains the beauty of the roll before eager roller skiers about to practice.*

*Photos: Ingrid Remak*

# IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 1 Loppet Mentoring

- 1 Go! Training and Minnesota Valley Come Under Loppet Umbrella
- 1 The six stages of Loppet Love
- 1 Notes from the Executive Director
- 2 Loppet Volunteers Plant Trees
- 3 IPC Nordic World Cup - a Life Changing Experience
- 7 The Loppet Opportunity Pipeline
- 9 Partners in Community
- 10 Foundation Members and Donors
- 11 Foundation Membership
- 12 2012 Loppet: The Last Three Weeks
- 13 Exploring Customer Relationship Management
- 14 Minne-Loppet Review
- 15 Youth Programming Update
- 15 Re-Grooming a Great Brand
- 16 Wirth Park Planning Process Update
- 18 Jibril learns to ski
- 19 Loppet Juniors
- 19 Forever Young - Loppet Ski Club

## CITY OF LAKES NORDIC SKI FOUNDATION CALENDAR

- May 30, 2012 - Membership year ends, time to renew!
- June 23, 2012 - UCare Tri-Loppet
- September 22, 2012 - Surly Brewing Trail Loppet
- October 27, 2012 - Loppet Trails Day
- January 12, 2013 - Peace Coffee Pre-Loppet
- February 2-3, 2013 - City of Lakes Loppet Festival Weekend

Have an idea for an article? Want to place an advertisement in this publication?

Contact Ingrid Remak (612 604-5334 or [remak@cityoflakesloppet.com](mailto:remak@cityoflakesloppet.com)).

*The great balancing act - Arezzo Jones and Jonathon Ramirez from Nellie Stone join Muaj Xiong and Issac Sonquist from Anawatin in celebration after balancing on the Skeeder Todder for five seconds winning their spring Adventure Race in Theodore Wirth Park.*

Photo: Ingrid Remak



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