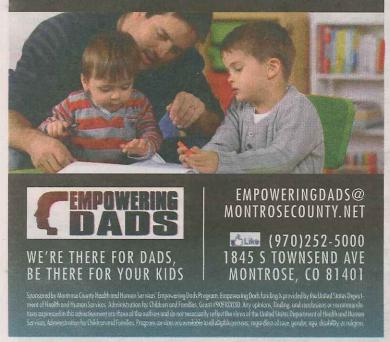
2014 Ouray County Fairgrounds Celebration

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TASP Brings Adaptive Skiers To Int'l Freeride Camp in Chile



NEVADOS DE CHILLAN, CHILE - Elaine Evans (far left) with Telluride Adaptive Ski Program athletes Brian Bartlett, Greg Mannin, and Karl Dorman, all above-the-knee amputee skiers taking a break from shredding on a sunny day in Chile. (Picture by Tim McGough)

BY ALLISON PERRY

Taking Adaptive **Awareness** To a New Height in South America

TELLURIDE - This summer, as part of a continuing effort not only to empower disabled athletes, but also to bring awareness of of the world, Telluride Adaptive resorts during the summer. Ski Program teamed up with Arizona's Alpine Ski Club and brought rier posing a challenge, McGough six disabled skiers to the First International Freeride Camp at Nevados de Chillan resort in Chile.

In a recent interview, TASP Program Director Tim McGough said the trip, which he hopes to grow and continue into the future, transcended shredding the 4 ft. of who ski on their prosthesis, which fresh snow a big storm brought is extremely rare, one below-knee in - and even skiing, in general. ment, independence and awareness," he said, "in addition to providing new experiences to our athletes and getting some disabled skiers down to Chile."

Although it is not unusual to see a sit-ski or a visually impaired skier racing down the hill in Telluride, or at any ski resort in the U.S. for that matter, McGough said it's a whole different story in South America. "There is no [Americans With Disabilities Assn.] in South America," he explained, "so things like navigating the airport, getting to and from the hotel, which has no ramps or wheelchair access and traveling

down there."

from traveling onto the ski resort, where adaptive skiing is something a great majority of the staff in addition to starting to educate - including lifties and ski patrol have never even seen. McGough noted that the only workers on the mountain with any experience in adaptive skiing are primarily those who work at ski resorts in the U.S. over the winter, and head to South adaptive programs to another part America to continue working at ski

> In addition to the language bartalked about getting "the Look" his small group of disabled athletes take to the hill on mechanisms such as sit-down skis and special prostheses. Among his group were three above-knee amputee skiers amputee snowboarder, a visually sit ski. Three TASP volunteers traveled with the group to assist Mc-Gough when he needed it, but he was solely responsible for running the program, especially during onsnow time, from recruiting athletes to coaching them.

Just because adaptive ski programs are not ubiquitous in Chile does not mean Nevados de Chillan is opposed to hosting one, however, and McGough said Ski School Director Christian Ahues was an ally in bringing more awareness resort and the region.

were also huge challenges for us. mountain," he said, "is that Chris-Some of the things we take for tian, the ski school director, wants granted here simply do not exist his resort to be at the center of a movement to start adaptive ski-These challenges extended ing in South America. Having the freeride camp there really allowed us to begin promoting awareness Chris and some of the resort staff."

> In a recent interview, Ahues said, "For Nevados' future, I hope to improve logistics for teams and accessibility, and to train the operators to know how to help and give good service to adaptive skiers. This is the beginning of adaptive skiing here and Nevados has so much to offer. The mountain is wonderful and the place is special.

"I was very impressed with when skiers and resort staff saw TASP," he said, "and with the high level of the prosthetics that some of the athletes have. This was the first time I have seen an adaptive freeride team. We have had adaptive alpine teams training before, but this was the first freeride team. It was awesome! Many skiers from here can't be-"This trip was about empower- impaired snowboarder and a gentle- lieve it when they figure out the man with a spinal cord injury in a freeriders have one leg. Adaptive sports impresses and inspires other people and demonstrates that human capacities have no limits."

With Nevados enthusiastically on board, McGough hopes to operate the trip solely through TASP in future years, as not having to partner up with the Alpine Ski Club would allow the disabled skiers and coaches to better plan and stick to their own schedule and timeline, and be more autonomous as a group.

"Because of the challenges and more adaptive skiing to the and lack of staff we had this year, we really had to keep our group "The cool thing about this small and limit it to only the most

COMMUNITY



WE ARE FAMILY - (From left to right) Brian Bartlett, Dustin Flemming, Tim McGough, Tomer Alpert, Brent SNOW DAY - Gracie Everitt (left) and Brent Cote (right) braved a Cote, Gracie Everitt, and Karl Dorman showed their Telluride pride in Chile. (Photo by Emily McGough)



Chilean snowstorm. (Photo by Tim McGough)

advanced and independent athletes," he adds, citing the fact that change is location, and that Neva-next to smoking craters," he said. the skiers not only had to be profion-snow instruction, but also were look like. responsible for getting themselves to and from the airport.

to increase the limit to 12 skiers, and bring along enough of a and everything is on more of a coaching staff that we won't have to turn anyone down," McGough continued. "We are a non-profit as and everything is above treeline." well, so we can even offer scholarships to the program as long as we have enough staff to facilitate Chillan is also an active volcano. a larger group."

dos de Chillan was exactly what

"The terrain is unique and amazing," he said. "It is similar to "Next year we hope to be able Telluride, in that it is steep, there is a lot of hike-to terrain, trees, grand scale, but it also has lava flows, rocky and knobby spines Adding to the grandeur of the terrain is the fact that Nevados de "We did a cat ski run, and before

McGough said what will not we dropped in, we were standing

In addition to smoking volcacient enough to ski without direct he hoped a freeride camp would noes and variable and steep terrain, avalanche danger also has to be addressed, as, according to McGough, the resort does not do much avalanche mitigation. And so the group focused on backcountry protocols and safety as well as ing moments of the trip, Mc- and have fun doing it. on adapting to different terrain and Gough said. "One of our skiers, snow and line selection.

> McGough cited the snowpack itself as offering both the biggest and a Paralympic champion and no one's leaving until you accomdifference and the biggest chal- had never skied [conditions] like plish your goal."

lenge for the skiers. "It is a mari- what we saw in Chile. This guy is time snowpack down there," he used to crashing gates on ice and said, and is "more similar to the hard-pack at super high speeds. West Coast than Colorado; thus the When we got there, he looked at snow is very thick, wet and heavy, me at first and said 'Tim, I can't which is much harder to ski."

and conquer this unique obstacle - and everyone - feel comfortable created some of the most inspir- enough to conquer that challenge Greg Mannino, from Montrose," Gough said of the group's time in he says, "is a Hall of Fame skier Chile. "No one is left behind and

turn,' but the camaraderie and Watching his group confront support of the group helped him

"We have a family here," Mc-

2014 Ouray County Fairgrounds Celebration

Ouray County Fair · Thurs-Sat, Aug 28-30

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