

Adaptive Winter Sports:

A guide for new Arise & Ski Participants

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History

The ARISE & Ski program, founded by Melissa Hall and Christopher Weiss, began providing adaptive ski lessons at Toggenburg Winter Sports Center in 1997. Both Melissa and Christopher started skiing as children; Melissa spent much of her youth on McCauley Mountain racing while Christopher started skiing and walking at about the same age and became a Toggenburg instructor in 1977 at the age of 15. In the 90s Melissa worked for ARISE and soon rose to the position of Executive Director. Her knowledge and experience in the field of disabilities and Christopher's many years as a professional ski instructor inspired them to create this unique program. With some assistance and training from the PSIA and various adaptive ski schools Melissa and Christopher began recruiting and training volunteers. Finding participants was not difficult. Melissa moved on to focus on her family and other projects.

The current program is run by a team of expert winter sports enthusiasts: Christopher Weiss continues as the technical director and Richelle Maki has taken on the lion's share of coordinating the program with the support of Tom McKeown, the current executive director of ARISE; Jeremy Holden, Caitlin & Andy Frieble, Cory Williams, Thaler Barnes make up our team of clinic leaders and expert instructors.

Since its inception ARISE & Ski has provided ski lessons to individuals with various disabilities including: spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, autism, Lowe syndrome, behavioral disorders, vision impairments and many others. The program has grown over the years thanks to the support of the Hickey Family (owners of Toggenburg); the staff at Toggenburg; the donations of various individuals, corporations, and agencies; the incredible volunteers that work with us; and all the skiers at Toggenburg that share the mountain with us.

Philosophy

Arise & Ski functions as an adaptive winter sports recreational program that advocates for accessibility and inclusion. Our belief is that winter sports benefit all who wish to participate. Our goal is to provide each participant with an opportunity to learn and enjoy winter sports in a safe and fun way. We take a "person-first" approach and do not allow anyone's disability define who they are and what they can or cannot accomplish. We acknowledge that winter sports involve activities that present challenges and risks to all participants which is why we clinic and train our instructors with an emphasis on maintaining a program wide awareness of responsible ways of enjoying winter recreation.

Who are the instructors?

Arise & Ski instructors are volunteers who have been through extensive training both on and off the snow. Our volunteers range in age from 15 to 65. Many of our volunteers have a family member or a close friend with a disability. Oftentimes family members of our participants decide to volunteer

as instructors. Instructors are dedicated professionals and tend to work with the same participants from year to year. One of our core beliefs is that as the teacher-student relationship grows there is more opportunity for success and achievement. Instructors are teachers, friends, mentors and winter enthusiasts.

What makes us unique?

ARISE & Ski is unique among adaptive programs for many reasons. ARISE & Ski is a local grass roots organization created by individuals who came together to make adaptive snow sports a reality in Central New York. That community connection remains core to the program. We are generously supported by Toggenburg Mountain who provides space in the lodge, lift tickets and free ski and boarding equipment. The volunteers with ARISE & Ski come from the same community that our students come from. This has allowed many of our students and instructors to find common ground with each other and in many cases has fostered relationships that go beyond the ski season. We are one of the few programs that is all inclusive. This means that not only will we teach an individual with a disability to ski, but we can teach the family and friends of the student. This family and community connection has made adaptive winter sports, something many people see as extraordinary, ordinary at Toggenburg and the CNY region as a whole.

Costs & Expectations of Participants

ARISE & Ski students are responsible for transportation to and from Toggenburg. We expect students to arrive early and be ready by the planned lesson time. We also ask that students notify the program if they will be late or are unable to attend.

Once at Toggenburg students are responsible for their own personal belongings. ARISE & Ski cannot be responsible for lost or stolen possessions. Students are also expected to provide, or purchase, their own food. Packing a lunch to eat in the lodge is a longtime skiing tradition but students can also purchase food in the main lodge at the cafeteria or dine in the Foggy Goggle restaurant.

ARISE & Ski strives to make winter sports accessible in every way, including the cost to participate. Due to our tremendous volunteer efforts and the ongoing support from Toggenburg we have been able to keep costs participant costs low. In some cases an entire season with ARISE & Ski can cost less than one lesson at many of the resort based programs. Payment to participate in ARISE & Ski is due before the first day of lessons in January. No payments will be accepted at Toggenburg. If you need to make payment arrangements you may do so by contacting the ARISE business office at 315-472-3171.

Cancellation Policy

- 1) If a weather travel advisory has been issued we ask that no one travel to Toggenburg, we would rather everyone be safe than risk the possibility of an accident.
- 2) If the actual reported forecast is to be zero degrees or below we reserve the right to cancel. An outgoing message will be left at 315-671-3094 by 7 AM each morning to notify skiers and volunteers of any cancellations.
- 3) If an instructor arrives at the Toggenburg and finds that conditions are such that it is not safe to use equipment on the hill or any trails, the instructor reserves the right to cancel the lesson. All attempts will be made to contact equipment skiers as early as possible to make sure no unnecessary travel takes place.

Program Dates

The ARISE & Ski program runs for 6 weeks every winter. Indoor volunteer training sessions and orientation meetings may begin as early as October. Our "on snow" volunteer training starts the first weekend that Toggenburg is open. Student lessons usually start the first Saturday after the New Year's holiday.

Pre-Season Preparation

Like any new experience, learning to ski or snowboard can be both exciting and scary. To help make this new experience fun consider taking steps at home to prepare before the season begins. Some simple, but helpful, things to do before hitting the slopes include:

- Play a winter sports video game
- Look at books or magazines about skiing and snowboarding.
- Plan ahead by counting down the days before the season begins on a calendar.
- Practice meeting new people and introductions so the student is not surprised by meeting new people and the Arise & Ski instructor on the first day.
- Talk with other families who have participated in ARISE & Ski to learn about their experiences
- Visit a Ski shop or Toggenburg before the lessons begin.
- Look at suggested websites and resources to help the student learn more about snowsports.

Some internet resources to visit

The two sites below become important as the season draws near. Applications for participants and volunteer applications will be available at the Arise and Ski webpage and there are often videos posted and discussions happening on the Facebook group page.

Arise & Ski web site is: <http://ariseinc.org/ski/index.html> --learn about our program and our staff

Arise & Ski Facebook group is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Ariseandski/> -- please join the group

Toggenburg Winter Sports Complex website is: <http://skitog.com/>

Toggenburg Facebook site is:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Toggenburg-Mountain-Winter-Sports-Center/159247597460065?sk=wall>

Go With a Pro Facebook page (has videos)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Go-With-a-Pro/98259290799>

PSIA-AASI Go With A Pro: Adaptive Skiing and Riding

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRvyim8Bc80>

Geoff Krill discusses adaptive winter sports

What to Wear & Gearing Up

Cotton is not good clothing for winter sports (jeans, sweatshirts, sweatpants will not provide weatherproof warmth) because it absorbs sweat, soaks up the snow and you will get cold easily.

Layering gives you the flexibility to add or remove layers, depending on the weather conditions and your activity level. These layers are best:

A Wicking Layer - This is the layer worn next to your skin, usually consisting of long underwear. Thermal underwear made of a synthetic - usually polyester has "wicking" power. This means the fibers will wick (move) moisture away from your skin and pass it through the fabric so it will evaporate. This keeps you warm, dry and comfortable. Silk is also a good, natural fabric that has wicking abilities. Even though it's cold, you will sweat - especially if you are snowboarding or snowshoeing.

The Insulating Layer - This middle layer includes sweaters, sweatshirts, vests and pullovers. The purpose of this layer is to keep heat in and cold out, which is accomplished by trapping air between the fibers. Fleece, a synthetic material which maintains its insulating ability even when wet and spreads the moisture out so it dries quickly is commonly used these days. Wool might be “old school” but it naturally wicks away moisture and is still one of the best insulators.

The Outside / Protection Layer – This is generally a shell and pants, and guards against the elements of winter. It should repel water from snow, sleet or rain and block the wind, while also letting perspiration evaporate.

Most genuine winter shells and pants are made waterproof and breathable to some extent by using tightly woven fabrics teamed with a coating or laminate. This keeps moisture on the outside but allows perspiration to escape, keeping you dry and comfortable. Gortex is the popular material but can be expensive – there are other products that will work similarly and cost less than gortex.

Headwear - Helmets or knit hats are the best at keeping your head warm when skiing or snowboarding. If you choose to wear a helmet, keep in mind that you should select one that breathes appropriately for you as well as one that fits with your favorite goggles.

Eyewear - Protecting your eyes is a wise thing to do when skiing or riding. Sunglasses can work on those sunny spring days when you want/need to look your coolest, but goggles are suggested when it is on the colder side or snowing.

Hands – “Mittens” and “Gloves” are terms that describe a wide variety of hand wear. It is important that the individual chooses what he or she is comfortable with but knitted gloves or mittens will not hold up to the rigors of vigorous winter recreational activities nor will they provide the warmth and protection needed. Driving gloves are also not warm enough nor water proof enough for winter sports. Look for gloves and mittens that are insulated and provide some protection on palms and fingers and some bulk on the back of the hand. Some winter sports gloves and mittens have small pockets where one can insert chemical hand warmers – these are excellent.

Feet - Wool or acrylic socks are better than cotton athletic socks. One can find socks specifically designed for skiing and snowboarding – usually one pair is sufficient – if you decide to wear two pairs there is a risk of bunching inside the boot and blisters are possible.

Once you have gathered appropriate clothing and layers, plan ahead by practicing putting on the layers. If you are choosing to use a helmet, practice wearing it a few minutes a day to get used to how it feels.

Toggenburg Winter Sports Complex

Toggenburg Mountain can be a very busy place, especially on a weekend. If crowds and very active facilities might pose difficulty you might consider visiting Toggenburg a week before the program begins in an effort to familiarize yourself, or the student, with the setting. Visit the lodge, the rental shop and take a look at the slopes and lifts to prepare for the different sights, smells, noise, etc. of these new environments

Additionally:

- Learn where the restrooms are.
- Eat at the Foggy Goggle or in the cafeteria.
- Check out parking situation and entry ways for Arise & ski participants needing wheel chair access.

First day of ARISE & Ski lessons

Your first day at an ARISE & Ski lesson may seem confusing and chaotic, especially if you are new to winter sports and its culture. Plan to arrive early to allow for time to adjust to this new atmosphere. There will be a lot of things happening.

Where to go at Toggenburg:

Once you arrive at Toggenburg come into the main lodge. The ARISE & Ski meeting area is adjacent to the staircase going to the balcony. There will be a large banner near the staircase that reads “ARISE & Ski”.

Check in process: After you have located ARISE & Ski, the student (or parent / caretaker) will need to check in. There will be a table by the back wall where some volunteers will help you get situated. This is where you will be given a lift ticket and the rental forms you completed before the season begins. **DO NOT BUY TICKETS AND RENTALS AT THE TICKET WINDOW;** we have already done this for you.

Meeting the Arise & Ski Instructor: After you have checked in, one or more instructors will be assigned to the student. At the beginning of the season it may take some time to match an appropriate instructor to each student. Once the appropriate instructor has been identified, talk to the instructor about what you want to learn and find out what to expect from the lesson. The instructor will have access to the student’s application and may have some questions to ask before getting rental equipment and/or heading out to the slopes. At this time the instructor and possibly a member of our supervisory team will work with the student and family/guardians to determine what, if any, adaptive equipment will be used. This assessment process usually involves our staff asking questions about the kinds of recreational activities the student has participated in before; if there are any medications, behaviors, likes and dislikes that we should know about. We will also talk about issues concerning mobility, balance, vision, hearing as well as general questions regarding strengths and weaknesses. This assessment process helps us determine the best approach to teaching winter sports to each particular individual. As we begin to work together we may make changes in adaptive instructional approaches based on our experiences.

Please understand that the very first session for a new participant requires some time and patience. We want to take the time to build a warm and trusting relationship. To that end we spend time meeting the student and any people that visit the program with them. We have found over the years that following a careful step by step assessment process and gentle introduction to winter sports provides the greatest opportunities for a positive experience.

After the lesson: Talk to the student and the teacher about what happened during the lesson and what to think about for the following week.

Emergency Situations for ARISE Participants

Instructors are trained to apply these protocols

1. Stay calm: your reactions will impact reactions of injured person. Talk to and reassure the skier.
2. Secure Scene Safety: Be sure other skiers can see you and avoid you. Request help from bystanders if necessary.
3. Request Help: Stay with the skier at all times. Send others to alert Ski Patrol and Arise Staff. Be as precise as possible about location on the hill, extent of the problem, and the name of the skier.
4. If there is a chance of back or neck injury-DO NOT MOVE THE SKIER! The only exception would be if breathing is obstructed.
5. Try to keep the injured skier warm and dry. Sometimes help may take several minutes to arrive.
6. Do not attempt to remove the skier from and adaptive equipment. Leave this to trained personnel.
7. If there is a potential of injury to leg, knee or ankle, do not remove the skier’s skis.
8. Never attempt to remove a helmet.

9. Avoid direct contact with any body fluids. Your personal safety needs to come first.
10. For injuries to the wrist or forearm, allow skier to self-support using their good arm.
11. Watch for frost bit/ frost nip. Get skiers showing signs of frost bite or nip indoors immediately.
12. Report all possible injuries.
13. You may be asked by ski patrol to provide information of the incident. Please stay with the skier until you are released by ski patrol.

ARISE & Ski glossary of terms

Amputation: Removal of a limb. A skier with an amputation may require special adaptations in equipment or technique. Common sites for amputation are below knee, above knee, below elbow and above elbow. Unilateral refers to more than one amputation on the same side of the body. Bilateral can refer to either both arms, both legs or an arm on one side and a leg on the other side.

Aphasia: loss or impairment of the ability to use or understand words. Receptive aphasia refers to the inability to understand words. Expressive aphasia refers to the inability to say words formulated in thought.

Assessment: The process of evaluating the ski student to determine his or hers abilities with the goal of developing an effective plan for the students ski lessons. The instructor will want to know about the student's emotional well-being, expectations, learning style and ability, skiing and other athletic experiences. The instructor gathers information on the student from a variety of resources, including, but not limited to, the student themselves, the parents or caregivers, previous instructors notes, skiers application, skiers profile forms, observation. Assessment of the student can take place before, during and after each lesson.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): Neurological Syndrome.

Symptoms include short attention span, easily distracted, impulsiveness, hyperactivity, wandering or restlessness that interferes with everyday functioning.

Autism: Classified by the DSM-IV as a Pervasive Developmental Disorder involving qualitative impairment in social interaction, communication and marked by restricted repetitive and stereotyped behavior, interests and activities (see DSM- IV for full criteria).

Balancing movements: One of the four basic skiing skills. Muscular actions to maintain balance or the desired alignment on skis. Balancing movements are usually broken into two categories, actions that affect fore and aft balance and actions that affect lateral balance.

Bi-Ski: a sit ski using a molded seat mounted on two skis.

Carved turns: Turns on skis in which the skis travel on the edge with a minimum of slipping or skidding.

Cerebral Palsy (CP): a disability resulting from damage to the brain before, during, or shortly after birth and outwardly manifested by lack of muscular coordination and speech disturbances.

Christie: A ski turn in which the skis turn on corresponding edges.

Clock System: Relating ones position on the hill to the numbers on an analog clock face.

The reference system is that the skier is always facing 12 o'clock.

Cognitive disability: Brain damage affecting the ability to process information, and /or to coordinate and control the body or its movement. Disabilities resulting from organic causes, include Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, and brain tumors. Disability can also result from non-organic causes such as injury or physical trauma.

Dampener: A piston with hydraulic fluid on both sides. These are used on sit skis to help control the rate of compression and rebound.

Developmental disability: Condition that interrupts or delays normal growth or development, having onset before age 18 and of indefinite duration. Common conditions include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy and Downs Syndrome.

Dowel Test: Balance test performed with a skier in a sit-ski balanced over a dowel to determine the best position for the seat on the ski.

Down's syndrome: a congenital condition characterized by moderate to severe mental retardation, upward slanting eyes usually with epicanthic folds, a broad short skull, broad hands with short fingers, and decreased muscle tone. Down's syndrome is a chromosomal abnormality affecting the human chromosome numbered 21—called also *trisomy 21*

Dual Ski: A hybrid sit ski. It is a cross between a mono-ski and bi-ski using two traditional skis under a molded seat.

Dynamic parallel: Ski turns with more carving than skidding.

Edge control movements: One of the four basic skiing skills. Movements on skis that increase or decrease edge angles. Edging movements include angulation and inclination.

Edgie-wedgie: A rubber device that screws onto the tips of a pair of skis that assists the skier in keeping the skis together and assists them in maintaining a wedge when needed.

Exercise: ski movement patterns that are broken down into parts and isolated for skill development. Ski instructors often combine exercises into a progression.

Fall line: the natural downhill course (as for skiing) between two points on a slope. The fall line is the path on which a ball would roll if it were released down the slope.

Four-track skiing: Skiing on two skis while using handheld outriggers and a snow slider for stability.

Genetic disorder: conditions resulting from chromosomal abnormalities.

Grid system: A system of describing ski runs and terrain for visually impaired skiers by breaking up a distance into imaginary units.

Handlebar: an attachment to a bi-ski that a skier who does not use handheld outriggers can grasp while skiing.

Hemiparesis: muscular weakness or partial paralysis restricted to one side of the body.

Horse and buggy: a system used to guide a visually impaired skier. The instructor and the skier each hold one prop, such as a bamboo pole, in each hand at hip level. The instructor is able to provide direction to the student by directing the poles.

Learning partnership: The rapport that the instructor builds with the student. Essential to the success of this relationship is the instructors understanding of the students' needs and expectations and the students willingness to actively participate in learning.

Lift-loading mechanism: System of levers and swing arms that mechanically raise a sit-ski into a position suitable for loading onto a ski lift.

Mental retardation: sub-average intellectual ability equivalent to or less than an IQ of 70 that is accompanied by significant deficits in abilities (as in communication or self-care) necessary for independent daily living, is present from birth or infancy, and is manifested especially by delayed or abnormal development, by learning difficulties, and by problems in social adjustment.

Classification include:

- Mild (IQ range between 51 and 70)
- Moderate (IQ range between 36 and 50)
- Severe (IQ range between 21 and 35)
- Profound (IQ of 20 or below)

**the phrase "mental retardation" is considered by many offensive and no longer commonly used by those in the disability and mental health professions - this is exemplified by recent proposals to change the name of the New York State "Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD)" to the "Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)".*

Mono-Ski: Sit-ski using a molded seat apparatus mounted to one ski, the skier usually uses handheld outriggers.

Mounting Plates: Mounting plates are the plates used to mount bi-skis and some older mono skis to the skis.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS): a neurological disease marked by patches of hardened tissue in the brain or the spinal cord and associated especially with partial or complete paralysis and jerking muscle tremor. Other symptoms may include loss of stamina, poor balance, incontinence, visual impairment and slurred speech.

Muscular dystrophy (MD) any of a group of hereditary disorders characterized by progressive and irreversible wasting of muscles. Tissue degeneration originates in the muscle itself. Voluntary and involuntary muscles are affected and the person may walk with crutches or a cane or possibly use a wheelchair.

Outrigger: Similar to Canadian crutches with an adapter that allows a ski tip to be attached to the end. The ski tip is retractable and can be flipped up to expose the brake which can be used to assist the skier in gripping the snow. Fixed outriggers can also be attached to a bi-ski to provide additional stability to the skier.

Parallel turn: a ski turn made on corresponding ski edges. It may be more or less carved depending on the skier's intention and skill.

Paraplegia: paralysis of the lower half of the body with involvement of both legs usually due to disease of or injury to the spinal cord.

Paresis: Slight or partial paralysis.

Pressure control movements: One of the four basic skiing skills. Movements that create, maintain, reduce or redirect the pressure of the skis on snow. Pressure control is achieved through leverage, extension, flexion, and transfer of pressure from ski to ski, all in combination with edge control movements. Ski characteristics, skier movements, turn shape, terrain, and snow conditions determine the pressure along the ski at any instant.

Prosthesis: an artificial device to replace or augment a missing or impaired part of the body.

Quadriplegia: paralysis of all four limbs—called also *tetraplegia*

Rotary Movements: One of the four basic skiing skills. Ski movements that increase, limit, or decrease the rotation of the skis. Rotary movements can be grouped into four primary categories: Rotation, counter-rotation, anticipation release and rotary push off.

Self-loading lift mechanism: used to raise the mono-ski from skiing height to lift loading height.

Side slipping: a method of disengaging the ski edges to move down the hill with the skis across the fall line.

Side step: A method of using the ski edges to move up the hill with the skis across the fall line.

Sit-skiing: a type of skiing that uses special equipment that allows a skier to sit. Typical types of sit-skis include mono-ski, bi-ski and dual-ski.

Ski bra: a metal device that clamps onto the tips of a pair of skis to help to keep them together.

Ski Frame: Rectangular device used in various ways to assist a student learn to ski. The ski frame can be used to provide stability, speed control, to guide turns or to maintain contact with a student who resists being touched.

Skill: the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance and/or dexterity or coordination especially in the execution of learned physical tasks

Skills concept: The four fundamental skiing skills: balancing, edge-control, pressure control and rotation. The skills concept, which is an essential aspect of PSIA and AASI's teaching system, provides instructors and base from which to evaluate, prioritize, and develop student performance.

Sno-wing: A piece of adaptive instructional equipment used to assist an ambulatory student to ski or snowboard. Can be used with a variety of students, the sno-wing consists of an oval shaped hoop with four anchor points. The student wears a hip belt with four straps sewn into it that clips to the hoop at the anchor points. The sno-wing provides balance and stability to a student while allowing them to learn gain confidence on the equipment that they are using.

Spina bifida: Congenital malformation of the spinal column in which segments of the spine fail to fuse, allowing the spinal cord to protrude. A surgically implanted shunt or tube may be necessary to allow fluid to drain.

Spinal cord injury: Trauma to the spinal cord, resulting in partial or full loss of function and sensation below the injury level, possibly resulting in paraplegia or quadriplegia.

Stance: How a skier stands on their skis. One of the most basic indicators of ski performance at all levels of skiing; stance affects the application and blending of skills.

Straight run: Skiing directly down the fall line with the skis in the fall line. Usually down on gradual slope with a flat area or an uphill slope at the bottom.

Tether: Device used to help control the student's speed and turn shape. A tether consists of a length of 1" flat webbing with a carabineer at either end that is connected to the student's equipment. In the majority of cases a tether is used in conjunction with a bi-ski but in some cases may also be used to directly assist a skier by attaching to a ski bra.

Three-track skiing: Skiing on one ski while using handheld outriggers to assist in maintaining balance.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI): Brain damage resulting from either organic or inorganic causes; may affect almost any aspect of movement, thought or behavior. Hemiplegia, hemiparesis memory loss, aphasia and/or seizures are commonly associated with TBI.

Two-point assist: also referred to as "thumb tethering", technique used in teaching mono skiing and bi skiing whereby the instructor uses their hands to provide assistance with skier's speed and directional control by gripping the back of the seat, or frame, of the mono or bi ski itself. The two points of contact are the instructor's right and left hands with the right and left sides of the back of the adaptive equipment. Generally used on gentle terrain with beginning skiers.

Visual impairment: disability involving reduction or loss of vision. Classifications include legal blindness, partial sightedness or total blindness.

Wedge-Christie turn: a turn that begins in a wedge and finishes with a skidding phase, resulting in corresponding edges (in parallel)

Wedge turn: a turn with skis in a converging position (pizza or "A") with the skiers maintaining opposing edges throughout the turn.

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Note: *In many ways adaptive winter sports is still in its infancy. As such it continues to evolve and develop in leaps and bounds relative to technological and educational innovations. This glossary is by no means comprehensive but created in an effort to provide adaptive winter sports professionals with a functional, and easy to understand, vocabulary of commonly used terms and phrases related to our sport and the broader disability field. We will, of course, continue to add to, and improve, this document as our experiences and expertise develops. We hope that you find this resource helpful.*