

BOEC is my Healer

By Sandy Lahmann, BOEC Participant

I'm pretty sure that you guys realize how much what you do for me means to me emotionally. But do you realize that you are also physically healing me?

When I first started skiing with BOEC almost two years ago, I was in a bi-ski on a tether. couldn't get off Silverthorne, and had to stop and rest twice on each run. Now I'm mono-skiing on blacks and bumps. When I started handcycling two summers ago, Joe had to push me up small hills. Now I zip up Vail Pass like it's nothing.

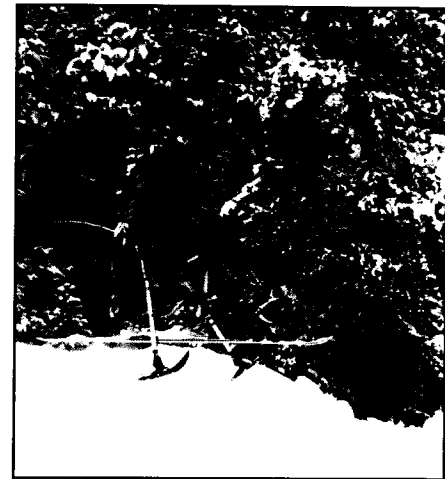
But let's look at these achievements more closely. I remember when I first started handcycling, full of fear that I would just go splat on the bike path. At that point, every time I exercised at all, my left leg would go totally paralyzed. Sometimes my left hand and wrist would go totally paralyzed, or at least wouldn't work very well. I got dizzy. With just a little exercise I fell into a fatigue and fog that would totally floor me and leave me unable to function until the next day.

I decided I trusted Joe out on that bike path. I figured that if I went splat out there, he would know what to do. I trusted him to keep me safe. And after all, who needs a functioning left leg on a handcycle? What did it matter if I was dizzy while riding that handcycle when it

was so low to the ground anyway? I had done some reading about how exercise actually helps improve multiple sclerosis symptoms. I talked with Joe about it and he described how he's seen new pathways being formed in the brains of brain injury clients. I figured MS is nothing but brain injury in the form of small lesions. I bet it would work for me.

I slowly began to see some improvement. I could go a little further each time. I had a little less fatigue, a little less dizziness each time. Last ski season was my first season mono-skiing. That brought new fears. I remember tearfully asking Quintin how you could tell if you have frostbite if you can't feel your body parts. He was calmly reassuring and tutored me on the proper placement of heat packs. At the end of last ski season I made an amazing discovery. Even though I was skiing more and more and doing harder stuff, when I was done with my afternoon of skiing I could wiggle the toes on my left foot. After a year of exercise, my left leg was no longer going paralyzed. I still couldn't walk all that great but I wasn't dealing with paralysis any more.

With another summer of handcycling and well into this new season of mono-skiing, I am discovering that I have more and more movement in my left leg and left hand. I never get dizzy anymore. The fatigue is



Sandy Lahmann rips through the powder at Breckenridge Ski Resort.

substantially reduced. In fact, I am now at the point that I can plan on doing something in the evening after I mono-ski.

You guys are healing me. With every mono-ski lesson and every handcycling opportunity, I get better and better. Sure I have some minor setbacks now and then. But all in all, I am so much healthier than I was when I started with BOEC. How can I ever begin to thank you for helping me to heal?

2008 Calendar of Events



March 29
Breckebeiner Nordic Ski-a-Thon Fundraiser
- Breckenridge Nordic Center

March 29–April 1
April Fool's Ski Trip (*adults, traumatic brain injuries*) - A long weekend of adaptive ski/riding, activities at the Scott Griffith Lodge.

April 5–7
Spring Fling (*ages 16–25, developmental disabilities*) - Winter fun with a day and a half of spring skiing.

April 10–13
Visually Impaired Ski & Ride Camp - A long weekend of adaptive skiing/riding for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Made possible by the Alcon Foundation.

May 5
24th Annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration and Fundraiser
- Mi Casa Restaurant and Cantina in Breckenridge.

July 8–12
Camp Big Tree (*ages 12–16, sensory processing disorder*) - A camp based in Buena Vista, Colorado, featuring rock climbing, camping and river rafting on the Arkansas River.

July 29–August 2
Wilderness Camp (*ages 16–25, developmental disabilities*) - An exciting river trip down Ruby and Horsethief Canyons in western Colorado.

August 9–11
Jr. Adventurer's Camp (*ages 8–14*) - Designed to boost self-esteem and have fun in a safe setting. Features, rafting, structured lodge activities and nature skills.

September 20–26
Visually Impaired Wilderness Camp (*ages 13–17*) - An exciting river trip down Ruby and Horsethief Canyons in western Colorado. For individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Made possible by the Alcon Foundation.

September 21–27
Boundary Waters Canoe Trip - A week of canoeing and camping on the pristine lakes of Boundary Waters Wilderness in northern Minnesota. Begins and ends in our private lodge.

October 1–7
Labyrinth Canyon Green River Trip (*adults with traumatic brain injuries*) - A week in the majestic canyons and gentle waters of southeast Utah.