

Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation

Did you hear the BIG new? Our Founder, Shelley Gautier, is heading to the Paralympics in Rio! We hope you will join us in cheering Shelley on as she cycles for Gold!

WOW! Where did the summer go? It seems like yesterday that we were hiring students to help develop and run our outdoor riding activities and sadly they must return to school and will be greatly missed. However, we wish them well with their studies and some have even agreed to stay on as volunteers. We are very pleased to report that half of our 2016 summer student hires were people with disabilities!

We have had a fantastic summer season packed with activity and fun! Please take a few moments to check out the activities in our Chapters.

Hamilton Chapter

Ribbon Cutting

On August 18, 2016 the Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony in Hamilton with MP Bob Bratina doing the honours.

The event was well attended by our cyclist and volunteers who enjoyed a ride on this beautiful sunny day! Mr. Bratina also joined the fun by trying out a hand cycle and a tandem bike.

Thank you to MP Bob Bratina for presiding over the official grand opening of our Hamilton chapter.

It was also announced that the Hamilton para-cycling program will be continuing into fall 2016. The fall rides will continue on the trails at Pier 8 on Sundays.



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Success Story from Sharon Ruttan in Hamilton

I just wanted to write to let you know how much I am enjoying the tandem biking! I participated in both of the training programs at the NCCCH centre and loved the fact that being legally blind (VIP) we are now riding outside. The last two sessions, down by Pier 8 at 47 Discovery Drive, my pilot Colleen and I rode 30K! It is such a great feeling of freedom and reminds me of when I used to use to own and ride horses. I never had the opportunity growing up or in my adult life to participate in doing an activity that seemed to be only available to those that were sighted! I am hoping to continue training to possibly ride in some fun competitions as at my age I am not para olympic material! Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in a fun activity that I would not have had the opportunity to do so before. Have a good day! Sharon Ruttan, guide dog Hominy and Forester (retired guide dog).

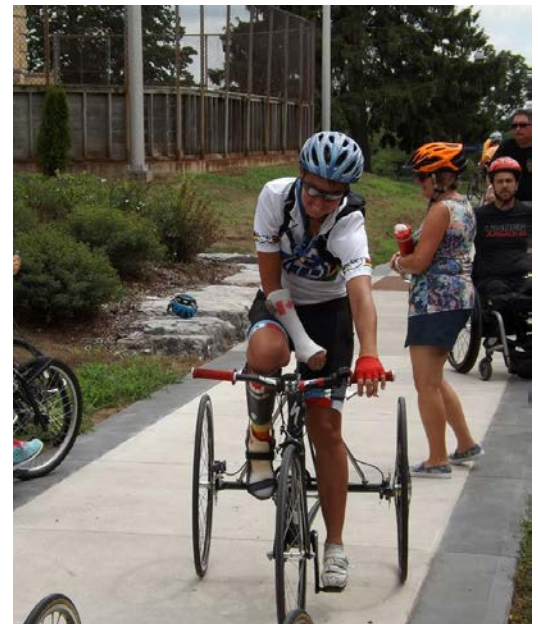


Brantford Chapter

Brantford Fun Day

This summer the Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation hosted its first ever fun day at the W. Ross MacDonald school for the blind in Brantford. This fun day included both tandem and hand cycling; bringing together participants and volunteers from our Hamilton, Brantford, and Niagara chapters and introducing new participants too para-cycling. We had a great turn out with approximately forty people participating in group rides, while meeting people from other chapters.

The event kicked off with a speech by the President of the foundation, Alan Greer, who welcomed everyone to the event before the cyclists ventured out on the trails near the school for a 15km ride.



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A D.J. spun tunes to entertain everyone throughout the day and everyone was treated to free pizza and soft drinks while socializing and having fun.

One of our Summer Program Co-ordinators, Timeshia Edwards, is a student at the school in Brantford and has overcome incredible life challenges to live a full and productive life. Timeshia and Program Leader, Robert Clark did a fantastic job in reaching out to the visually impaired community to recruit participants, including sighted pilots, to participate in tandem rides throughout the season.



Shelley Gautier attended the Fun Day event to encourage and coach new riders to participate, including a member of our Executive Committee, Rick Watters, who was thrilled to discover that he could cycle again for the first time in 38 years despite limited arm function, following a spinal injury at the age of sixteen. What a great workout while having fun!

We hope to make our Fun Day an annual event!

Ribbon Cutting

The Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation's tandem program was kicked off this year with a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Brantford's MPP Dave Levak, who presented a certificate of excellence to our Foundation. Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, the riders enjoyed cycling on the beautiful trails around the school in Brantford.

Brantford Contact Information

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Niagara Chapter

Ribbon Cutting

August 18, 2016 was a day for celebrating. The Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation officially launched their Para-Sport program in the Niagara Region. The ribbon cutting ceremony took place at Kingsbridge Park, Chippawa. It is from this location that the para cyclists begin their ride each time that they meet. Gathered were volunteers and participants, displaying wonderful smiles as they prepared to transfer to their bikes.



Thank you to the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant money and to the fundraising efforts of the first annual, Stationary Bike Race, May 2016 which helped make it possible to deliver the recreational programs and to purchase specialized equipment to meet the needs of people with disabilities in a supportive, accessible and integrated environment.

A special thanks to Niagara Falls Councilor, Mike Strange who did the official ribbon cutting and addressed his heartfelt thanks and appreciation for what the Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation is providing to the community. The Foundation is very grateful for the support.

The SGPSF Stationary Bike Race

The Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation First Annual Stationary Bike Race took place at Club Italia, Niagara Falls, May 28, 2016. The interest and enthusiasm of sponsors, donors and team riders exceeded our expectations!

Already many are pledging their return to our “2nd Annual Bike Race”. In partnership with the Niagara Falls Mayor’s Accessibility Advisory Committee, this one day event featured 10 teams of 10 riders working diligently collecting pledges. Each team rode for 20 minutes which was not an easy task. The



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competition was fierce to clock in the most kilometers ridden.

Exciting for all participating, volunteering and spectating, was the involvement of two Celebrity Teams, all former Olympians or Canadian Champions in their field of sport expertise. One of our Celebrity Teams were the grand winners of both most kilometers ridden and most pledges brought in.

The event raised \$17,000.00 to purchase hand cycles, a customized trailer, and to provide programming and training for our Program Leaders and volunteers in Niagara Falls.

Plans for our “2nd Annual Stationary Bike Race” are already underway which will be held May 7, 2017 at Club Italia.

Success Stories from Niagara

From Peggy: The Power Cord Gym at Brock University has been running the spin classes every Tuesday and Thursday. Shelley has been coming to the classes with much interest in participating and testing her strength and is a high functioning individual who makes it a point to attend the gym and increase her strength and cardio. Her words are “This gym is a little gem in St Catharine's and I love it. It has helped be so much in my strength and endurance”

A new member, Shelley, attended her first spin class and found out that there were more bikes coming soon and that the sessions were also going to be outside so she signed herself up for the outdoor riding session and was the first one in the parking lot to try out the new bikes. The smile she had was huge and with her indoor riding experience she had no problem moving the bike along the Greater Niagara Circle Route. Her nickname soon became the Speed Demon and after being told many times to slow down during the ride she still had a very hard time removing the big smile from her face. She found something that she really liked. “I have never been told that I am good at something. Thanks for the all the fun!” Those words are what make all the frustrations with volunteering for this foundation melt away. Shelley is also interested in doing the half marathon in October with the Foundation. See you at the start line Speed Demon!

From Mary Jo:

I love the biking; it is something that I had put behind me 25 years ago. Now I feel happy when I ride, almost normal. It has opened up my world allowing me to ride in the fresh air and I am not confined to an indoor gym for exercise. There is nothing like fighting my way up a hill, of course with my “pushers” for a boost and



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coasting down the other side of the hill makes me feel so carefree. I have met so many nice people through this program that are so encouraging and make me want to keep going.

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Ottawa Chapter

Introducing our Ottawa Program Leader: Joey Desjardins!

Thirty year old Joey Desjardins of Hawkesbury, ON was always an avid outdoorsman and played a range of sports: dirt biking, ski doing and motorsports. And he was never afraid to push his limits and do whatever he set his mind on. He had a sense of adventure, was fearless and was never afraid to take risks. And he liked speed. But one day, his risk taking caught up with him and he sustained a permanent spinal cord injury while dirt biking with his friends.

Through perseverance, drive, self-discipline and the support of his wife and family, Joey adjusted to a new way of living. Now he still does sports but different ones – water skiing, alpine skiing and competitive handcycling (his favourite). He has also played wheelchair basketball and sledge hockey. Not only is Joey an athlete - he is also an advocate, participating in injury prevention initiatives and educating others on the importance of preventing injuries by sharing his story as a public speaker so that others can learn from his experience. This is very important to him.

Fluently bilingual, Joey presented for Parachute – Preventing Injuries Saving Lives (formerly known as SmartRisk) and the Prevent Alcohol Related Trauma in Youth (PARTY) programs which have been important opportunities for him to educate and inform young peoples about the consequences of risk-taking behaviour and remind them that they are not invincible.

Joey became an Ambassador for the Rick Hansen Foundation in 2011. In 2012, Joey accompanied Rick Hansen in the cross-Canada relay marking the 25th Anniversary of Rick Hansen's Man in Motion world tour for spinal



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cord research and Joey was one of Rick Hansen Relay's official endurance athletes, cycling from Fredericton to Ottawa, Thunder Bay to Winnipeg, and throughout British Columbia.

Joey is also a presenter with Changing Minds, Changing Lives – a program of the Canadian Paralympic Committee that educates healthcare professionals, the education sector, disability advocacy groups, parent groups, and people with disabilities about the rehabilitative value of adaptive sports.

As the Ottawa chapter chairperson for The Shelley Gautier Para-Sport Foundation, Joey eagerly promotes hand cycling to new athletes and advocates for race opportunities to ensure the continuation of the sport.

In September 2015, Joey competed in the Canada Army Run and was the winner of the half marathon. That summer, Joey competed in the 2016 Canadian Road Championships in Ottawa, ON. He also competed in 2016 Defi Sportif Games in Montreal, Quebec - all with impressive results.

What is next for Joey? He has recently achieved the B standard for Canada's para cycling team as one of its newest members. He also seeks opportunities to educate others about the importance of accessibility. "I don't get angry. There is always a way to overcome obstacles. If I cannot get over it, I go around it, under it or through it. When I was at the Ministry of Transportation I knocked on the door as I couldn't get in as there were stairs. The staff offered to carry me up the stairs, but instead, a ramp was set up so I could wheel my way up to the door and get in."

Joey is always looking for new challenges as they are what drive him. And Joey is certainly driven to succeed in whatever he does.



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