

ASA Summer Program Volunteer Orientation & Handbook 2009

MISSION

The mission of the Adaptive Sports Association is to provide outdoor sport and recreational experiences for people with disabilities. These activities are provided regardless of individual financial limitations and create a fun and safe atmosphere for learning and enhancing self-esteem.

FUNDING

ASA is a qualified not-for-profit corporation [501 (c) (3)], and as such, is not funded by any state or federal agency. We are entirely dependent upon our members' donations, grants, fundraising events and program revenue for monies to sustain our programs.

ASA POLICY AFFECTING VOLUNTEERS

The Adaptive Sports Association was founded in 1983 by Dave Spencer, is a chapter member of Disabled Sports USA and is a qualified not-for-profit corporation under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. The exemption number is SF-E0-68-157, EIN-94-2938093. Group ruling GEN: 2599. State # 98-05441.

ASA recruits potential volunteers through media and by word of mouth and is responsible for all training of our outdoor guides, assistants, and aides to meet the standards outlined by our training staff and summer risk management plan.

As a trained ASA volunteer instructor, you are covered under a liability insurance policy. However, ASA has no personal injury insurance or workers' compensation for volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for their own personal injury insurance.

The Adaptive Sports Association holds a US Forest Service permit for commercial use of the San Juan National Forest. ASA is licensed with the State of Colorado as a commercial rafting outfitter and as a commercial fishing outfitter.

The ASA Board of Directors and staff reserve the right to make additions or deletions to this handbook if and when necessary.

1. Summer Program Overview

As we head into Summer 2009, we start our 12th summer season! Over the years, our program has continued to grow to serve more individuals through our program offerings. We continue to strive to offer a wide variety of outdoor activities that are adapted to the needs of our individual participants. We will continue to run our “daily” activities and will explore new programming as it becomes available.

Regular Activities

ASA offers day trips in whitewater rafting, flatwater canoeing & kayaking, fishing, hiking, and adaptive cycling. We also offer rock climbing trips that are contracted out through a different outfitter. We have decided to focus primarily on activities that require adaptive expertise to run; getting away from some of the activities for which we only provided transportation and supervision.

We also offer overnight camping trips. These trips are designed to facilitate increased independence among our clients. Participants are selected by ASA staff and each trip is tailored specifically to the group of individuals participating.

Special Activities

ASA occasionally offers specialty programs and cooperative activities with other adaptive programs.

For the 2009 season, we will be partnering with programs such as San Juan Mountains Association, Telluride Adaptive Sports, Mild to Wild Rafting, Disabled Sports USA, the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation and the Wounded Warrior Project.

Where We Go:

➔ **Rafting:** We run the lower Animas River through Durango, typically putting in at 32nd St. and taking out at High Bridge (near Wal-Mart). We vary the run depending on water levels, sometimes putting in at Santa Rita Park to avoid the Smelter rapid at high water, and sometimes shortening the run in low water. ASA also has two inflatable kayaks (duckies) that we can utilize on most of our raft trips.

➔ **Canoeing & Kayaking:** All of ASA’s canoeing and kayaking is on flat water (no rapids). We use several local lakes, such as Haviland Lake, Electra Lake, Molas Lake, Pastorius Reservoir, Lemon Reservoir, Vallecito Reservoir and Jackson Lake. In addition, we use the upper flatwater “meanders” of the Animas River north of town. For these trips we put in at Bueno Tiempo Ranch and take out at 32nd St.

➔ **Fishing:** We can fish on all of our canoe and kayak trips. Accessible fishing from shore is available at Haviland Lake and Andrews Lake. Fishing licenses are required for all participants and volunteers who would like to fish on a trip.

➔ **Rock Climbing:** We contract our rock climbing adventures out through the San Juan Outdoor School in Telluride. These folks provide the expertise, permits, and equipment. We provide the clients and volunteers to assist with the event. San Juan Outdoor School provides their services on a cost basis, providing a significant discount to ASA.

➔ **Hiking:** We will be running 3 levels of hiking trips this season. This will allow for us to continually challenge more advanced students while continuing to provide outdoor access for all. We will encourage students to attend activities that continually challenge them in a safe and encouraging environment.

➔ **Cycling:** This program started in 2008. We obtained a wide variety of adaptive cycles and are looking forward to continuing this new and exciting program. As with most “new programs” we will be developing this one “on-the fly”. We will start with trips on the river trail and will advance from there depending on our students success rates.

➔ **Overnight Camping:** This program is structured similarly as others in the ASA Summer Program and will include different levels to encourage growth and development ultimately resulting in independence. Volunteers will be asked to assist in gear selections, meal preparation, leading day and evening activities, and night supervision. A “pre trip meeting” will be held for all volunteers prior to each camping trip to discuss specific participants and trip goals. We will continue to encourage individuals to come as independently as possible. Please remember it is not your responsibility to provide personal care to ASA students. If a situation arises, please find a staff member and ask for help!

2. Who are our Students?

So far, the majority of our summer students have been local, most of who have cognitive disabilities. Many of our summer participants are skiers and snowboarders with our winter program. We are beginning to see more out of town students (families on vacation, etc.), more school groups, and more groups from other types of organizations – all markets we are trying to grow. Students range in age from 5 to 75. We encourage family members and friends to join in all activities.

In 2009, we will be bringing in a group of 4-5 Wounded Warriors for a multi day outdoor adventure! This will take place in late September and activities will include fly fishing, canoeing and kayaking, a multi day raft trip and MORE!

3. Guide to Common Student Disabilities/People First Language

Please take some time to read these two handouts. The Guide to Common Student Disabilities is a brief overview of what we tend to see most often. It is a “work in progress”. We began with primarily cognitive disabilities and we would like to continue adding more. Your input on this handbook would be greatly appreciated.

Please remember that it is intended as a starting point to understanding disabilities. Every student is different. They may be exactly as the guide describes or they may be completely different. We also have a disability reference in the office, which is more medically oriented. We provide lots of support on all of our activities – ask lots questions (of students, staff, and other volunteers).

People First Language is a way of talking about disabilities and people with disabilities that takes the emphasis off the disability and places it on the person. The easiest example of this is saying “people with disabilities” rather than “the disabled”. This may seem subtle at first, but remember that people are a lot more than just “disabled”.

4. Summer Program Specifics

Summer activities will be scheduled in advance for the majority of our trips. We strive to run trips 3-4 days per week from June 1st until the middle of August. We will also custom schedule trips for families, or groups from within the Durango community or for our summer tourists. The website will be kept up to date with schedules. We will not be mailing schedules out this year, unless specifically requested, in an effort to conserve resources. If you need assistance accessing our website or would like to request a paper schedule, please let our staff know ASAP.

**For volunteers, the times listed on the online schedule is for participants. When you sign up to volunteer for an activity, we will let you know what time to arrive. Generally, we ask that volunteers arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the activity.

Volunteer Requirements:

- Complete all paperwork (volunteer intake form, waiver)
- Attend training
- ASA will run a background check

Volunteer Roles:

Volunteer Guide – Assist students with disabilities while taking part in activities. The Volunteer Guide’s role will vary greatly depending on the type of trip and the student’s disability and abilities. Some students may require more than one Volunteer Guide while other students may be paired with another student and one guide. All activities are group oriented and staff and volunteers work together to manage the entire group – you are never on your own!

Assistant Volunteer Guide – Same as Volunteer Guide, but under the age of 18. The only difference is that Assistant Volunteer Guides may not be paired one-on-one with a student. We will typically form small groups – for example: two students with one Volunteer Guide and one Assistant Volunteer Guide.

Trip Leader – A Volunteer Guide who is 21 or older, with CPR and First Aid training and with significant experience with leadership and outdoor activities may qualify to act as a Trip Leader. As the title indicates, the Trip Leader is in charge of the outing and must organize and manage students and volunteers, oversee other aspects of the trip (such as equipment) and respond appropriately to emergencies and other challenges. If this interests you, let ASA staff know.

Shuttle Driver- We are always looking for ASA Volunteers with GOOD driving records who are interested in acting as a shuttle driver for our rafting trips. Volunteers will pick up the ASA van at the office and will meet the trip at the specific take out for the trip. If you are interested, please let staff know ASAP and we can discuss this further.

Sign-up/Scheduling

We will update the calendar of activities on our web page at least once a week, so you can check in at www.asadurango.com. We will also be sending out periodic program updates via email. If you would like a paper calendar/updates sent to you via mail, please let the office know.

Call us (259-0374), e-mail us (annmarie@asadurango.com) or stop by the office (125 E. 32nd St.) to let us know when you can help out. Please try to schedule your volunteer days at least a week in advance, but if you decide at the last minute that you can help out on a particular day, let us know. If you need to cancel a day for which you signed up, please call at least 48 hours in advance, so that we have time to round up a replacement (the sooner the better!)

ASA's Outdoor Philosophy

As with our winter program, our priorities with our students are SAFETY first, FUN second and LEARNING last. It is our firm belief that a student cannot learn if she or he does not feel safe and is not having fun. ASA strives to provide every student with a positive outdoor experience that can enhance physical and emotional well-being. All reasonable accommodations will be made for students to participate in every activity in which they are interested. To this end, we have modified much of our equipment to accommodate students with physical disabilities (this is an ongoing project, so input is welcome!). To enhance environmental awareness and encourage good stewardship (and because it is the right thing to do), current Leave No Trace/low impact philosophies and practices will always be used and will be taught to students whenever appropriate.

One More Policy

Bathroom Buddies: On most trips, you will have access to a restroom or outhouse, but there will be times when you will not. ASA volunteers should always request assistance from another volunteer, guardian or chaperone when escorting a student to use the restroom. If this is not possible, send your student into the restroom alone and wait outside. **FOR LIABILITY REASONS, NEVER TAKE YOUR STUDENT INTO A RESTROOM ALONE.** For students who need physical

assistance using the rest room, please ask an ASA staff person or trip leader for help.

Other (Water) Volunteer Training

Trainings are offered in rafting, cycling and canoeing/kayaking. In these trainings, we will show you how best to work with students and equipment. We will not teach you to be a raft guide, but we will teach you everything you need to know to facilitate a safe and enjoyable trip for students. We would prefer that you attend these trainings, but if, for some reason, you cannot attend scheduled trainings in these areas, you may come to an activity and “shadow” as training.

Perks/Bennies

☐ Our activities are fun, satisfying experiences which make a huge difference in students' lives. For many students our activities provide a new experience and a means of enjoying the beautiful, natural world in which we choose to live. For some it is a welcome break to sitting at home all day watching TV or playing video games. / Volunteers are welcome to borrow any of our summer program equipment (except for rafts) on days it is not in use.

☐ Also, as a commercial raft outfitter, we have a pro-deal with NRS, a leading river and outdoor equipment manufacturer. Volunteers are more than welcome to take advantage of this significant discount.