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## ADDS MOVES WILLIAM FROM WAITING IN THE CHALET TO SKIING THE SLOPES HIMSELF

William Zhou

I moved from China to Canada and settled in Oakville in 2019. Winter 2022 was, without a doubt, the most exciting and fruitful I've had in Canada thus far because I met a group of great people and with their help, I learned how to ski!

I've loved sports since I was a kid. However, because of the damage to my leg by an illness at two years old, I was somewhat different from my peers. Despite the challenge, I tried to participate in as many sports as possible—table tennis, badminton, cycling, swimming, etc.—which helped me physically and mentally.

However, when it comes to skiing, things are a bit more complicated; this sport mainly relies on legs to keep balance and move down the hill, which is my biggest challenge. Before I moved to Canada, skiing was popular in China, especially among young people, but adaptive sports had barely been introduced. I tried to learn, but it was a pretty frustrating experience, and I gave up quickly. I thought I was incapable of skiing independently.

Canadian winters are long and cold, with enormous amounts of snow. Everyone I know skis, including my family. This made me feel excluded and lonely.

While they enjoyed the thrill of skiing and the beauty of the mountains, I was sitting in the waiting area. One day, I noticed an adaptive skiing slogan while dropping off my daughter at the skiing centre. "SKIING IS FOR EVERYONE." So, I Googled adaptive skiing groups. Luckily, I found and reached out to ADDS, and attended the annual Think Snow party in November of the year 2022. I started skiing that season.

Adaptive skiing was quite intuitive. ADDS is a supportive and collaborative community with a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere. Many volunteers and skiers have been with the group for decades. The instructors and volunteers are experienced in coaching adaptive skiers with various challenges. With their support, I

made rapid progress. Andre was with me every Sunday, with many others providing sound advice and help. By the sixth Sunday, I was taking the lift and skiing independently. I dreamt of skiing and kept that childlike enthusiasm when I finally had the opportunity to learn as an adult—thanks to ADDS.

Adaptive skiing is thrilling, from overcoming physical challenges to experiencing the joy of moving down the slopes independently.

I also appreciate the inclusive nature of ADDS. The group brings together people from diverse backgrounds and abilities, fostering a sense of belonging for everyone involved. It's a pleasure to spend time with them—listening to their



conversation and building friendships. It's also an excellent place to improve my English. Before the 2023 skiing season ended, I bought my own outriggers and skis. I expect to improve further in the coming skiing season and for many years.

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I look from my window at the Fall colours that have begun to take hold, my thoughts focus once again on the upcoming ski season and the sun-soaked, snow-covered hills at Caledon Ski Club. I'd like to express a heartfelt thank-you to our host club for being steadfast supporters of inclusive sport and sharing our belief that snowsports are for everyone!

A huge thank-you also goes out to our devoted volunteers. In the post-pandemic world demand for organized recreation particularly among adults with disabilities has steadily increased. As we are the only adaptive snowsports organization in the country that caters to this often overlooked demographic, we're constantly on the lookout for confident intermediate and advanced level skiers who are interested in joining our cause.

Should you or anyone you know be interested in skiing with us in a volunteer capacity, please reach out to me directly at [ski.adds@cadsonario.ca](mailto:ski.adds@cadsonario.ca).

Our 2024 ski season will take place on Sundays from January 14th to March 3rd Transportation to and from Caledon will be provided by Wheelchair Accessible Transit Inc. I encourage members and volunteers to take advantage of our chartered bus when circumstances permit.

Please note that this year's annual "Think Snow" social and registration event will take place on Friday November 17th All members, volunteers and friends of ADDS are encouraged to attend. Please keep an eye on your email or our Facebook group for upcoming details.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to our financial supporters, many of whom have been a part of the ADDS family for many years. Your support during this difficult economic time is greatly appreciated. As inflationary pressures increase so do our operating costs. We are funded entirely by way of individual donors. If your circumstances permit, please consider making a donation by way of our website at [cadsonario.ca/adds-caledon](http://cadsonario.ca/adds-caledon) or by contacting Fred Gaby, our chairman of fundraising at (416) 445-6160.

On behalf of myself and our Board of Directors we wish you and yours a safe and happy Autumn. We look forward to "skiing" you soon!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabor Takacs".

Gabor Takacs  
President, Adult Disabled  
Downhill Skiing (ADDS)