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JACKSON SMITH ADDS MEMBER OF THE YEAR

I'm 29 years old. I was born and raised in Toronto and started skiing with Track 3 at Earl Bales when I was 7 years old. My dad would take me to my lessons; I have very nice memories.

I have had to deal with a lot of health issues over the years — I've had 22 surgeries. I learned that I am brave and strong. I suffered a severe spiral femur fracture in 2006. I spent 8 months in the hospital and rehab. I missed my class's graduation from elementary school trip to Ottawa. Unfortunately, the worst tragedy of my life happened in December of 2006 - my dad passed away; I was only 11 years old. My heart was and is still sad.

When I was in grade school, because I was "different", I was bullied a lot. My younger brother, Donavan, would stand up for me. I created a speech and talked

to my classmates about belonging and that everyone belongs. It helped them to understand that everyone is different, but everyone wants to belong and have friends. This helped and things got a bit easier.

I attended a great high school named Oakridge and joined the Best Buddie program. I met some wonderful people, was crowned Prom King and had the most beautiful date, Olivia. She was a "regular girl" and accepted my Prom Proposal to be her escort. You can check this out as I made the front page of the London Paper¹. I have also stayed in touch with my best friend Lauren and in August, she asked me to propose a toast to her at her Wedding - it was the greatest honour of my life.

My mom, brother, and I moved to London in 2011. There I was able to join Track 3. Prior to Covid, I improved so much that I was able to take the chair lift, and I was skiing with poles without a tether. My instructors were, of course, always with me. It was such a huge accomplishment and made me feel so free and proud.

Because of Covid, I hadn't skied since March of 2020. In the meantime, we had also moved back to Toronto. I was nervous to start skiing again. 4 years felt like a long time. It took a long time for my mom to find an adult program for me in Toronto. My mom eventually found a program called ADDS (Adult Disabled Downhill Skiing). I remember meeting the ADDS group at the Mandarin at their Think Snow event last November 2023; everyone made me feel welcome. I was excited to run into a friend from a drama program I attended; this made me feel more relaxed.

Skiing with ADDS helped me to be able to do my favourite winter activity again.



The ADDS Instructors and Volunteers helped me develop confidence in myself, they were patient with me and very kind. I love being able to participate in a winter activity that everyone else does again. Skiing keeps me physically active. I have scoliosis, and skiing is good for my back.

I remember my first day skiing with ADDS... I was so nervous, and in many ways felt like I was starting all over again. My goal with ADDS is to develop the confidence and improve upon my skills so

I can ski with my poles again. ADDS is a great community and everyone has made me feel very welcome. I can't wait until Winter 2024 – 2025!

In the end, I must thank my mom. The doctors said I would never walk or talk when I was younger—and now I'm a College Graduate! I have traveled and I have a part time job at a great social enterprise called Smashing Good Piñatas. Without the love and support of my mom, I wouldn't be the man I am today.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

With cooler temperatures and shorter days upon us, it's with eager anticipation that I look forward to another winter on the slopes at Caledon Ski Club.

My sincere thanks to all who make our program possible; donors, volunteers, and our gracious hosts at Caledon. Without your support there would be no opportunity for adults to participate in organized snowsports. As you may know, ADDS is the largest ski and snowboard program in Ontario that caters exclusively to participants 19 years of age and older, a demographic that often falls through the cracks as it pertains to adaptive sport

and the well-being attained through organized winter recreation. As our operating costs in recent years have increased substantially, now more than ever it is my key objective to keep our program financially accessible to participants and volunteers alike.

Our annual Think Snow get-together takes place on Friday November 15th at the Mandarin Buffet at Finch and Dufferin in Toronto. If you're able to attend, I invite you to join us for dinner and the opportunity to socialize in the spirit of skiing. More details to follow.

As the lifeblood of our organization consists entirely of volunteer staff and private donations if you or someone you know would like to help out in a financial or volunteer capacity please visit our Canada Helps page at canadahelps.org/en/dn/18660 or contact me directly at ski.adds@cadsonario.ca

Gabor Takacs
President, Adult Disabled
Downhill Skiing (ADDS)