



Curler Outreach Program
Special Needs Curling



Origins of the Fort Wayne Curling Club



- 2006 – Torino Games
 - 2 founders tried curling at BGCC (2.5 hours away) because it was viewed as a sport they could play with their child with Autism
- 2010 – Vancouver Games
 - Interest reinvigorated and ice time now available



Special Needs Curling Program

- Started with floor curling sets in an adaptive PE class at local high school
- Formalized into a program after the construction of our first dedicated curling facility
- Funded by AWS Foundation, a local foundation dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities





How the Program is Run



- Highly encourage parents, siblings and peers to play alongside
- Start with delivery sticks to get people into a game as soon as possible
- Safety – Grippers on both feet, halos or helmets
- Gameplay, gameplay, gameplay
- Do instruction gradually and gently during play
- Help the participants feel/be successful
 - Foot wedges and handle reversals when needed
 - Mix up teams each week
 - Keep score in the game but not week after week
- SafeSport required for all volunteers



Why should a curling club run such a program?

- Be an asset to your community
- Helps tremendously with grants, sponsorship and media coverage
- Other similar programs
 - Boys & Girls Club
 - Big Brothers/Big Sisters
 - Paralympic Organization
 - Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts





How to Start Such a Program



- Talk to club members to find links to people with special needs
- Reach out to organizations that support people with special needs
- Do some introductory sessions as one-off events before applying for a grant
- Reach out to local foundations that support people with disabilities
- Write the grant to be focused on how curling can enrich people's lives (physical activity, sportsmanship, socialization, feelings of success and inclusion)
- We would be happy to write a letter of recommendation



Where/How to Get Participants

- Down Syndrome and Autism organizations
- Local Paralympic Organizations
- Special needs classes at schools
- Recreational Therapy providers
- Group Homes (transportation can be an issue)

Cathie Rowand | The Journal Gazette
Caleb Brown learns curling from U.S. Paralympic curling coach Steve Brown on Saturday during a wheelchair curling clinic at Canlan Ice Sports. The Fort Wayne Curling Club is hoping that some of the people at the clinic will join the club. People in wheelchairs are able to compete on the same team as anyone else.





How Our Grant is Structured



- Equipment
- Introductory sessions
- Leagues (Special needs league, rookie league, regular leagues)
- 100% coverage for those with disabilities, 90% for those without
- 4-week structure
- Volunteer payments
- Grant Administration



Benefits of Running Such a Program

- \$15,000 - \$20,000 additional revenue to our club (~10% of our annual budget)
- Our new facility
 - Owner offered to finance because he has a disabled child
 - AWS Foundation provided \$100,000 collateral for WCF loan
- Amazingly fulfilling to see progress of the participants
- The enjoyment of our volunteers





Our New Facility

(Brought to you in part by our Special Needs Program)





QUESTIONS?

CRAIG FISCHER

PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER

FORT WAYNE CURLING CLUB

CRAIG@FORTWAYNECURLING.COM

260-443-6673