

NDVS/SB OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

NDVS/SB provides individualized services and resources to infants, children, and adults with visual impairment to empower them in achieving their goals.

All About Annie's House

NDVS/SB students visit Annie's House near Bottineau, ND, twice a year. In December, the JAM program, which is a 3-day program focused on outdoor winter activities and socialization for middle schoolers, ski and tube at Annie's House. Middle schoolers also spend a day at Annie's House during their summer program, in early June. What's so special about this place? Annie's House staff answered our questions!

What is Annie's House?

Annie's House Adaptive Recreation Program was founded in 2011. Ann Nicole Nelson, a beloved daughter and friend to many, died at age 30 in the terror attacks on September 11, 2001. Ann was working on the 104th floor of the World Trade Center as a bond broker when the towers collapsed. Ann was a North Dakota native known for her positive,



Ann Nicole Nelson

adventuresome spirit. When her computer was returned to her family after her death, they made a discovery of her bucket list. This included the goals she hoped to accomplish and the experiences she hoped to have in the future. The list inspired the ambitious project of building Annie's House and developing an adaptive program at Bottineau Winter Park.

The program is funded by generous donations that come from individuals, groups, businesses, and grants.

Annie's House Adaptive Recreation Program serves any individual with a 10% or greater cognitive or physical disability.

What is the connection to the Anne Carlsen Center?

Bottineau Winter Park chose to work with the Anne Carlsen Center because of their experience working with individuals with disabilities. Annie's House's paid employees, Rikki and Emily, are employed by the Anne Carlsen Center, working at Bottineau Winter Park.

What types of programs do you have throughout the year?

Our busy season is the winter, when we offer downhill skiing, snow shoeing and tubing. In the summer we offer hiking, archery, water wars, and many science programs.

Continued on page 2.



Above left, NDVS/SB students tubing during Winter JAM, last December. Annie's House can be seen in the background. Above right, students tubing down the big hill near Annie's House in 2023.

Are you open to the public?

Bottineau Winter Park is open to the public during the ski season on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, plus holidays. The trails around the park are open to the public year-round. Annie's House Adaptive Recreational Program also puts on a few family fun events each year, open to everyone.

What accommodations are embedded into your programs and events?

Our program comes at no cost to anyone with a disability who wants to spend time outside. Prior to an individual's arrival, we have them fill out an intake form, so we can accommodate each individual person's needs. We have a variety of adaptive equipment such as Trackchairs, to take people in wheelchairs hiking, bi skis so all can downhill ski, and much more. All of our instructors are specially trained to work with all personalities and disabilities.

NDVS/SB has brought students to Annie's House for a number of years now. What activities do you plan for our students?

When students from NDVS/SB come to visit us, we ski and tube with them in the winter. In the summer we try to choose programs that focus on the senses. We usually go for a hike, do a craft, and either do science experiments or animal interactions in the afternoon.

How can someone support Annie's House?

To support Annie's House Adaptive Recreation Program, we ask people to share information about our program, make a donation, become a volunteer, schedule a visit, and follow us on social media.

Tell us about the staff at Annie's House.

Emily works through the Anne Carlsen Center as a program director for Annie's House Adaptive Recreational Program. She

has been working for the program since 2020. Before that, she was a volunteer for the program, developing many of the summer activities. Emily loves to be outside in all seasons. Kayaking, hiking, fishing, and cross-country skiing are some of her favorite outdoor activities. She lives in Bottineau with her husband, two teenage children, and two pigmy goats.

Rikki also works through the Anne Carlsen Center as a program director for the Adaptive Program. She has been working for the Anne Carlsen Center since 2020 and was a volunteer helping with ski lessons before that. Rikki enjoys skiing, and she is a certified ski patroller and certified ski instructor. During the summer she loves hiking and spending time at the greenhouse. Rikki lives in Bottineau with her husband, two teenage boys, and four dogs.

We have a small group of hard-working volunteers that help with all our adaptive ski lessons and call on community members to help with our fun family events. We couldn't do what we do without our volunteers – and we are always looking for more!

For more information, visit <https://annecarlsen.org/recreation/annes/>.



NDVS/SB students flying paper airplanes outside of Annie's House near Bottineau, ND, last June.