

SSASS Newsletter February 2021

Hello!

This newsletter is being sent to members of the SSASS community to help us keep in touch with you during this unusual season. You are receiving this update if you are a current student or instructor, or were a student or instructor last year. We are also including those of you who kindly donated to our program during the 2019/2020 season. And you can unsubscribe at the bottom of the letter if you do not wish to receive our occasional updates.

SSASS is pleased to be able to provide lessons this season, albeit not to all of the students who expressed interest. During the summer and fall the SSASS Safety Committee was hard at work developing our COVID policies. It was important to protect not only students but also instructors from the risk of transmission. This meant that we had to limit registration to those who could maintain physical distance and self-regulate. So, we had the daunting task of informing some parents that their child would have to wait until next year if they were very young (under age 8), new to the sport, or needed to use equipment that would require instructors to be too close. We had to phone and email these parents, in some cases asking them to update us on their child's recent growth and development to figure out if protocols could be followed. We were somewhat apprehensive about having these conversations, but the parents seemed to fully understand the gravity of the situation and they graciously accepted our position. We have the most amazing families in SSASS! We now have about 35 students in the 2020/21 Weekly program.

There is no Schools Program this season and the Visitors Program is on hold due to the advisory against non-essential travel. We still have the Race Program – see story below.

Many of our instructors opted to take the year off; we have 31 returning instructors and 10 new instructors compared with 59 active instructors last season.

Our operational costs will be lower than usual and, due to the generosity of our donors in the past, we have sufficient funds for this season. Despite the fact that we are not actively fund raising this year, we have been fortunate and have still received several donations.

Our SSASS room has none of the usual camaraderie and chaos among volunteers, students, caregivers and families. For now, our room is only accessible to our instructors. Students arrange to meet their instructors outside the SSASS room, ready to start their lessons. However we can still be reached at info@ssass.bc.ca. If you see us around the hill in our red jackets, say Hi!

We'd like to share a few stories from this year's students and from 2 instructors who are taking the year off.



Ryan Wiebe, Student:

The SSASS program has given me a big part of my life back. I was struck with a seizure disorder at 14, changing my life as I knew it. The teachers have enabled me to enjoy skiing once again and have taught me a few new things as well.

For a few hours I can forget that I have a seizure disorder and carve my way down the hill once again.

The staff and teachers welcomed me into the group of amazing people that greet you with a smile on their face, even if they are not your teacher.

The SSASS program has given me an opportunity to recover an activity that I am passionate about, without the program skiing would have been lost to me.

Abilities outweigh disabilities, all you need to do is try.

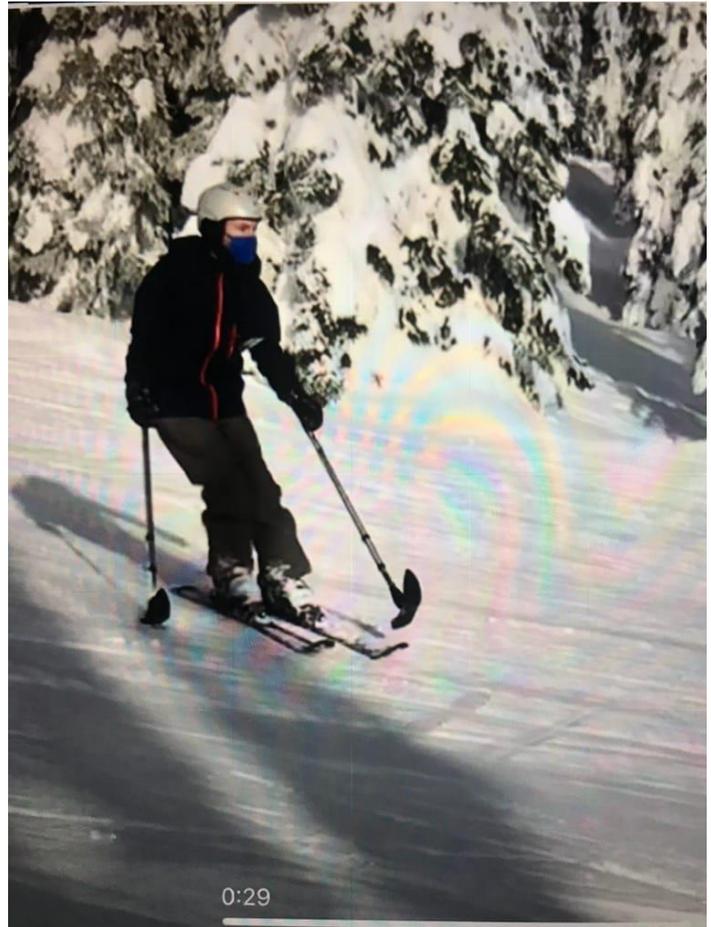
Kobe Funk, Student:

As a lover of sports and activity, I came to SSASS with the goal of learning and trying something new. Although I was initially sceptical about how my challenge of Cerebral Palsy would show itself, having never been on a pair of skis and being a late comer to the sport.

I believe the instructors at SSASS know how to teach, encourage, and coach young persons to find strength and pride in the ways that make us all different, and to see it as a tool within and never something to be hidden away.

Whatever barriers you have do not have to make a permanent home within you. Here the stigma are gone, walls are broken down, and I think I can speak on behalf of all students in saying, when we are here on the hill we are all together the same.

We are skiers!





SSASS Race Program:

This season we have adapted our program to a 1:1 coach to racer ratio as to minimise family bubble mix. We wear our masks at all times. We are still meeting on Sundays but our schedule is not the same. We used to do two 2-hour blocks (AM & PM) separated by an hour lunch break. The big change this season is that we are doing a straight 4-hour block (9AM to 1PM) with a short 15-minute washroom and power bar break. This new format is really testing everyone's stamina and commitment to the race program. We have a great relationship with the VSC (Vernon Ski Club) coaches and members and hope to have access to Cloud Nine once in a while. We ski the whole mountain and unless we are running gates on Cloud Nine we average 14 runs per session including 4 or 5 Black/Double Black Diamond runs.

SSASS (Silver Star Adaptive Snow Sports) Race Team warming up before heading out for the first session of the season.

Christina Roy, Instructor:

For the first time in 11 years I am not staying on Silver Star Mountain for the winter months and teaching with SSASS. It does indeed feel quite different and I often find myself wondering about our students and my wonderful cadre of fellow instructors. I certainly miss the many stimulating discussions and the magic of watching a child progress over a season.

However, remaining in my Mallorytown , Ontario bubble is not a hardship. My three sons live in close proximity which I thoroughly enjoy. My many extended family members along with several great friends fill my "social" calendar to the extent that we are allowed. My days are filled with walking, cycling (as long as it's no colder than -2), skating, reading, online bridge, practising the Ukulele, Firepit evenings and working on renovations / upgrades of some apartments owned by my sons. The days are speeding by and the daylight hours are noticeably longer. Hopefully we will subdue Covid 19 in the near future and be able to enjoy the embraces of friends and family. Stay safe, stay well!

Above is a picture of me skating on the St. Lawrence River on Jan.27.....clear and smooth as glass.





Andy Mather, Instructor:

As some of you know, I decided in December not to teach or even ski this season, due to my doctor's Covid-19 concerns. My heart, with its A.Fib. failure, is getting stronger daily; however I feel isolated in my small bubble. To fit into my Lg. SSASS Jacket next season, I'm busy walking our dog Chipper, doing 'Zoom Pilates' weekly and using Tread Climber x 3/week. Looking forward to snowshoeing with Kathie at Sovereign Lake. I heard SSMR is doing a good job and it's still crazy on weekends! I have talked to a few SSASS instructors; most is going as well as can be! To stay current, I attended a 2 hour Zoom CADS Course Conductor seminar: "Teaching ASD/CI using COVID-19 Protocols". Learned great new ways; hoping parts will be included in CADS Manual update! Free quarterly newsletters are available via the CADS Program websites.

Bye for now, missing all. *Please Stay Safe & Take Care Out There!*