

Skiing helps students overcome handicaps

Mark Rod, of Farmington Hills, is using his love of skiing to help handicapped students overcome their disabilities.

Rod, a senior at Michigan State

University, is a volunteer in a therapeutic recreation program, for handicapped students from the Michigan School for the Blind.

Each Wednesday, from December

through March, MSU students and other volunteers assist 46 handicapped children and young adults, ages 7-26, in learning downhill and cross country skiing.

"Winter sports are important to the handicapped students," says Debra Stuart, therapeutic recreation director at MSB.

"Participation in sports can help them learn to enjoy the winter months, and, if their families ski, can provide them with an activity the whole family can enjoy."

Rod, enrolled in James Madison

College at MSU, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Rod, 28015 Ridgebrook. He is a 1976 graduate of North Farmington High School.

A volunteer-student relationship, such as Rod is involved in, has a reciprocal effect in that each is learning from the other, says Stuart.

"The volunteers are able to see improvements in the students' agility, confidence, self image and social awareness," she says.

"It is a chance for the volunteer to make a difference for someone else."

The techniques used in teaching the students to ski are based on those used

in two blind skiing programs, BOLD (Blind Outdoor Leisure Development), a downhill program and Ski for Light, a cross country program.

"Although an MSB therapeutic recreation representative is present at each ski outing, it is the volunteers who really make the program available to the students," says Stuart.

Blind students aren't the only ones taking part in the MSB ski program. Students with other handicaps also participate.

The technique used in downhill skiing is a certified technique developed by

French ski champion Jean Eymere, the founder of BOLD, who was blinded by sugar diabetes.

The student holds on to the middle of a balance pole while two volunteers, one at either end of the pole, guide him down the slope.

Eventually the student develops the agility to go down the hill by himself.

For cross country skiing, each student is paired with a volunteer who instructs him in the basics of cross country skiing and directs him through the course.

Lifeguards needed for pool and beaches

Lifeguards seeking ocean-like waves in beach breezes can have their pick this summer at Oakland County parks.

Lifeguards and swimming instructors are needed for Michigan's only wave action pool and at three county park beaches.

Water safety instructor certification is required for teaching. Lifeguards need an advanced lifesaving card. They should have certification and advanced first aid.

Applicants must pass a water test given by the Oakland County Parks at the Oakland University Leisley Sports Center.

Dates for the exam are Sunday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Sunday, April 27, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Waterford Oaks wave action pool, one of a few in the country, is 180 feet long, ranges from zero to eight feet in depth and creates waves as high as three feet alternating with calm periods.

The pool opens May 23 and closes for the season on Labor Day. Open swimming hours are 11 a.m. to dusk daily. Swimming lessons are available for all ages.

The county parks system also has three parks with swimming beaches including Groveland Oaks in Holly, Independence Oaks near Clarkston and Addison Oaks north of Rochester.

To schedule an appointment for the water test, call Marijani Baker at 858-0921.

'Wrinkled radical' to lecture at Mercy

Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers, will talk on "Families of the Future" at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 10, at Mercy College of Detroit.

Ms. Kuhn, who is called a "wrinkled radical" because of her advocacy for the aging, will be the first speaker in a series of lectures on the family sponsored by Mercy College.

There is no admission charge for the lecture, which is open to the public. It will be held in McAuley Auditorium on

the Mercy campus, 8200 W. Outer Drive at Southfield.

Ms. Kuhn, 75, became known as the "Wrinkled Radical" when a television program with that title depicted her efforts on behalf of the aged. She fills numerous speaking engagements and writes many articles about her favorite topic — the need for young and old to work together to eradicate age prejudice.

IN 1970, Ms. Kuhn turned 65 and was forced to retire from her social work position. She and four friends formed an action group later dubbed Gray Panthers by the media because of the members radical actions and dramatic techniques.

The organization now numbers more than 50,000 members in 40 states. For the past decade, Ms. Kuhn and the Gray Panthers have been fighting the system that relegates older persons

to non-productive roles. Because she believes the elderly should not be segregated, she actively recruits young persons to work for human liberation and elimination of age discrimination.

The Gray Panthers' primary goal is to raise the consciousness of older Americans so that they will continue to lead useful lives. "Suicide" is the way she describes the theory of disengagement by which older persons are cut off from the mainstream of life.

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