

ENSIGHT

Skills Center, Inc.

for visual rehabilitation



January 2010



Empowering Independent Living for the Visually Impaired

Opportunities to come and see us at Enight!!

Touring the facility

The Enight Skills Center would like to invite you to stop by one of our three locations. We are open to the public if you would like to take a tour of our facilities, meet our staff, or come and see our many low vision aides. We currently have locations in Fort Collins, Greeley, and Denver. Enight hosts our own support groups at both the Fort Collins location and the Greeley location, the Curtis Strong Center. However, since we do not host a support group in Denver, we are more than happy to have low vision support groups from the area plan a day to bring the members in to the center and either hold a meeting in our main lobby or take a tour and see what low vision rehabilitation is all about. If you are interested in bringing a group in to one of the facilities please call the office to make an appointment.

- Denver Office is located at 6000 E. Evans Ave. Building 3, Suite 012. Denver, CO 80222. 1-303-757-4500
- Fort Collins Office is located at 3307 S. College Ave. Suite 108. Fort Collins, CO 80535 1-970-407-9999

- Curtis Strong Center for the visually impaired is located at 918 13th St. Suite 4 Greeley, CO 80631 1-970-353-9417

Volunteering with Enight

The Enight Skills Center is always looking for volunteers. We are a nonprofit organization that is set up to work with volunteers from the community. We are currently looking for a volunteer coordinator that can help us schedule volunteers and tasks. We are also looking for someone who can help with some front desk duties as well as people to take brochures out to people in the community.

In the past, we have had many people come from the area Lions Clubs to offer their time. If you would like someone from Enight to attend your Lions Club meeting and talk about different volunteer opportunities please let us know. We would be happy to come and talk to any and all clubs.

We believe that volunteers are the key to helping us raise awareness about low vision and the resources that are available. The more brochures distributed, the more people who have our information to pass along to those individuals who can use our help. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please contact the Fort Collins Enight Skills Center at 1-970-407-9999. Together we can make a difference!

Living an Active Lifestyle

It's easy to believe that vision loss means you can't have an active lifestyle. The facts tell a different story. The U.S. Association of Blind Athletes estimates that it has helped more than 100,000 men and women with vision loss become top athletes in the last 30 years. And this figure is just for elite athletes. Millions more individuals with vision loss lead

health-conscious, active lives, participating in exercise programs, fitness groups, and activity clubs on a regular basis. In many instances, people decided to be more active and health conscious only after vision loss became a factor in their lives.

The key, as with most challenges in life, is equal parts courage, consistency, and motivation.

Many older adults experiencing age-related vision loss may feel discouraged when it comes to maintaining or starting an active lifestyle. One of Senior Site's goals is to reassure, assist, and encourage you to remain active throughout life's journey. Having vision loss does not mean you are helpless. Just ask the hundreds of thousands of elite and recreational athletes of every age who are not letting vision loss prevent them from living full, active lives. And there is no better time to start than right now!

For More Information

- The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD). The slogan of NCPAD is **Exercise is for EVERY body**, and every person can gain some health benefit from being more physically active. This site provides information and resources that can enable people with disabilities to become as physically active as they choose to be.
- United States Association of Blind Athletes. While aimed mainly at elite athletes, the casual exerciser can also find useful tips and information on this site, particularly in the sports adaptations page.
- AARP. Physical Activity. This site provides tips for seniors on staying active.
- Information obtained from the American Foundation for the Blind. www.afb.org



Enightful People

Safe journey in Paralympic skiing is a matter of faith.

By DANIEL GIRARD
TORONTO STAR

Chris Williamson entered the 2002

Paralympic opening ceremony in Salt Lake City on crutches after tearing up a knee ligament. Four years later in Torino, he left the closing ceremony in a wheelchair due to a broken ankle. Now, as he readies for Vancouver in March, Williamson has cut a deal with Jennifer, his wife of 10 years. "I've promised her if I get injured this time, I'm retiring," the 37-year-old ski racer from Markham said. "But I'm planning on walking in *and* out this time."

Zippering down the hill at up to 120 km/h clearly requires a mix of courage and insanity. Doing it when you are blind, as Williamson is, simply alters the percentage of each a tad. "This is a sport you can't be hesitant in," Williamson, a 12-year veteran of the Canadian para-alpine team, said recently before leaving for a series of races in Europe. A big part of that confidence, Williamson said, is having faith in his guide, Nick Brush, who skis just a few meters ahead and communicates with him via two-way radio. Brush, 21, who is from Panorama, B.C., and in his third season with Williamson, radios details of ruts or bumps in the course while Williamson responds every time he passes a gate or if he wants to go faster.

"There's a lot of trust involved," said Williamson, who has no vision in his right eye and 6 per cent in his left due to macular degeneration caused by toxoplasmosis. "I've got to trust where he's going and he has to relay it quickly. And he's got to trust that I'm not going to run into the back of him." Williamson, who despite the injuries picked up gold, silver and bronze medals

from his first two Paralympics, is a legitimate contender to win five this time in the visually impaired category: downhill, slalom, giant slalom, super-giant slalom and combined.

"I don't think Chris will be satisfied with anything less," said Jean-François Rapatel, director of high performance for the para-alpine team. "He's one of the best skiers in every single discipline." Rapatel said Williamson is "a very complete athlete" who knows the importance of training hard both on and off the hill and eating well. "He sets a great example for all of his teammates."

It's something in Williamson's genes. His father, Peter, who died in 1992, was a speed skater for Canada in the 1968 Winter Olympics and went on to coach such stars as Mike Ireland and Clara Hughes. "It's hard to put into words, but he's always in the back of my mind," said Williamson, who raced in the 1987 Canada Winter Games in speed skating but retired from the sport after breaking his ankle and leg. "He definitely taught me a lot about competing and made me who I am today."

A skier since age 3, Williamson didn't begin racing until he was in his 20s and made the national team for the 1998-99 season. A sharp-witted father of two - Hayley, 6, and Alexander, 2 - Williamson has an economics degree and works as a bank teller but hopes to return to school to get an education degree and teach Grade 5 or 6.

Williamson might take the 2011-12 season off to get those teaching qualifications, but he still hopes to compete at the 2014 Paralympics in Sochi, Russia, as long as he stays healthy and at the top of his game. But the more immediate focus is a solid tune-up in Austria before Christmas and then success in World Cup races in Europe in January to build momentum going into Paralympic events at Whistler. "Being at home is going to be

great because it means there's going to be a comfort level, which is key when you're visually impaired," said Williamson, who had a dozen family and friends at both Salt Lake City and Turin and expects about 20 this time. "It gives a lot more confidence and that can only help."

The mission of Enight Skills Center is to provide low-vision clients with the opportunity to enhance their life skills, increase their levels of confidence and independence, and enrich their lives through adaptive training and technology.

Enight Skills Center is a non-profit organization that relies on funding from grants, fundraising, and donations.

These funds allow us to keep our doors open and provide the best possible care to our patients.

Please consider helping!

If you'd like to make a donation, please call us at 303-757-4500.

We are an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and all donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for your support!

For a list of local support groups, please call:

Center for People With Disabilities

Steve Johnson

303-442-8662

Please note our new January and February hours of operation:

Open Wednesdays from 9am-4pm

Enight Skills Center

6000 E. Evans, Bldg. 3, Ste. 012 • Denver, CO 80222

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