

Jimmie Heuga Nomination

Linda Whittle

Nominated by:
Billy Kidd
Mike Sanford

Years of Service: 1984-2010

The Jimmie Heuga Center was founded in 1984. Currently known as the Can Do Multiple Sclerosis Center (CDMSC), it provides a program dedicated exclusively to helping those suffering from MS to live the best life possible and to ensure that access to skiing is available to people with all types of disabilities. The CDMSC believes people are empowered when they undertake and succeed at challenging outdoor recreation. Jimmie, afflicted soon after his world stunning achievements as a Bronze medalist in the '68 Olympics Games, was an ardent believer in this credo. Creating awareness throughout the skiing community, the Center has earned a national and international reputation as a model program in adaptive outdoor recreation.

After working in Hotel Management for several years Linda Whittle realized she wanted to give up the city life and career, to do what she loved in life!

That love...was skiing! At this time she had been a two time cancer survivor. After overcoming her own challenges and becoming involved with Jimmie Heuga and his foundation, she dedicated herself to helping people fight MS. She has been involved with the Heuga Center for MS since its inception. Her fundraising efforts have produced over \$300,000 in donations. She became a close friend to Jimmie and shared in following his dreams of helping make this a life-long endeavor. Her team has been the longest participating team in the Vertical Express event held in Steamboat Springs and Vail, Co. During her affiliation with the Center she served as one of numerous volunteers dedicated to making the lives of those afflicted with MS more enjoyable. Linda provided a myriad of services in her volunteerism and went on to serve as a National figure in adaptive skiing, including coaching the US National Adaptive Ski Team. During Linda's long career with the CDMSC, she has seen the expansion of a fledgling program serving a small number of aide- recipients to a year-round program providing thousands of adaptive recreation lessons annually to people with disabilities, including a new sector of participants, the "Wounded Warriors", most recently those from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. She also coaches the Disabled Vets Winter Sports Clinic on a yearly basis. Linda is also associated with the Paralyzed Veterans Association in Colorado Springs, Co., and in Bronx, NY. Her work with athletes includes being a Blind Ski Guide for disabled athletes and a US Ski Team coach with the Special Olympics. She also organized an ongoing program for ski racing with the Special Olympics in Steamboat Springs. Her roles evolved from volunteer to a nationally recognized leader in the adaptive recreation arena. Linda has traveled locally and nationally to promote adaptive teaching and the significance of therapeutic recreation, as well as the CDMS fundraising events. She is widely recognized for these accomplishments on a National level and she continues to devote her time as a volunteer with Disabled Sports USA as a key staff member.

Her dedication to the Heuga Center has been central to its overall success in providing vital services and healing to its many recipients. Her dedication to adaptive recreation at both the local and National level over a long period of time is remarkable and worthy of recognition, particularly in the name of one to whom she personally provided such loving and important services, Jimmie Heuga, himself. In this, the year of his passing, it is most appropriate that Linda be recognized for her unselfish dedication, loving care for the afflicted and wounded and leadership in this most important arena of caring for those most in need. We think Jimmie would be proud to say "Thank you Linda, for all you have done".



photo courtesy Mike Sanford