



2019-20

Annual Report





We are **34** years
STRONG

A message from the **Chief Executive Officer**

Dear Friends and Supporters of STRIDE Adaptive Sports,

Our future was looking bright up until March of 2020 when COVID-19 hit the world. But we adapt, it's what we know best. The pandemic has impacted many organizations, and STRIDE is no different. Over the past 5 of total 34 years, we've experienced exponential growth in program development, asset procurement, finances and community awareness, bringing us to the forefront as a national leader in adaptive recreation programs in the Northeastern US. But the final quarter of this fiscal year has impacted every area of that growth, and most importantly our athlete families have been affected.

I am grateful for the foresight of our Board of Directors, and for my frugal and cautious approach to finances over the last decade and a half, which has allowed us to save enough assets for STRIDE to withstand a crisis such as this. No one could have predicted a global pandemic to be the reason for a crisis of this magnitude. We now face a new way of providing services, in delivering approaches to inclusion and social interaction, and with developing and administering ways to re-open all of the 18 adaptive sport programs we previously provided so successfully. The re-invention of each of these programs will have to include policies and regulations following CDC guidelines for health and safety, paramount to those we serve.

Our biggest concern will be our fiscal health, as we approach a realistic budget plan for 2020-21. It is already apparent that our fund-raising events may drop by more than 50%; investments and donor contributions will be vastly reduced; events canceled and grants will be far more competitive. With so many of our constituents having their own economic and financial crisis, our individual donors may also drop off. In short, we are planning for a difficult year financially and programs, but because of the financial cushion built, we will survive and adapt. Our staff of 4 full-time employees still have their jobs and proudly serve the disabled community. While losing 30% of our seasonal programs due to COVID-19, we still conducted 10,924 adaptive lessons, just shy of last year's numbers.

As we continue to adapt, our vision still includes the full use of the SHARE Community Center and SCORE Camp. We recognize the fact that services we provide may be slow to come back, and we are cautiously optimistic to address this with attention to health safety for all. We hope you will continue to support us far into our bright future, as we adapt and continue to serve.



Mary Ellen Whitney

CEO & Founder

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Board of Directors



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STRIDE Adaptive Sports
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Darien, CT

Our Mission

STRIDE's mission is to educate and empower Individuals with disabilities in life-changing sport and recreation programs to sustain active, healthy, and fun lifestyles.

Our Vision

Building a community with equal opportunity and access for sport and recreational activities. No one should be left behind because of a disability!

Our Priority

Safety, health and well-being of everyone in our STRIDE community

Our Core Values

CREATE opportunities and provide outlets for individuals with special needs to make friends, increase self-esteem, develop life skills, realize their potential and become productive members of society.

EDUCATE volunteers, families and communities about opportunities that exist for individuals with special needs.

PARTNER with leading professionals, educational institutions, agencies and communities in order to create top-tier recreational programs for individuals with disabilities.

LEAD in the arena of adaptive sports by providing opportunities for STRIDE participations that are safe, fun and help achieve personal goals.

ENGAGE a committed team of volunteers, parents, family, friends and community members in our services and mission.

CHALLENGE the status quo by removing boundaries and breaking down barriers of ignorance and attitude that can block the path of independence for individuals who have disabilities.

Who we are *and what we do*

- A volunteer non-profit educational organization founded in 1985-86
- Provided 10,924 free/low-cost adaptive sport and recreation lessons
- Over 700 skilled sport instructors and volunteers
- Served over 2000 families in 2019-20
- Offered programs in 18 sports in 28 locations in 3 states
- Focus is education for individual life-time sports
- Funding goes directly to programs with modest operating budget
- Operates with a staff of four
- Chapter member of Move United Sports (Disabled Sports USA)
- Official US Paralympic Sports Club
- Member of Professional Ski Instructors of America / American Association of Snowboard Instructors
- Member of New York Special Olympics and an official Red Cross provider
- Recognized as one of the largest adaptive sport organizations in Eastern US: among the leading adaptive organizations in the USA
- Partnerships with school districts, colleges and other non-profits
- Partnerships with Warfighter Sports, of Move United, for providing rehabilitative sports & recreation programs to regional Wounded Warriors and veteran communities
- Programs are primarily cost-free or low-cost for participation' and scholarships are available where cost is prohibitive
- Operates a tent-camping facility in Chatham NY, on 86 environmentally protected wooded acres with miles of trails, ponds, camping areas, and a large pavilion/main lodge.
- Funding is diversified and comes from private donations, fund-raisers, and corporate sponsorships. No government funds are solicited.
- Operates a 5,000 sq. ft. adaptive fitness and Community facility called SHARE Center (*STRIDE Health and Recreation Education Center*) that opened in 2020.
- Dave & Marisa Clark Memorial Foundation awarded 8 athletes with skiing awards (no biking awards due to COVID-19).
- Staff & Volunteers are COVID-19 trained.



2,000
STRIDE Athletes

2019-2020 Highlights

sport & recreation programs

- ~ Sled Warriors won the Gold Medal at the 2020 NYS Empire State Games.
- ~ Awarded \$25K in funding from Christopher Reeve Foundation to purchase Alter-G Treadmill for the SHARE Center.
- ~ Started 'Warrior Wednesday' Program at the SHARE Center for veterans to socialize while receiving informational services.
- ~ Created virtual program 'Adapt in STRIDE' to provide on-line resources for youth and veterans to maintain a healthy lifestyle during the COVID- 19 pandemic.
- ~ Re-invented the 5K Run, Walk, Roll as a virtual event with 8 weeks of couch to 5K fitness with Program Director, Megan Evans, chronicled on social media.
- ~ Hosted "Better Together" Volunteer Appreciation party quarterly series. Volunteers relax, socialize, and meet volunteers from other programs.
- ~ Hosted 8 themed camping weekends at the SCORE Center including a Wounded Warrior weekend, and an Alumni weekend for campers who have aged out to introduce them to a mentor leadership program.
- ~ Replicated our dance program to *Dance Experience* in Delmar, NY, providing enrichment in genres of dance such as jazz, tap, and ballet.
- ~ Hosted 'Feel Good Friday' to Warriors and families before the Snowfest dinner, to be pampered by local hairstylists, barbers, and massage therapists. Averill Park High School band provided music, and lunch donated by local restaurant- *The Mess Hall*.
- ~ Hosted a Warrior evening to see comedian, Jeff Dunham, including backstage passes to meet and greet him.
- ~ Welcomed the *Empire State Games* torch relay at our SHARE Center, en route to Lake Placid. Joined by regional lawmakers, we celebrated our sled hockey team before competition.
- ~ Officially opened our doors to the SHARE Center on Veterans Day 2019 with a ribbon-cutting Grand Opening Ceremony with dozens of NYS elected officials and STRIDE constituents.



Warriors Meet & Greet with Comedian Jeff Dunham
at the Times Union Center

101

veterans participated
in STRIDE Wounded
Warrior Programs

2019-2020 Highlights

sport & recreation programs

The nucleus of our winter programs continues to be alpine skiing and snowboarding. This year we taught 1465 total lessons in a shortened ski season ending early March due to COVID-19. Our sled hockey team had 13 total members including 2 Warriors totaling 5,665 lessons with a shortened season and only one tournament due to COVID -19. Summer program nucleus is our SCORE Camp in Chatham, NY, yielding 1305 lessons during 9 weekends and day events. We count 'lessons' that last 1 to 2.5 hours in each sport or activity. This year we accepted 152 new applicant athletes to our programs. As COVID-19 pandemic takes a frightening grip on our world, we stand resolute to continue our work in the virtual remake of every program possible as we reinvent ways to do things safely until we can be in-person again.

PROGRAMS & Activities Offered

- Air Rifle • Archery • Bocce •
- Bowling • Cycling • Dance •
- Disc Golf • Fishing •
- Fitness Training • Golf •
- Hiking • Horseback Riding •
- Kayaking • Kickboxing • 5K Run
- Sailing • Skiing • Sled Hockey •
- Snowboarding • Snowshoeing •
- Swimming • Tennis •
- Tent Camping •
- White Water Rafting •
- Wounded Warriors • Yoga •

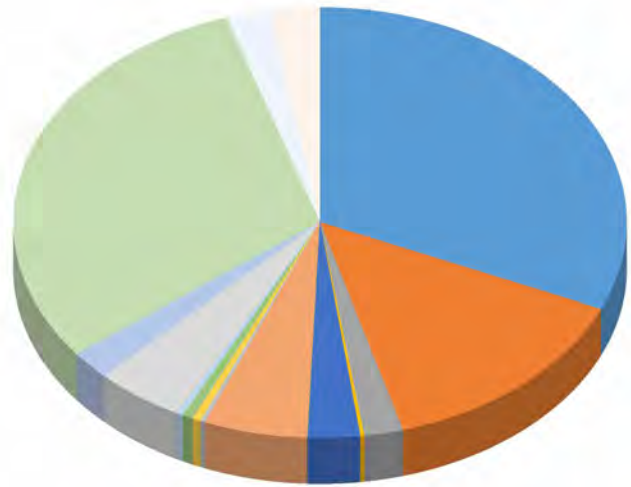


Programs generously supported by:



Volunteer hours = \$1,407,477

Volunteer hours expressed by dollar amount per program at average NY, MA, CT, RI rate \$30.50 / hour



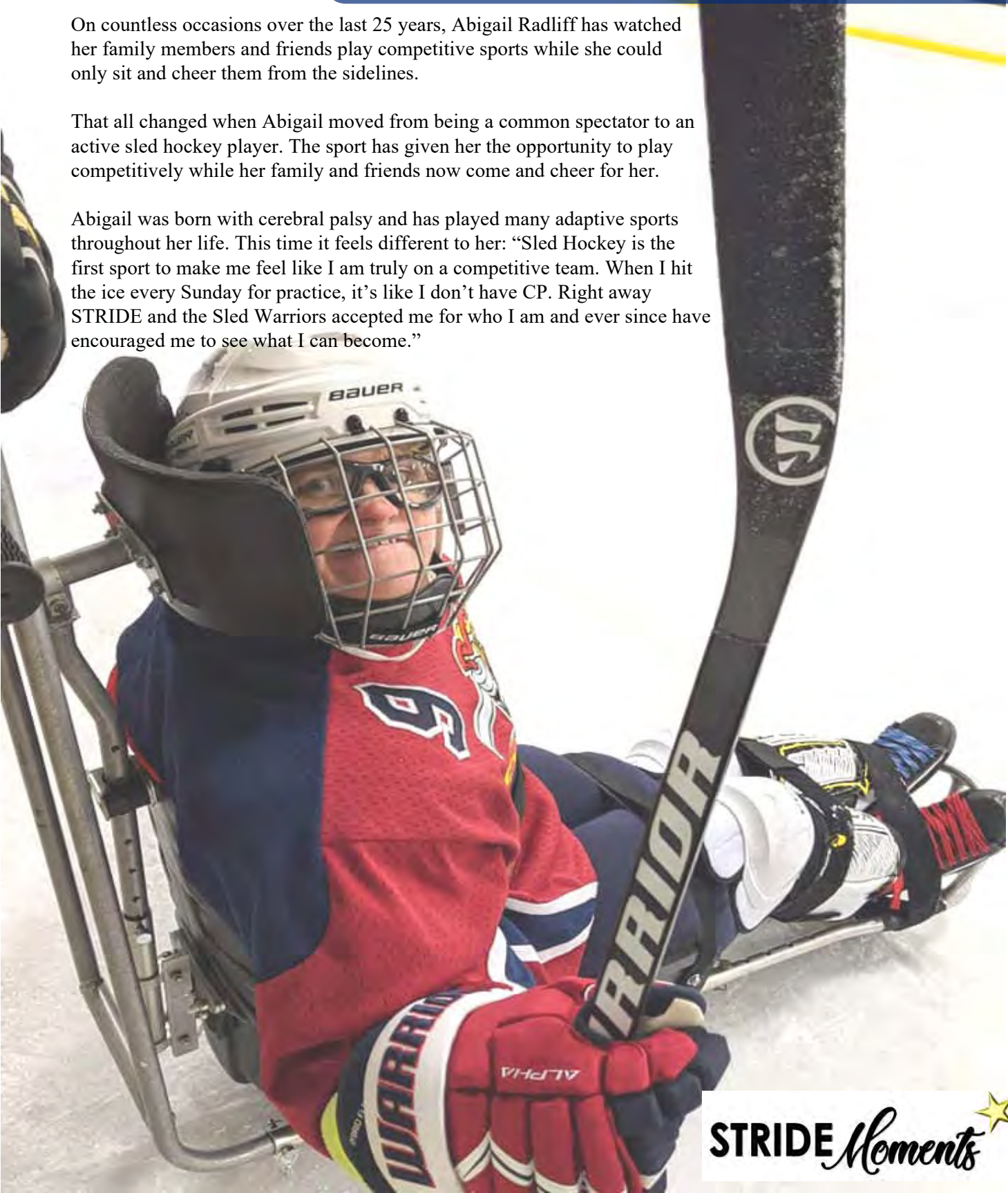
- Snowsports
- SCORE Camping
- Tennis
- Sailing
- Swimming
- Golf
- Sled Hockey
- Learn to Dance
- Bowling
- Adaptive Shooting
- Teen Dances
- Yoga
- Whitewater Trip
- Bike Camp
- Fundraising
- Miscellaneous /Office
- Intern Hours
- Wounded Warrior Programs

10,924
adaptive sport lessons

On countless occasions over the last 25 years, Abigail Radliff has watched her family members and friends play competitive sports while she could only sit and cheer them from the sidelines.

That all changed when Abigail moved from being a common spectator to an active sled hockey player. The sport has given her the opportunity to play competitively while her family and friends now come and cheer for her.

Abigail was born with cerebral palsy and has played many adaptive sports throughout her life. This time it feels different to her: “Sled Hockey is the first sport to make me feel like I am truly on a competitive team. When I hit the ice every Sunday for practice, it’s like I don’t have CP. Right away STRIDE and the Sled Warriors accepted me for who I am and ever since have encouraged me to see what I can become.”



2019-2020 Highlights

STRIDE Adaptive Sports

Staff:

- ~ STRIDE Administrative team operates with 4 full-time staff with oversight from the Executive Board of Directors
- ~ Four college interns were utilized as office staff.
- ~ We utilize resources of service agencies providing day-hab work programs for adults with disabilities.

Development:

- ~ Due to COVID-19 we lost revenue from 1 major fund-raiser, the Great Race, and are preparing for revenue loss in 2021.
- ~ Program revenue from administration fees was lost due to halt of spring programs being canceled because of COVID -19.
- ~ In-kind donations were high, yielding over \$200,000.
- ~ Corporate sponsor support increased for our 4 fund-raising events.
- ~ Growth in the 100K Vertical Challenge was up by 2%.
- ~ Reinventing our 5K race to a virtual event was successful.
- ~ We were granted a PPP forgivable COVID-19 loan for \$38,000.
- ~ Grants and individual contributions remain steady streams of revenue.

Communications/Marketing:

- ~ Our social media presence is still growing.
- ~ We updated our website and made some upgrades in our collateral materials.
- ~ STRIDE's presence in the community continues to grow in awareness through many avenues including media, press and recognition awards.
- ~ We hired an IT firm to transfer our fundraising software platforms to a web-based platform, a transaction savings of 9% ; all data collection is now integrated with our database.
- ~ We have integrated Safe Sport athlete training into every volunteer application with criminal background checks annually.
- ~ We are rated Platinum level for transparency by Guidestar.



130 new athlete applications
received this year

STRIDE Moments

Our 10 year old son Andre has autism. He speaks a little but becomes silent in new situations. We wanted him to have a sleep-away summer camp experience as we both loved going to camp as kids. Before attending the SCORE Camp, Andre had never spent a night away from family. We were understandably nervous to put him in a new situation so far from home. We spent several weeks excitedly preparing Andre. We chose a weekend where the theme was music, as he loves to play drums and sing.

We bought him a new sleeping bag, carefully packed his belongings and set off on this adventure. When we pulled into camp, we were greeted by Stefon, the camp director and immediately felt at ease. As Andre explored the campsite, we had a strong sense that he had found "his people," a community of acceptance and belonging, made up of people with varying abilities who all supported each other. Andre was quick to sit in a camp chair by the fire pit - he barely said goodbye as we left. When we came back to pick him up on Sunday morning, Stefon told us that Andre participated in activities and seemed to have fun, although he did not speak very much, and ate very little. As we were pulling out of the SCORE site, we asked him whether he wanted to come back; after some thought he said "yes."

Two weeks later we were back again, and this time Andre ran from the car to join the group, barely glancing back at us. When we picked him up, we were told that he talked, ate, participated and had a great time! He barely acknowledged our arrival (a good sign). That evening at dinner at home, Andre asked for more water - instead of his usual gesture or other form of nonverbal communication, he actually spoke the words "water, please." This was a big breakthrough and his speech has continued to improve in the past month. Finding "his people" has helped Andre to see that while there are many types of differences, we are all just trying to belong.



20 adaptive sport
and recreation programs
offered year round



Kim Wilson, Volunteer of the Year

Ten years ago, a fledgling start-up sled hockey program called Bethlehem Eagles came to STRIDE to partner under our wing; and today The Capital District Sled Warriors, has grown exponentially. Kim Wilson, the founder has continuously been the best hockey mom/manager for the team. Not only the team director, but a volunteer that champions STRIDE's mission. Kim has helped connect the team in our community for the greater good as a whole and not just for the team itself. She has made it a priority to ensure that anyone who wants to join or try seated hockey, would feel welcomed. Her tenacity has made the sled hockey team what it is today, winning the gold medal Empire State Games, a long way from where they started.

Additionally, she crosses over as a volunteer leader to other programs such as whitewater rafting and skiing, where she involved all 3 of her children as volunteer ski instructors at STRIDE, a family affair! As advocate for her son Luke, a STRIDE hockey player, she secured him a paid internship at STRIDE through Siena College. Even her husband Tom has been a volunteer, assisting STRIDE in all the construction issues around plumbing and HVAC systems at the SHARE Center, donating time and materials continuously for years.

Congratulations Kim Wilson, STRIDE's 2019 Volunteer of the Year.

over **32,547**
volunteer hours



STRIDE honors our over 700 volunteers for making a huge difference in the community. Whether they run a lap with a biker, paint walls, clean up the camp, teach a snowboard lesson, decorate for an event, take a child camping, or collect a raffle prize, every volunteer has a ripple effect that positively affects the lives of individuals with disabilities in our communities. Our program services wouldn't exist without the assistance we receive from so many big-hearted people. Calculated volunteer hours given for the year were 32,547 volunteer hours at a NY, CT, MA average value of \$30.05, equaling \$1,407,477 given to STRIDE in time! The intrinsic rewards received from volunteering for STRIDE are valued much higher than any tangible award we can think of. We honor all those who help us throughout the year.

STRIDE Athlete's Creed

"I will try my best and always stay positive in play or competition. I will not say or think the words 'I can't.' I will be a good sportsman and have strong character. If I fall, I will get up. If my teammate falls, I will be there to lift them physically and emotionally. I know that what I do reflects on STRIDE, my parents, and my community who support me."



30 active partnerships with educational organizations through Partners in Education



STRIDE Honorary Board

Greg Adams

Vice President, Americas, SABIC
Houston, Texas

Phil Bayly

Anchor, WNYT NewsChannel 13, NBC
Clifton Park, NY (Retired)

Robert Braverman

Attorney/Partner Braverman/
Greenspun
New York, NY

Tyler Fairbank

CEO, The Fairbank Group
Jiminy Peak Hancock, MA

Pat Flaherty

Former NFL Offensive Line Coach
Jacksonville, FL

Chris Gibson

President of Siena College
Former U.S. Congressman, 19th
District, NY
Kinderhook NY

John Gray

News 10 ABC Anchor
North Greenbush, NY

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New York City, NY

John Robinson

CEO Our Ability
Glenmont, NY

**Chaplain (Major General) Donald L.
Rutherford, US Army**

23rd U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains
Averill Park, NY

CSM Frank Wicks

Command Sergeant Major (Retired), US Army
West Sand Lake, NY

STRIDE Adaptive Sports Staff

Mary Ellen Whitney

CEO & Founder

Joe Russo

Chief Operations Officer

Patrick Hayslett

Development Director

Megan Evans

Programs Director

Interns:

Camille Pawloski - SUNY Albany
Nora Kipp -Siena College
Dennis Nguyan - SUNY Albany
Kevin Flores - SUNY Albany

Thank You Major Sponsors & Funders

Major Corporate Sponsors (\$5,000 +)

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Nine Pin Cider
NPA Financial
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SEFCU
Ski Sundown
Tauck World Discovery
Warfighter Sports
WEP Limited Partnership

Grant Makers

10th Mountain Division Foundation Anthem
Foundation / Empire Blue Cross
MetLife Foundation
Miloslava Leukhardt Living Trust
Move United Sport (DSUSA)
Christopher Reeves Foundation
Andrew Sabin Family Foundation
John E. Sackett Foundation
Stuart and Joan Seliger Sidney Family Fund
Fredericka V. Slingerland Family Foundation
Stewart’s Shops

Third Party Fundraising Events

Corvino Performance Thanksgiving Fundraiser John J.
Curran Council Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast
John J. Curran Council Knights of Columbus Pork Dinner
Shenendehowa 5K Track Booster Dash
Ski Sundown
UPS Ride 4 STRIDE
William Lemerond, Berkshire East Ski-A-Thon
Marc S. Zeplin Foundation Concert

Major Donors (\$1,000+)

Ancient Temple Lodge #14 Masons
Doug Bauer
Carol Campbell
Disabled American Veterans #38
James Duffy
Jay & Deirdre Epstein
Michael & Michelle Gambino
Sigrid Gray
Heather Grimm
RADM Martin Leukhardt
Tommy McDonough
James & Marie Moorhead
Paul ‘Oleary
Don Reutemann
Lindsay Schine
Jeff & Kim Sutton
The Estate of Kathryn Allen

United Way Campaign Major Donors:

Gregory Adams
Laurie Woodcock
Chris Shattuck
David Van Hoesen
Samuel Colborn
Crystal Coso
Mark Bachand

Major In-Kind Donations

Bern Unlimited
Bonded Cement
Chatham Hardware
CJ Lawn & Land Care
Delmar Fire Company
Dolce & Biscotti
Eagle Scout Project – Noah Printup
East Greenbush Bowling Center
Friehofer’s
Frito-Lay
GE Healthcare
GE Veterans Network
Gogglesoc
Hannaford
HANYS
Heims Auto Care
Isabelle School of Dance
Jeff Dunham Comedy Tour
Jet Blue
Jiminy Peak
June Farms
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Mirror Lake Inn Resort & Spa
Mary Ellen & LJ Whitney
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Paul O’Leary
Pinnacle Roofing
Regeneron
Rich Peters
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RPI Shooting Range
Rubicon
Saratoga Lake Yacht Club
Spare Time Latham
Stewart’s Shops
Suzanne Boudreau
SWANY
The Sagamore & The Edison Club
Tim & Gail Tagan
Transpack
Union College
VanGorkam Yacht Design
Veterans Business Council
Veterans Miracle Center
WEQX

Together we change lives!

Financial Performance & Outlook

As a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization, STRIDE depends on the generosity of its donors and funders to support our athletes and programs.

STRIDE now operates with a budget of nearly \$500,000, making us one of the larger and strongest independent adaptive sport organizations in the Northeast. Being good stewards of the money we receive, we put our athletes and people first. We are family.

For every dollar we receive, more than 87 cents goes directly into our programs, better than the

national average and earning STRIDE a Guidestar Platinum ranking, the highest.

Nearly 40% of STRIDE program needs are supported by in-kind donations (non-cash items such as food, venue rental, professional services, equipment, and auction items or prizes) and other donated services. This helps maximize our impact.

	2019/20	2018/19
Total Revenues & Program Support	693,388	660,801
Total Expenses		
Program Services	474,360	407,846
Management & General Operating	74,084	60,642
Fundraising	39,004	47,761
Total:	587,448	516,249
Change in Net Assets	105,940	144,552
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	1,276,930	1,132,378
Net Assets - End of Year	1,382,870	1,276,930

We feel a great responsibility to our donors, large and small.
That is why we are proud of our efficient operations.

Over 80% of our budget is a direct expense to our programs that provide life-changing experiences for individuals with disabilities through participation in adaptive sports and recreation. We are masterful at keeping costs low with our leverage of in-kind donations! Thank you to every donor, large and small!



\$198,292
donated in-kind
products and services



Union Men's Hockey vs STRIDE Sled Warriors



STRIDE CENTER FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION & EDUCATION

STRIDE Adaptive Sports

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