

THE PATH AHEAD

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OFF TO THE RACES: myTEAM TRIUMPH

Everyone can be a champion, and myTEAM TRIUMPH wants the world to know it! This national organization helps people of all abilities keep active and achieve amazing goals.

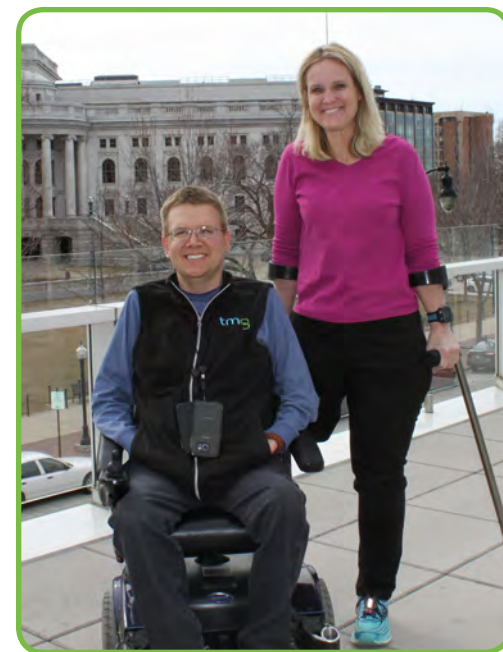
MyTEAM TRIUMPH brings together a community of athletes who love racing. The athletes who have disabilities, called Captains, are partnered with athletes called Angels. The Captains use adaptive racing wheelchairs, bikes or rafts — which are provided by myTEAM TRIUMPH — to compete in the races. The Angels assist the Captains by pushing or pulling the adaptive equipment. If a Captain can use the adaptive equipment by themselves, the Angel races beside them for moral support.

Tom Gierke, a TMG IRIS Consultant from Menasha, WI, who uses a wheelchair, and his wife Jana, whose right leg is amputated, are proud members of myTEAM TRIUMPH's Wisconsin chapter. The couple have been Captains in many races across the state, and now their 15-year-old son, Zane, who has been Tom's Angel in the past, is involved. It's been a great way for them to bond as a family, meet fantastic new friends, and stay fit.

Tom remembers the first year they were racing, the local news featured a story about Jana and myTEAM TRIUMPH. One day, an excited little girl ran up to them and said she had seen Jana on TV. The girl's mom told Tom and Jana that the story started a wonderful conversation with the little girl about how people with disabilities can do all kinds of awesome things. For Tom, raising that type of awareness is important.

“[Being on myTEAM TRIUMPH] is about putting yourself out there and making the effort to do it,” says Tom.

One way that both Tom and Jana are putting themselves out there



and pushing their boundaries is by participating in one of the toughest races ever: The IRONMAN Wisconsin triathlon. This grueling 17-hour race has participants swimming 2.4 miles, biking 112 miles and running 26.2 miles. This September, Tom will be a Captain for the entire race, and Jana will be Tom's Angel during the swim portion. This is certainly the couple's biggest race ever, but both Tom and Jana are thrilled to be a part of this ultimate test of strength and endurance.

“I figure if I can make it through these challenges, how much better will I feel about myself for accomplishing it?” says Jana.

Providing opportunities for athletes of all abilities to overcome obstacles by crossing the finish line and realizing their potential is what myTEAM TRIUMPH is all about.

RESOURCES FOR STAYING ACTIVE

Want to find an adaptive sports team that you can join, or learn ways you can experience the great outdoors and enjoy fun activities like fishing and hiking? Check out our list of resources for staying active! To find the links to these websites, visit tmgwisconsin.com/staying-active.

Access Ability Wisconsin (AAW) This non-profit organization is dedicated to helping people access the great outdoors.

Accessible Nature Discover accessible trails across Wisconsin and experience the natural beauty of our state.

myTEAM TRIUMPH A national organization with a chapter in Wisconsin that connects athletes with one another to compete in marathons and other races.

Open the Outdoors The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) list of accessible outdoor resources includes beach wheelchairs, adaptive kayaks, sit skis, and more.

Special Olympics Wisconsin Athletes from across the state see if they have what it takes to compete in Olympic events.

Wisconsin Adaptive Sports Association (WASA) A fantastic resource for finding adaptive sports teams such as wheelchair basketball, tennis, and softball.



SARAH'S STORY: FINDING STRENGTH IN EXERCISE

Sarah Schemenauer knows better than most people that living a healthy life can be hard work. Thanks to her determination, she's achieved some amazing goals with her physical health, and doesn't plan on stopping anytime soon.

Sarah's journey to get healthier began in 2008. The 32-year-old, who lives near Chippewa Falls and is enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency, said that one day she got tired of feeling out of shape, so she took action.



“When I talked to my TMG IRIS Consultant about my goals, I decided one of the main ones would be getting healthier and more active,” said Sarah.

With the help of her IRIS funds, Sarah got a membership at her local YMCA. In 2012, as she became stronger, she decided to try a new challenge: finish a one-mile walk/run race. So Sarah, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, built up the strength to walk one mile using her forearm crutches. She managed to finish the race in just 36 minutes, which was a whopping nine minutes faster than the goal time she had set for herself. It was a huge personal win that she's still proud of, and it made her want to keep working toward other health-related goals.

Sadly though, in early 2015 Sarah was in a terrible car accident and was badly injured. She needed a lot of

time to heal, and stopped exercising for almost two years. But one day in late 2016, a friend who owns a gym sent her a message.

“He was like, ‘Hey, do you want to do a triathlon together?’” says Sarah. “I was like, ‘uh.... sure!’”

So together, Sarah and her friend trained to build up Sarah's strength, and last August they finished the triathlon. He helped Sarah during the swimming, running and biking portions of the race. Today, Sarah continues to find new ways to achieve her goal of being healthier and more active as part of her IRIS plan. She's thrilled at how much exercising has not only allowed her to reach major goals, like competing in races, but also how much it has helped make everyday tasks like moving in and out of her wheelchair on her own much easier – something she had been unable to do for a long time after the car accident.



“I feel like I’m on top of the world,” says Sarah. “I’m getting my independence back.”

These days, Sarah is focused on getting stronger, and eventually she wants to compete in a race using her new handcycle (a bike that you peddle with your hands). She loves to dream big, and knows that no matter what, she’ll find a way to reach her goals.

“If you can’t do something one way, try it a different way,” says Sarah. “There are limitless ways you can do something. Yes, it may be hard and frustrating, but if you keep going at it, you’ll get it!”

YOUR MEETING PLACE FALL EVENTS!

If you live near Racine or Oshkosh, you’re not going to want to miss TMG’s final 2018 Your Meeting Place events! Stop by these fun-filled community gatherings that bring together local people enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency, community resources, and TMG staff.

Your Meeting Place at Festival Hall

September 26, 2018 | *Festival Hall – Racine Civic Centre – Racine, WI*

Your Meeting Place Oshkosh

October 24, 2018 | *UW Oshkosh Alumni Center – Oshkosh, WI*

Check out tmgwisconsin.com/events for more information about these open house events. We hope to see you there!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wisconsin Summer Inclusion Institute 2018

July 23-25, 2018 | *Westwood Conference Center – Wausau, WI*

Disability Pride Festival

July 28, 2018 | *Tenney Park – Madison, WI*

Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference

October 29-31, 2018 | *Kalahari Resort – Wisconsin Dells, WI*

THE WEBER'S STORY: A BIKE BUILT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Going on a bike ride is a great way for families to bond and explore new places together. So what do you do when one of those family members happens to have a disability that prevents them from riding a bike on their own? You get a little creative!

The Weber family, who lives in Kenosha, WI, understands this situation very well. Karen and Ken are the proud parents of Chris, a 24-year-old enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency. The Weber family loves staying active together and taking a nice bike ride. Unfortunately, Chris didn't have a way to join them, because they didn't have the right equipment.

That changed last summer when the Webers were at the Accessibility Expo in Chicago and discovered

the Duet Wheelchair Bicycle Tandem – a bike that has a wheelchair attached to the front. They were able to use IRIS funds to purchase the bike because it helps support Chris' goals of being a healthy, active member of her community. These days, Ken, Karen and Chris enjoy biking whenever they can.

“Chris gets out and about and interacts with other people ... and it's fun,” says Ken.

The Duet wheelchair detaches from the rest of the bike and can be used as a regular wheelchair if the Webers stop somewhere during their bike ride. The bike also fits nicely in the back of their van, making it easy to transport. Because it's so convenient to use, the Webers are planning lots of bike trips this summer along Wisconsin's accessible bike trails.



Biking as a family has brought a lot of joy to the Webers, and they're thankful to have found the Duet. Karen and Ken say there's a lot of great accessible equipment out there that can benefit families. They recommend using the internet and going to accessibility fairs and expos to learn what's available.

“If you see us on the Duet, ask us about it!” says Karen. “If you see something interesting, most people love to talk about it and are willing to share.”

MEET ZACH THE ZUMBA KING

Finding a hobby you love that also helps you stay fit is awesome. Making a career out of that healthy hobby is living the dream! For Zach Selden, that dream is quickly becoming his reality.

The 26-year-old from Antigo, WI, is wild about exercising. He's a fan of kickboxing, hiking, rock climbing and Pilates. But his passion is Zumba – the heart-pounding cardio dance class.

Zach first learned about Zumba from his mom when he was a sophomore in high school. One day, she asked if he wanted to join the Zumba class she attended. Even though he was hesitant at first, he decided to give it a try.

“I was like ‘Well, I hope it’s for guys too,’” laughed Zach. **“It got me a really good workout because I was drenched!”**

From then on, Zach, who is enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency, was hooked on Zumba. Not only has it been a fun way for him to get out of the house, but it's also been a helpful way for Zach to manage living with Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS). Some of the symptoms of PWS, if not managed well, can involve gaining dangerous amounts of weight. Exercise helps Zach build muscle and maintain a healthy weight.

“I’ve been struggling (with my weight) throughout my life, and what really helped me is just being active,” says Zach.

Today, Zach teaches Zumba twice a week at a local church. He's also studying to get his STRONG by Zumba certification and his personal trainer certificate, called the ACE Certification. Once he gets those certificates, he hopes to work as a



personal trainer at a local gym. It's the perfect way for Zach to share his love of exercise with others and to help them lead happier, healthier lives.

“Zumba is really uplifting and it’s a stress-reliever,” says Zach. **“It’s also breathtaking, and I really enjoy it!”**



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WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

At the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA), we value the fact that our employees live and work in communities all around Wisconsin. Our Area Associate Directors provide local leadership for our TMG IRIS Consultant Teams throughout the state. If you have questions about TMG and the services we provide, please visit our website at tmgwisconsin.com for more information.



Questions about IRIS,
call: **1-800-223-6048**



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