

CONTACTS:

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The dream of a North Dakotan who perished in the Twin Towers Tragedy on 9/11 is about to become a reality; while providing hope for individuals with disabilities, including wounded warriors, across North Dakota and the greater region

Construction begins on “Annie’s House”, an adaptive ski facility at Bottineau Winter Park

Groundbreaking Ceremony May 17 – Build Weekend Sept. 6-9, 2012

Bottineau, ND and New York, NY – May 17, 2012 would have been Ann Nicole Nelson’s 41st birthday. A proud resident of Stanley, North Dakota, Ann’s life was tragically cut short when she perished on September 11, 2001 while working for Cantor Fitzgerald on the 104th floor of the World Trade Center. But Ann’s spirit of kindness and sense of adventure is continuing to make an impact in the world and is about to make a lasting impact on the citizens of North Dakota and Manitoba through a very special project to commemorate this year’s 11th Anniversary of 9/11. Ann left behind a “bucket list” expressing her desire to someday return to North Dakota and build a home. Her dream is going to come true and in the process, will provide hope and enjoyment for special needs children and wounded warriors from across North Dakota & Manitoba for years to come.

Annie’s House will be North Dakota’s first adaptive ski facility to teach disabled children, young adults, and wounded warriors how to ski. The project is the result of a two-year collaboration between the Bottineau Winter Park, Ann’s parents Gary and Jenette Nelson of Stanley, ND, the Bottineau Area Community Foundation and The New York Says Thank You Foundation, the country’s leading volunteer service organization focused on the 9/11 Anniversary.

The groundbreaking ceremony will take place 11 AM on May 17 at Bottineau Winter Park on Hwy 43, 9 miles north and west of Bottineau, ND.

THE FACILITY

Annie’s House will be a state-of-the art facility that will replace the existing lodge at Bottineau Winter Park with a new facility designed to accommodate the needs of skiers with both physical and cognitive disabilities from across North Dakota and neighboring Manitoba. Approximately 50% the public space in the new facility will support the adaptive ski program and needs of disabled skiers and their families. This will be the first facility in North Dakota focused on empowering disabled skiers and their families to enjoy outdoor sports during winter while also providing a year-round facility to accommodate other adaptive sports like fishing, canoeing, waterskiing, and horseback riding. Other year round activities planned at the facility include folk festivals, theater productions, hiking, biking, running events, bird watching and hosting community events and receptions.

THE PROGRAM

Annie's House will provide an integrated, adaptive ski facility and accommodating programs for people with disabilities both young and old. In addition, Annie's House will be designed to provide adaptive ski equipment and programs for wounded warriors; these brave individuals who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan.

THE NEED

There are approximately 13,000 children and youth with disabilities in the state of North Dakota. Furthermore, approximately 130,000 adults with disabilities reside in North Dakota. In the ten counties currently served by Bottineau Winter Park, an estimated 2,800 children receive special education services. The above numbers do not include the population of people with disabilities, both young and old, within the greater region. Wounded warriors number in the hundreds across North Dakota and the greater region, these individuals will also have diverse needs.

PARTNERSHIPS

Annie's House will be modeled after The Adaptive Sports Foundation in Windham, NY, the country's only "stand alone" ski lodge dedicated to serving the needs of people with disabilities, both young and old; as well as wounded warriors. In addition, over the past two years, Friends of Annie's House has received very positive feedback on the need for and viability of Annie's House from lead agencies and community organizations across North Dakota. The Friends of Annie's House are presently working to collaborate with these agencies and organizations as well as inviting others to join the efforts in creating a wonderful recreational opportunity in western North Dakota and the greater region.

FINANCIAL & LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FROM ACROSS NORTH DAKOTA AND AMERICA

The Bottineau Winter Park and Bottineau Area Community Foundation in partnership with The New York Says Thank You Foundation have been privileged to garner the financial and logistical support from so many individuals and institutions from across North Dakota and the U.S. who have made the construction of Annie's House possible. Hundreds of individuals and scores of charitable foundations, educational institutions, corporate partners, government agencies, and service organizations and professionals focused on serving the special needs of those with physical and cognitive disabilities from across North Dakota and the United States have joined forces to make Annie's House a reality. These supporters include the Engelstad Family Foundation, North Dakota Tourism Department, Arthur Pearson Unitrust, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, City of Bottineau, Bottineau County, Lester Buildings and Landow-Levitin Architects of New York.

VOLUNTEERS

From Thursday – September 6 through Sunday – September 9, hundreds of volunteers from across the country will assist in the physical construction of the Annie's House facility at Bottineau Winter Park. Each year on the 9/11 anniversary, the New York Says Thank You Foundation sends large groups of New York City firefighters (many of them survivors of the World Trade Center attacks), along with 9/11 family members, ground zero construction workers, New York City schoolchildren and scores of other volunteers from NYC, to help with the NYSTY Foundations' annual project.

TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT

Contributions are welcome to assist in the construction of Annie's House as well as to help develop, manage, and sustain the adaptive ski and sports program well into the future. Donations to support the project are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law and can be sent to:

Bottineau Area Community Foundation
Attn: Annie's House
519 Main Street
Bottineau, ND 58318
EIN# 26-3121314

or

Bottineau Winter Park
P O Box 168
Bottineau, ND 58318

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR ANNIE'S HOUSE AT BOTTINEAU WINTER PARK**Thursday - May 17, 2012 - 11:00 AM – All Welcome**

Welcome – Wally Brandjord, President – Bottineau Winter Park

Presentation of Colors – Bottineau American Legion

National Anthem – Courtney Smith

Comments:

- Wally Brandjord, President – Bottineau Winter Park
- Jeff Parness, Founder – New York Says Thank You Foundation
- Diane Olson, Executive Director – Bottineau Area Community Foundation
- Mary Stammen, Director of Spec Ed – Griggs/Steele/Traill Spec Ed Unit
- Johnna Westby, Asst Professor – Dept of Spec Ed, Minot State University
- Dave Sprynczynatyk, Adjutant General – North Dakota National Guard
- Dean Ihla – North Dakota Tourism Division
- Jenette & Gary Nelson, Parents of Ann Nicole Nelson

Ceremonial Groundbreaking by above presenters

Musical Selection and release of 41 balloons in recognition of Ann Nicole Nelsons' 41st birthday

Closing remarks – Wally Brandjord, President – Bottineau Winter Park

Lunch, Birthday Cupcakes, music and entertainment to follow in the Bottineau Winter Park Chalet

For more information, visit www.skibwp.com or www.NewYorkSaysThankYou.org

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