

SPIRITED ATHLETES

SABAH

BOLD AT HEART

ISSUE: SPRING, 2020



SABAH'S CELEBRATION ON ICE

SUNDAY MARCH 8, 2020

All are courageous.

Yet some, like Jason, overcome more than disability to persevere past some of *life's most difficult and unthinkable challenges*. Witness the courage and determination of Jason, and all SABAH's athletes at the 2020 Celebration on Ice show.

IN THIS ISSUE

2020 Celebration on Ice

Jason's Long Road Back

2020 SABAH Rocks the Blue
and Gold Skate-A-Thon

2020 Summer Skate Schedule

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SHEILA O'BRIEN

One of the most extraordinary things about SABAH is that we are all so **different!** Each of our 833 athletes challenged by disability and nearly 500 dedicated volunteers brings something unique to SABAH's six adaptive recreational programs. While SABAH's determined athletes range in age from 5 to 65 years, they share a common goal to persevere past many obstacles to grow stronger and healthier.

During this year's Celebration on Ice, we are eager to showcase the achievements of our athletes with a collage of colors celebrating their many different abilities, backgrounds, and talents. The show's theme, "The Many Colors of SABAH," will be a dazzling tribute to their fortitude and resilience. It will also showcase Jason (see cover), as well as other athletes, who have overcome incomprehensible challenges to perform in the show. You'll be inspired by their resilience and awed by their determination. You won't want to miss it!

With gratitude,
Sheila O'Brien
Executive Director



How do I donate?

SABAH is grateful for your support! SABAH offers two School Day programs, serving children challenged by disability at no charge to the school or student. SABAH's adaptive recreational programs are provided with participation fees that fall far below the costs of programming so that all individuals with disabilities, regardless of economic capacity, can participate.

**Tax deductible
donations can be
made to SABAH at
www.sabahinc.org/donate**

2020 CELEBRATION ON ICE

celebrating the accomplishments of over 800 athletes challenged by disability



The 2020 Celebration on Ice theme will feature "The Many Colors of SABAH," commemorating the many different disabilities, diverse backgrounds, and unique talents of SABAH athletes.

Sunday, March 8, 2020

2:00 p.m.

KeyBank Center, Buffalo, New York

**Ticket purchases, flower purchases (for the day of the show),
and other important information is available
on our website at:**

 www.sabahinc.org/celebrationonice 

**Tickets will also be available at the KeyBank Center Box Office
through the day of the show.**

Jason's Long Road Back

A SABAH athlete for more than 15 years, Jason is a thoughtful young man who is always smiling, athletically gifted, and very charming. At 23 years old, Jason has a cognitive disability that would only be perceptible after a lengthy conversation. He's especially gentle with his fellow SABAH athletes, most particularly those who are not as physically gifted as he is. It's unfathomable that this kind soul would have to face a months long journey that would have him fighting for his life in the Intensive Care Unit at ECMC.



In May of 2019, Jason, who lives with his grandmother, responsibly parked his bicycle in his home before proceeding to the local convenience store. His bicycle had been stolen on previous occasions, so he was making sure it was safely put away before he went to the store. Something went terribly wrong on that spring night, but you have to wonder if Jason was more defenseless because he trusted nearly everyone. The details remain murky, but somehow Jason became the victim of a senseless shooting on Buffalo's East Side.

"When I heard the news about Jason, the first thought that crossed my mind was that he's so naïve and gentle," states SABAH's Executive Director Sheila O'Brien. "How could this have happened to him? One of the things I always struggle with is that many of our athletes, especially those like Jason, are excessively vulnerable because of their innocence. Knowing Jason, it would be out character for him to be suspicious or wary of anyone."

SENSELESS TRAGEDY REMARKABLE DETERMINATION

In spite of the initial news, there remained tremendous hope that the injuries caused by gunshot wounds would be minimal and that he would recover quickly. "When I walked into the Intensive Care Unit to visit Jason, I quickly knew that would not be the case," concluded Sheila O'Brien. "The look on everyone's face told me instantly that the situation was dire, if not bleak." After several months of visits with Jason and his grandmother in the ICU, Jason was finally awake, yet still on a ventilator. "I made a promise to him right there and then. Get better and you get to do a solo in the Ice Show." Jason's eyes grew big and a smile came across his face, even though he couldn't speak. "At that moment, I knew he was going to do it. I just didn't think it would be this year," states O'Brien.

...and the story of a promise kept.

SABAH's Celebration on Ice is spectacular for more reasons than anyone can count. Yet, here is one more reason to be there. **This year's show will also feature the story of a promise kept....**to Jason most of all. But we think the true beneficiaries of the promise will be for everyone who will witness Jason's fortitude and resilience, as well as that same spirit in more than 800 of his fellow SABAH athletes.



The Barbara Ann Willhoff

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Barbara Ann Willhoff Award is named after one of SABAH's most beloved volunteers. Barbara Ann brought endless joy, encouragement, and confidence to both SABAH athletes and volunteers alike. This award serves as a lasting legacy to Barbara Ann, as well as an inspiration to all of us to love and serve each other in the same way she loved us.



HARRISON STEINWALD AND SARAH O'BRIEN

Harrison Steinwald and Sarah O'Brien have been regular "on-ice" volunteers during the Wednesday evening program at Niagara University for over 4 years. The engaged couple also serves on SABAH's Junior Board of Directors, where they continue to chair the Kickstock Committee and serve as a remarkable fundraising force for the organization. Through their work on the Junior Board, the couple also serve as incredible ambassadors for SABAH by introducing the organization to a new group of advocates and supporters.



THE EMILY HERMANC

Spirit Award

The Emily Hermance Spirit Award is presented to the SABAH athlete who exhibits a spirit of enthusiasm and determination in spite of challenges. This special award honors one athlete who best exemplifies the courageous and optimistic spirit of the award's namesake, Emily Hermance.



JOE HANSEN

Joe Hansen continually beams as he skates on Saturday mornings at the Hamburg Town Rink. Joe began skating with SABAH in the School Day Adaptive Ice Skating program over 12 years ago. When he moved to a different class, his family decided to enroll Joe in the Hamburg Town Rink program to continue the progress he was making with his strength and mobility. As a non-weight bearing participant, Joe continues to make great progress because of his optimistic and joyful spirit.



THE GARY GEORGE, JR. Unsung Hero Award

Gary George Jr. was the epitome of quiet strength and compassion. His ability to be there for our SABAH athletes and do what was needed, while drawing no attention to himself, was what made Gary an unsung hero. Tragically, Gary passed away in April of 2006 at the age of 28. This award, named in his honor, is given to the SABAH volunteer who exhibits the same qualities that made Gary so special to all who knew him.



MIKE BROWN

In 2012, Mike and Lisa Brown experienced tremendous tragedy with the passing of their daughter, Jenna. Jenna was a SABAH athlete who loved her time on the ice every Saturday morning during the Hamburg Town Rink program. Putting aside their own personal grief, the Brown family honors Jenna through their volunteer service for SABAH athletes. While the entire family is involved, Mike, in particular, serves as a volunteer during two sessions at the Hamburg Town Rink and two more sessions on Sunday mornings at the Northtown Center at Amherst. His quiet strength and compassion honors Jenna, and serves as a fitting tribute to the award's namesake, Gary George, Jr.



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2020 Summer Skate Sessions

Get ready for the return of Summer Skate Sessions at Buffalo's Riverside Rink! Everyone must be registered so that we have your equipment at the rink!



**Tuesdays,
6:00 p.m. - 6:50 p.m.
Buffalo's Riverside Rink**



Dates:

July 7, 2020

July 14, 2020

July 21, 2020

July 28, 2020

August 4, 2020

August 11, 2020

**For more information or to register, go to
www.sabahinc.org/summerskates**

OUR MISSION

SABAH, a 501(c)(3) organization is dedicated to the mission of enriching the quality of life for individuals challenged by physical, cognitive, and/or emotional disability by providing education and therapeutic recreation, promoting fitness, and developing social and communication skills.

Thank you, Celebration on Ice Show Sponsors

SABAH is grateful for the support of our sponsors! Their support provides SABAH athletes with the opportunity to participate in one or more of SABAH's six adaptive recreational programs, as well as the exciting opportunity to showcase their skills in the 2020 Celebration on Ice.



PERSON
CENTERED
SERVICES



*Did
you know?*

SCHOOL DAY ADAPTIVE ICE SKATING PROGRAM

SABAH's School Day Adaptive Ice Skating program served 587 children challenged by disability from 37 schools this season. The School Day Adaptive Ice Skating program integrates movement with New York State Common Core Standards. This year's program, once again, is measured by a research evaluation and has posted gains across Physical, Social, Emotional, Control, and Academic Domains.



SABAH's website
lets you to purchase
various flower bouquets
Ice Show program patron ads
and Celebration on Ice show tickets
all in one very convenient place. Go to:
www.sabahinc.org/celebrationonice

SABAH Prepares for the 10th season of The Children's Guild Foundation's Summer Athletes Bold At Heart program with a \$40,000 Grant

SABAH is thrilled to announce that The Children's Guild Foundation has granted SABAH \$40,000 for the 10th season of The Children's Guild Foundation's Summer Athletes Bold At Heart program! This vital program, offered to children challenged by disability from May through June, integrates movement with New York State Common Core Standards and life skill development on the seasonal sport court surface of the Cazenovia Rink.

"SABAH is overjoyed with the results of The Children's Guild Foundation's Summer Athletes Bold At Heart program," states Executive Director Sheila O'Brien. "The program is measured by a research based evaluation which indicates that the program is highly successful in improving outcomes for children with special needs. Our partnership with The Children's Guild Foundation continues to improve the lives of more than 430 children challenged by disability each year."



THE
CHILDREN'S GUILD
FOUNDATION
Purpose and Passion for Children with Special Needs

Get Ready for the 2020 SABAH Rocks the Blue and Gold



Skate-A-Thon

Thursday, February 20, 2020

5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

KeyBank Center



On February 20, 2020, SABAH athletes and volunteers will have the opportunity to skate alongside their favorite Buffalo Sabres and Sabretooth! Support your favorite volunteer or SABAH athlete by making a pledge at www.sabahinc.org/skateathon

SABAH's Adaptive Ice Hockey Program Enjoys Visit From the Buffalo Sabres



It was a night to remember for SABAH's Adaptive Ice Hockey players! On January 7, 2020, Buffalo Sabres Zemgus Girgensons, Curtis Lazar, and Johan Larsson taught fundamental hockey skills to SABAH athletes. The experience of being coached by your heroes is one that over 30 SABAH athletes will savor for a very long time! These accomplished SABAH athletes learned many new skills and participated in a scrimmage during the exciting event!



SPIRITED ATHLETES

SABAH

BOLD AT HEART

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Save the Date

July 11, 2020



JOIN US FOR SABAH'S 5TH ANNUAL KICKSTOCK KICKBALL FESTIVAL!

See our website for more details: www.sabahinc.org/kickstock