

TEAM DECC 2011

Each week the DECC will feature a different DECC team member and participating nonprofit organization to highlight the wide variety of charities participating in your campaign. This Week's Featured Member and Charity:



Jennifer Lay (with her son Dakota)
Denver Public Library

United States Association of Blind Athletes

DECC # 3467
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719-630-0422
www.usaba.org

Jennifer's story

My youngest son, who is now almost 8 years old, was born with bilateral optic nerve hypoplasia and has been legally blind since birth. We have tried in the past to do sports but even with his limited vision it is too hard for him to follow all the quick movement of team sports. Through contacts at his school and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind we were able to connect with the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA).

The USABA coordinates Goalball Clinics for youth that are blind or visually impaired in the metro area. Being part of a team has been a great self esteem builder for Dakota and even his siblings have enjoyed playing the sport (with blinders on)! They even go out to local elementary schools to work with gym teachers. Dakota's whole school will get to experience goalball this coming year - how cool is that?

The mission of the **UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF BLIND ATHLETES** is to positively impact the lives of children, youth, adults, Veterans and Active Duty Service Members through sport, recreation and physical activity.

Making a difference in Colorado...

USABA's Mission Vision Program was designed to work America's Veterans and Active Duty Service Members who have lost their sight while serving in America's Armed Forces. Gilbert Magallanes was serving in the U.S. Army's Special Forces in Afghanistan when he was injured. Upon returning to the U.S., he not only battled depression, but his weight while learning to deal with his visual impairment.

Then he attended a Mission Vision program. He said, "Without Mission Vision and other programs for wounded soldiers, I wouldn't have gotten past my injury or depression as easily." Gilbert continued, "I'm no longer depressed, I stay off the couch. I used to weigh 287 pounds, and I've lost nearly 80 pounds. And I'm not going back. I'm not quitting. Playing sports and being active has saved my life." It is with the support of the City of Denver employees that allows USABA to impact the lives of people who are blind and visually impaired, and we thank you for that opportunity.



What your donation can do:

\$1 per pay period helps USABA send a child to an Abilities Day Sports Camp

\$5 per pay period helps USABA send a child to a week-long Sports Education Camp

\$10 per pay period helps USABA lower the Body Mass Index of a child or youth over a 12 month period

Thank you, Denver!

USABA provides numerous opportunities for people who are blind and visually impaired in Colorado. We hit the slopes in Breckenridge, we're on the gym floors in Ft. Collins, and we're running marathons in the streets of Denver. If you'd like to get involved in being a ski guide or a guide runner or would like more information on what we do across the state and the nation, please visit our website at www.usaba.org and access tons of information, our Facebook page, Twitter and YouTube channel.