



Supporting Spaulding Adaptive Sports Centers

We all know that exercise is good for us, but for those with a disability or recovering from an illness or injury, exercise can be truly life-changing. It can speed healing, improve physical and emotional health, and provide connection and community. That's why for more than 20 years, Spaulding Adaptive Sports Centers (SASC) has been dedicated to providing people of all abilities unparalleled opportunities to participate in a wide variety of athletic and recreational activities. With generous philanthropic support and committed leadership, SASC has grown into a vibrant 50-plus-sport, network-wide initiative with integrated research and educational components that make it a model for adaptive sports programming nationwide.

“We are transcending barriers by bringing able-bodied and disabled people together through a passion for sports and recreation.”

—Mary Patstone, Executive Director, Spaulding Adaptive Sports Centers

Programming

Centered around three primary geographic locations across Eastern Massachusetts, SASC offers year-round adaptive sports and fitness programs that enable participants to try something new or get back to the activities they loved prior to illness or injury. From air rifle to yoga (see full list below), these innovative programs are supervised by trained physical and recreational therapists along with industry professionals. Network-wide offerings include our extremely popular **Adaptive Ski Club**, which hosts trips across New England, and the **Bernard R. and Edna M. Sears Adaptive Hockey Program**, whose Shamrocks adult team became national champions in 2022.

Weingarten Adaptive Sports Program (Boston):

The Weingarten Program, based at Spaulding’s flagship hospital in Charlestown, introduces adaptive sports under therapist supervision during the inpatient stay, which can be critical for patients to see firsthand what’s still possible after a life-altering injury or illness. The program also has a significant waitlist for its many outpatient and community land- and water-based options.

McGraw Center for Adaptive Sports (Cape Cod):

Nestled in the scenic 1,900-acre Nickerson State Park on Cape Cod, the McGraw Center is the first-of-its-kind collaboration between SASC and the Universal Access Program of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to expand access to adaptive sports through a unique public-private partnership.

Spaulding Adaptive Sports North Shore (Salem):

Established in 2010, Spaulding’s flourishing adaptive sports program on the North Shore of Massachusetts represents a unique effort to provide adaptive sports to athletes and sports enthusiasts right in their own communities with the collaborative support of professional staff, volunteers, and students.

What are adaptive sports?

The term “adaptive sports” describes a sport or recreational activity that has either been adapted or created specifically for persons with a disability, including physical and cognitive. While emerging as early as the turn of the century, opportunities for adaptive sports expanded significantly in the post-World War II era when they began to be used in rehabilitation for Veterans. Today, with continual technological advances and expanding programs, the possibilities are virtually limitless for the range of available sports at all levels, from recreational to competitive.



50 adaptive programs offered

Sports/Recreation Programs (24)

- Air Rifle
- Archery
- Cycling
- Fishing
- Golf
- Hockey, Sled/Standing
- Inclusive Fitness (IFT)
- Kayaking
- Mountain Biking
- Outrigger Canoeing
- Pickleball
- Rock Wall Climbing
- Self Defense, Adaptive
- Skiing/Riding
- SPIN
- SPRINT
- Stand-Up Paddle (SUP)

- Swimming
- Tennis
- Therapeutic Drumming
- Therapeutic Riding
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Yard Games
- Yoga

Virtual Programs (17)

- 30-Minute Fitness
- Boxing, Adaptive
- Breath & Energy
- Cardio Conditioning
- Core & Stretch
- Dance with Parkinson’s
- Found Sound
- Green Growers Therapy
- Inclusive Fitness (IFT)
- Lower-Body Pump

- MENTOR
- Movement & Meditation
- Stand, Balance, Barre
- Total-Body Pump
- Upper-Body Pump
- Yoga, Adaptive
- Yoga, Chair

Veteran Programs (4)

- Fishing
- Skiing/Riding
- Sport & Spirit
- Wheelchair Basketball

Adventure Travel (5)

- Challenge Courses
- Horsemanship
- Mountain Biking
- Skiing/Riding
- Whitewater Rafting



“I love helping people with disabilities to understand what’s holding them back—and then witnessing the ways adaptive sports can propel them into a new life.”

—Dr. Cheri Blauwet, Director, Kelley Institute for Adaptive Sports Research; Attending Physician, Spaulding Rehabilitation; and Paralympian and Member, U.S. Olympic Committee



Research

As the Department of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Spaulding is a renowned leader in rehabilitation research. Capitalizing on this expertise, **The Kelley Institute for Adaptive Sports Research**, the scientific arm of SASC, conducts collaborative, participant-centered, and outcomes-based research designed to promote and expand inclusive opportunities for improving health and wellness among people of all abilities. Engaging athletes at every level, our research efforts advance novel technologies and innovative strategies to expand the field of adaptive sports as well as explore the impact of adaptive sports on key psychosocial measures, such as employment and community integration.

SASC during COVID

You might not think virtual programming and adaptive sports would be a natural fit but, with ingenuity and flexibility, SASC has built a novel model of service during the COVID pandemic that has allowed us to triple the number of participants accessing our innovative programs. Providing more than 7,500 sessions since 2020, **SASC+At Home** has provided virtual options that have removed barriers of access, mitigated isolation, and increased geographic reach. SASC is also a founding partner of **MENTOR** (Mindfulness, Exercise, and Nutrition To Optimize Resilience), an innovative, cross-institutional program funded by the CDC, where participants with mobility limitations work with a health coach virtually to self-manage their health.

As pandemic restrictions ease, we envision that our online offerings will continue to seamlessly merge with our in-person activities as they resume. Spaulding’s efforts in this area have been so successful that our experts published a landmark paper in *PM&R: The Journal of Injury, Function, and Rehabilitation* on the creation, outcomes, and benefits of a pioneering virtual adaptive sports program like ours.

Spaulding Adaptive Sports Medicine Clinic

The Spaulding Adaptive Sports Medicine Clinic brings together nationally recognized multidisciplinary expertise to evaluate and provide treatment recommendations for sports-related injuries in both recreational and elite athletes with disabilities. Led by Dr. Cheri Blauwet, Paralympic medalist and sports medicine specialist, this groundbreaking clinical program is one of only two in the country that employs the same innovative science and leading-edge technologies that able-bodied professional athletes use when training for competition. Following evaluation by a physician, each patient receives concurrent physical therapy and adaptive sports equipment evaluations to ensure a comprehensive and accurate assessment of their needs to get them back in the game.



Education & Advocacy

The more people recognize the value of adaptive sports, the greater impact they can have on people of all abilities. An integral part of SASC's mission is to provide education and training around adaptive sports to a broad range of constituencies, from clinicians, students, and volunteers to patients, public servants, and community leaders. Clinical programs like the adaptive sports elective at the MGH Institute for Health Professions, Spaulding Resident Days, and student internship programs at regional colleges offer unique opportunities for exposure to the field at all levels of training.

Sustaining SASC's Success: The Power of Philanthropy

Adaptive sports programs—even those as successful and clinically integrated as Spaulding's—are difficult to sustain because they are not reimbursed by insurance or traditionally supported by government grants. Spaulding must therefore rely almost exclusively on philanthropic funding—both current-use operating support and endowment—to ensure that every person in our growing community has access to the kind of premier sports and recreation programming we have to offer. Some places might call special programs like these extras; here at Spaulding, we call them essential. With your support, we can maintain and enrich specialty services like SASC that build on our extraordinary care to ensure optimal outcomes. Here's how you can help:

Programming: Heavily reliant on advanced technologies, customized equipment, and specially trained professionals, SASC's programs can incur significant costs. Your generous support helps us sustain the infrastructure of our programming across the Spaulding network, from adaptive equipment and training tools to the salaries and ongoing education of our expert personnel.

Research: A critical part of making SASC, and adaptive sports everywhere, self-sustaining is systematically and scientifically proving their value to increase awareness and change policy. Your generous support of The Kelley Institute for Adaptive Sports Research ensures that our adaptive sports professionals can conduct studies of the efficacy of our offerings to foster continuous improvement and broader implementation.

Education and Advocacy: The field of adaptive sports not only provides countless benefits to the health and well-being of its participants but can also be an agent of change around disability rights and inclusion, anti-discrimination laws, and health equity. Your generous support enables our adaptive sports team to improve awareness among clinicians, present at national conferences, expand online marketing, and more.



Sport for Community

SASC collaborates with Sport for Community, a professional development exchange that pairs emerging international leaders with American executives, advocates, and educators in the sports sector for a month-long mentorship that promotes inclusion for people with disabilities. Part of the U.S. Department of State's Global Sports Mentoring Program, this unique initiative focuses on transforming communities through increased access to and opportunities in sports, and equips both parties with a strong sense of community, webs of support, and tangible strategies to create lasting social change. To date, SASC has hosted delegates from Belarus, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea.

“Adaptive sports improve quality of life for those with disabilities, and I've supported the programs at Spaulding because they are leading the way for others to follow. They've created a model that doesn't exist anywhere else.”

—David McGraw, Philanthropist and Founder, McGraw Center for Adaptive Sports, with his wife, Melissa, and the Donald C. McGraw Foundation

Gifts both large and small are invaluable in our ability to keep SASC thriving. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

From more information on how you can support SASC and its critical impact, please contact John MacRae, Senior Director of Principal and Major Gifts, Spaulding Rehabilitation, at 617-306-2394 or jcmacrae@mgb.org.