

Health Home Herald



Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA)

By Kerri Hummel, DSHS Health Home QA Specialist & Megan Ahleman, NWABA Senior Program Manager of Sports Outreach

I had a tandem bike sitting in my garage for the past year and it needed a new home. While researching where I might be able to donate it to, I found Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA). I was able to connect with Megan Ahleman, Senior Program Manager of Sports Outreach and learn more about NWABA.

NWABA was a new program to me, and I did not realize they provided activities across Washington State that could benefit our clients such as snowshoeing at Snoqualmie, rock climbing in Tacoma, and soccer in Wenatchee. After speaking further, we knew immediately that

our programs needed to be shared with staff, care coordinators, and clients.

NWABA Mission: To provide life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

NWABA Approach: Our programs are designed to empower individuals with skills and tools to achieve a richer, fuller life including improved social relationships, a positive self-image, and the confidence to pursue success in all other areas of life.

Core Programs:

Sports Outreach: Building community, teaching skills and promoting independence through over 15 different sports such as hiking, tandem biking, snowshoeing, kayaking, paddleboarding, goalball and more. Providing

in-person programs to people of all ages in Vancouver area the first and third weekends of the month and in Seattle/Tacoma area the second and fourth weekends of the month.

Camp Spark: Providing opportunities through overnight, comprehensive sports camps for youth and young adults, ages 8 – 21. Camp sessions last between three and six days. Through summer and winter sessions, campers learn how to swim, snowshoe, develop friendships and gain the skills and resources to help them achieve success in all areas of life. We partner with the Washington Department of Services for the Blind, whose support helps make Camp Spark possible for youth across the state.

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Virtual Programs: NWABA offers a variety of 60-minute, live, audio-described and high-contrast virtual workouts Monday – Friday to keep people healthy and active at home. Our virtual programs are open to adults of all fitness levels, expanding throughout Washington and across the globe. View [our weekly schedule](#) for more information. We then post our [Live Workout Recordings](#) for people to access at a time that works best for them. We also have a robust, audio-described, [“How To” Video Library](#) for individuals who are new to working out and would like to learn exercises performed in our live workout programs.

Additional Services: NWABA also supports the community by increasing visibility and awareness throughout the region, as well as providing mini grants to individuals and teams who are blind and visually impaired.

How do I get involved?

Becoming an Athlete: At NWABA, we believe that any individual who is blind or visually impaired is an athlete and deserves the opportunity to participate in regular physical activity.

- Register for in-person weekend events as a [youth athlete](#) (ages 0 – 18)
- Register for in-person events as an [adult athlete](#) (ages 19 and up)
- Register for virtual events as a [virtual athlete](#) from anywhere in the state of Washington.
- Register for [Camp Spark](#)

Volunteer with NWABA: We rely on volunteers to support our mission, and we offer different types of volunteer opportunities to appeal to everyone wishing to support us. Share your passion for sports with athletes in your community!

Support NWABA: Whether it’s a one-time donation or a reoccurring donation, your gift will make an impact on the lives of children, youth and adults who are served by NWABA.

Contact NWABA at 360-448-7254, Programsteam@nwaba.org | www.nwaba.org | [LinkedIn](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Youtube](#)



Monthly Webinar Invitations

The Health Home Program offers learning topics for new Health Home Care Coordinators. For the current invitation, please visit <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/washington-health-home-program-%E2%80%93-training-invitations>

A reminder to register for the webinar under your own name and email address. Doing so will help implement accurate attendance reporting as well as ensuring that all attendees receive the follow up materials from each webinar session.





Care Coordinator Corner

Submitted By: United Healthcare via Optum-Health Care Solutions LLC

Care Coordinator: Melanie Nordstrom

On February 28, 2021, just after midnight, the phone at Luke's home rang. Luke's stepfather answered to find one of his coworkers notifying the family that Luke had been in a bad car accident. The family quickly rushed to the scene to find that Luke had already been taken to the local hospital in Forks. Luke was unconscious, and the decision was made for him to be airlifted to Harborview Hospital in Seattle.

Luke remained in a coma at Harborview, but only his mother and father were allowed to see him for five minutes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Luke's two sisters, younger brother, parents, and stepfather were devastated and scared. Despite only being able to see Luke on Zoom, his family decided to stay nearby the hospital in a hotel. They began and ended their days with prayer, waiting for calls from Harborview to learn about Luke's condition. Luke broke his right femur, which caused a stroke, shattered his left wrist requiring three surgeries, and suffered a traumatic brain injury. His heart stopped three times, and he was clinically dead each time, but Luke survived and was moved to a long-term care facility in Everett. The Everett Care Center was doing what was necessary to protect their residents from the pandem

ic, which meant the family was not allowed inside. They took turns staying in Everett, setting up a table and chairs outside his window, writing messages on a dry erase board. Even though Luke could open his eyes, he was still in a coma and has no memory of his family outside his window. They notified staff when Luke needed assistance, as he was unable to use the call light on his own. Due to COVID restrictions, they found a public restroom four blocks away. As a family, they grew stronger and closer, praying daily and strengthening their faith as Luke grew stronger.

While Luke was in the SNF, they began getting the house ready to bring him home. He needed a hospital-style room to accommodate a hospital bed, feeding tube tree, a cot for a caretaker, and a commode chair. Local charities and businesses donated and built a gravel driveway and a ramp to their home. Many friends helped, proving Forks to be a strong-knit community.

In August 2021, more than five and a half months after his accident, the house was finally ready for Luke's return home. Upon returning home, Luke's condition remained critical, requiring full-time care, and he was still in a coma.

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Submit your story, resource, or ideas to the Care Coordinator Corner via: anthony.foster@dshs.wa.gov

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He was fed through a feeding tube and was completely bedridden. Luke is 6'5" and weighed 375 pounds, not someone who is easy to move. Eventually, Luke could sit up in bed, then stand up, and then transfer from his bed to his wheelchair. He was nonverbal, required assistance for all activities, and continued to rely on a feeding tube. However, his family was determined to support his recovery. In November 2021, Luke enrolled in the Health Home program, and Care Coordinator Melanie began working with him and his family.

Melanie quickly began providing invaluable support, helping the family navigate local and state services, and connecting them with essential medical and therapeutic resources. Luke began attending occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy sessions, on top of seeing his physician and brain specialists. Due to injuries and his size the physical therapist got him a custom-made walker, wrist brace, and ankle brace. Despite the challenges, including a hand fracture on his unaffected side that made transfers difficult, Luke's determination and the unwavering support of his family and care coordinator led to significant improvements. Their dedication was evident as they learned to assist Luke with walking, articulation, and swallowing. Over time, Luke's sister was able to return to work, leaving his father as his primary caregiver.

Today, Luke's progress is remarkable. He is about 80% articulate, can express his needs, ambulate independently within his home, and participates in the Health Home meetings with Melanie. He can walk up to 400 feet outdoors using a walking stick with supervision, dress and toilet himself, eat solid foods, and drink thin liquids safely. Luke participates in supervised pool exercises and has significantly reduced his medication intake to just half a tablet a day.

Luke's positive attitude and belief in himself, combined with the support of his family and care coordinator, have been instrumental in his recovery. His family often expresses their gratitude, saying, "How do people do it without a care coordinator?" and "We would never have been able to help him without the help of Melanie and UnitedHealthcare."

Prior to the accident, Luke was class president at his high school, went to state as a wrestler, played football, and was on the track team. Luke's claim to fame in their town is his hugs; nobody gives hugs like Luke! Bears, famous for their hugs, take lessons from Luke. Mentally, before the accident, Luke suffered from depression and self-deprecating thinking. Even though he worked hard at various jobs, the depression robbed him of joy. After the accident, as time went on and he woke from the coma, the effects of the three times he flat lined at Harborview changed Luke completely. Luke and his family recognize that every day is a miracle.

Recently, Luke achieved a significant milestone by serving as a groomsman at a friend's wedding, needing only his walking staff for support throughout the day. Luke has reflected upon his accident and sees the love and support he has. He is aware that this was a drinking and driving accident that changed not only his life but many lives. His sister quit her teaching job to become one of the full-time caretakers he needed. His father Tracy comes up from Olympia every other weekend to visit. These visits have been monumental in helping Luke's recovery and giving his stepfather and mother some rest. Looking ahead, Luke aspires to become an alcohol and substance use counselor to help others on their journeys to recovery.

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Currently, Luke, Melanie, and his family are working with COPES Area Agency on Aging to have their bathroom remodeled with a walk-in shower. This will allow for increased safety in the home and will enhance Luke's dignity and independence.

Luke and his family's story is a testament to the power of resilience, family support, community support, and dedicated care coordination. His journey continues to inspire those around him, proving that with the right support, incredible progress is possible.

A message from Luke: He knows how difficult it was for his family and for himself during the last few years, but those struggles made his life beautiful, and they are all living their best lives now!

PRISM Access Reminder:

Please be sure to log into your SAW account every 30 days, enter the PRISM application, and click on at least one of your assigned clients so that you will continue to have uninterrupted PRISM

access.



Can you solve these healthy living Rebus puzzles?

<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> 
<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> 



Spotlight on Resources

Flight Club Foundation: “People Helping Parrots, Parrots Helping People”

By Kerri Hummel, HH QA Specialist with DSHS & Debbie Goodrich, Flight Club Foundation President and CEO

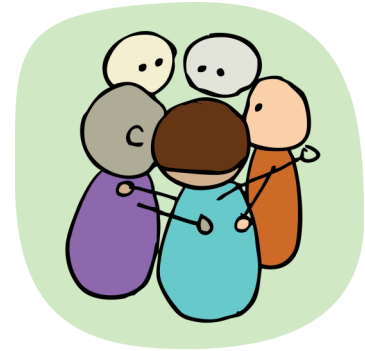
Pets are an important aspect of our lives, and they provide support to us as we support them. Did you know that birds are one of the most popular pets in the United States?

Parrots are an iconic species of animal that represents the health of the planet and the communities of people who affect them. Parrots can be owned as pets, yet are endangered, exotic species as

well. Flight Club was created to help the public, and the parrot community understand all aspects of how parrots impact people's lives.

Flight Club created the notion of the need for parrots to participate in PARROT PLAY-DATES. To not only learn to possibly fly but also to socialize both birds and people alike.

Flight Club Foundation hosts several community events throughout the year and look forward to meeting new, wonderful people, and introducing them to the world of parrots. You can learn more about this Flight Club Foundation or attend a community event, by visiting www.flightclubfoundation.org.



Health Home Relationships and Resources Huddle

Join us for the Health Home Relationships and Resources Huddle.

This virtual meeting occurs the first Monday of every month at 9 am. It provides a space where care coordinators and other Health Home staff can share resources and best practices as they navigate care coordination and service provision for their clientele.

To receive the link for attendance, please email :

ria.babcock@comphc.org or
Christina.Garcia3@molinahealthcare.com

A Special Presentation



Please go to [Washington Health Home Program - Quarterly Newsletters | DSHS](#) under

April 2025 | Cooking For You: Friendly Recipes