CHILDREN'S SNOWSPORTS
THE BEAR ESSENTIALS
Hello, fellow Central Division members

By Susan Boyle, President, PSIA-AASI Central Division

I hope you had as much fun on the snow this season as I did. I visited with members at Wilmot, Spirit Mountain, Detroit Mountain, Hyland Hills, Afton Alps, Buck Hill, Marquette, and the Spring Rally at Breckenridge which was our last event of the year. The Rally is a great event, and I encourage everyone to try it at least once. We skied unfamiliar terrain, and I learned a lot from clinic leader Paul Bowman, who is knowledgeable and a skilled teacher. He makes learning fun, and we should all remember to inject FUN into our lessons. Central Division is lucky to have such dedicated and talented education staff.

I heard from many of you throughout the course of winter. Thank you for your time, camaraderie, and your straightforward feedback, which has been delivered to governance and education leaders. I enjoyed skiing with you and hope to see some of you again next winter. Special thanks to the Nordic Ski clubs who invited me into their midst, to the Ski Patrollers who took time to talk about how we might work together, and to the snowboarders who let me hang out with them even though I was on skis.

My message is my firm belief: it doesn’t matter whether you ride one board or two, whether your boards are x-c skinny or powder fat, whether you ski with feet parallel or with one leg behind the other, we are all Central Division.

Celebrate Central!

We continue to build on last year’s work by exploring expanded uses for our new website. We’re also expanding the use of the online exam system, which recently received content from Central’s education staff. Individual membership has increased and we’ve added new Nordic and Adaptive member schools, as well as the newly developed Detroit Mountain in Minnesota. We welcome these schools, and are very excited to exchange ideas. We will surely benefit from our new Nordic schools because of their experience with youth X-C skiers and racers. Welcome to all of you!

The board of directors met the weekend of May 2nd and 3rd. At that time, governance issues were brought to our attention, including a need to update our bylaws and policies. Work on these issues will commence in June. If you have any ideas you would like to share, please let us know. We invite your input and your participation on our committees. If you have the time and inclination to serve, please let me know at susan.boyle@comcast.net so we can broaden our perspectives.

Spring delivers good weather and new life. My sincere hope is for the well-being of Central Division and all of its members. Enjoy your summer and we’ll see you in about six months or so.

Thank you for being a member of Central Division and for making winter fun.

“I don’t get it. What’s fun about that?”

By Ned Pinske, PSIA-AASI-C Children’s Education Staff

In the 1988 movie ‘Big,’ Tom Hanks plays Josh Baskin, a 14 year old who magically becomes a man. Man-child Josh lands the perfect job at a toy company. In one scene, Josh is sitting in on a new toy development presentation. The toy meets all the traditional requirements and accordingly should be a huge success. It is met with positive feedback and is well-received by all the adult executives. As the floor is opened for questions, Josh tentatively raises his hand and says, “I don’t get it. It’s a building that turns into a robot. What’s fun about that?”

This scene reminds me that each lesson I give needs to be FUN for my students to really “get it.” As you read the articles in this Special Children’s issue of The Central Line, you will see several examples of teachers making their lessons fun, through creativity and playfulness. I encourage each of you to ask yourself, “What’s fun about that?” as you plan your lessons for students of any age. And, if the fun factor is stumpng you — come out and play with the Central Division Children’s Education Staff next season!
By Chuck Roberts

Intermediate level skiers and snowboarders of the 7-11 age group, who are still developing their skills, often turn to the terrain park seeking even more fun. These youngsters typically try out the terrain park without taking any lessons or receiving any supervision, after watching how other kids use terrain features. Their results vary from elation after having successfully negotiated a feature (possibly by chance), to disappointment after they suffer numerous bumps and bruises. At such times, snowsports schools have an excellent opportunity to enhance a student’s fun in a first terrain park experience. The following presents a student’s beginning terrain park progression, and is directed toward children and young teens.

Feature Selection
Choosing the proper features for beginning terrain park skiers and snowboarders will determine the success of your lesson. The ingredients for a good beginning feature are typically: one of flat design, low height, ride on ramp and wide. Figures 1A-1D show typical feature choices that will help ensure the success of your class. Figures 1A and 1B show a typical “dance floor.” It is essentially a large reinforced board which is available in many terrain parks. The feature is approximately 4 feet wide and allows room for the skier or snowboarder to experience the sensation of traveling over a plastic surface without having a perfect line up. Figure 1C depicts a typical beginning straight box with a user-friendly ride-on ramp, and minimal height, found in many terrain parks. Figure 1D shows a portable terrain park feature that is placed on the snow during a class (Reference 1). A surface at low height is a good plan since it reduces the fear of falling off the feature, while allowing students to attain the skill of lining up and sliding. It is a good practice to check out the feature you plan to use in advance of your class to make sure it is positioned parallel to the fall line, level, and has a good ride-on ramp.

Beginning Terrain Park: Skiers
For the best results, your students should be intermediate to advanced skiers who are comfortable with maintaining a parallel position on skis. The straight fun box, or dance floor, would be the preferred feature to start the basics of terrain park moves. Introducing terrain park etiquette (Smart Style Program from NSAA) is recommended early on in the lesson and is typically displayed on an information sign (Figure 2) at the entrance to a terrain park. Encourage students to make a plan for using the park and then check out the features before using them. They should choose features that are consistent with their ability level and be respectful to other park users, when inspecting or utilizing the features. (Some Park rules include: Make a plan, look before you leap, easy style it, respect gets respect.) The Park and Pipe Instructors guide from PSIA-AASI covers the Smart Style Program in detail. (Reference 2)
The 50/50 (skiing straight over a box feature with skis parallel) is a good elementary move to start with and is the basis for many more advanced moves. The instructor should introduce the ATML (Approach, Take off, Maneuver, Landing) method that helps point out significant aspects of terrain park maneuvers. On a slight slope, students can practice a braking wedge which is used in the approach phase to adjust skier speed. Next, proceed from the braking wedge to a narrow flat ski parallel position (wedge change-up) which sets up the skier for the maneuver. A narrow parallel stance is necessary for boxes that may be only 12 inches wide. (A wide stance could result in the student straddling the feature.) When the students are comfortable with these maneuvers, the instructor may deploy the portable feature or select a suitable, uncrowded feature in the park in which to demonstrate the 50/50. Slowly stepping onto a box of low height from the side, and shuffling the skis, gives the class members a feeling of what to expect when sliding on plastic. Have the students try out a 50/50 maneuver on a beginner box (Figure 1C), emphasizing that they should line up by looking at the end of the feature. Figures 3A-3D are a sequence of photos showing a good 50/50 performed by a 10 year old skier.

In Figure 3A: at the approach, the student has adjusted his speed and is lined up with the feature with his feet together to accommodate the 1 foot wide feature. Figure 3B shows the student at the take-off, mounting the feature. Figure 3C shows the student performing the 50/50, sliding along the long axis of the feature with skis flat and parallel. At the landing (Figure 3D), the student skis away and is ready for the next “hit.” At this age level, lengthy explanations are not productive. Performing a good visual demonstration works well since most students in this age are primarily watcher-learners. A brief explanation on why this move works can be helpful. A basic tenant of this lesson is to take small steps toward the goal, while evaluating the skill development. Children at this age level tend to overestimate their skill level and may try to make significant leaps without taking the important smaller steps. Such actions can lead to disappointment.

Figure 4A-4D serve to aid in movement analysis toward correcting problems that are typically encountered in the beginning terrain park lesson. In Figure 4A, the skier has not properly lined up with the long axis of the feature which will result in the skier skiing off one side or the other of the feature before reaching the exit. Repetitive attempts at lining up properly, with some coaching from the instructor, usually eliminate this difficulty. Also, it helps to teach students to look at the end of the feature to aid in lining up. Figure 4B shows a student who suffered a loss of balance due to edging his skis while performing the maneuver. Since ski edges do not engage the plastic surface of a terrain park feature, they do not provide a means for correcting the position of the skis on a feature. The instructor can caution students to keep their skis flat, and if the skis are drifting off the feature, they should...
jump off and begin again. Emphasize that if a good line up with the feature is not achieved, the student should jump off rather than try to correct the trajectory over the feature.

**Figure 4C** shows a skier attempting to perform a wedge on a box. This can result in the skier straddling the box during the maneuver. (The risk of straddling the feature is also why the 50/50 is not performed on rails by skiers.) Attempting to make on-snow maneuvers on a terrain park feature is a common problem with beginning terrain park skiers requiring emphasis on keeping their skis flat and jumping off the feature, if the trajectory is not satisfactory. **Figures 4D** shows a student exiting a feature at mid-point after a bad line up. He merely steps off and tries again, demonstrating the value of features that are close to the ground.

**Beginning Terrain Park Park: Snowboarders**

The beginning terrain park lesson for snowboarders is similar to that for skiers. Your students should be intermediate to advanced level riders who are comfortable with linked toe and heel side turns with quick transitions. The straight fun box or dance floor, as shown in **Figures 1A & 1B**, would be the preferred feature to start the basics of terrain park moves. After reviewing terrain park etiquette (Smart Style) and ATML, select a feature and demonstrate the 50/50. Emphasize the classic A-frame stance with shoulders and hips parallel to the snowboard with the head facing in the direction of travel. Many youngsters at this age level have developed an upper body twist such that the upper torso is facing in the direction of travel.

If this is the case when performing the take-off, the board tends to realign with the shoulders, and the student may inadvertently performs a board slide, attesting to the need for proper alignment (an A-frame stance). It should be noted that performing the 50/50 can reveal basic deficiencies in your student’s riding behavior which when corrected, enhances the overall riding experience. The snowboard instructor should emphasize the value of lining up with the long axis of the feature, and looking at the end of the feature to assure a proper line up. Shuffling the board on the feature will develop a feel for riding on the plastic surface. It is important to explain to the class why the A-frame stance is necessary for this move, introduce exercises that reinforce the proper stance, and keep the group moving.

**Figure 5A-5D** show a reasonably good 50/50 performed by a 10 year old snowboarder. In **Figure 5A**, the student has
adjusted his speed by performing short pivots, or side slides, and is looking at the end of the feature. Figure 5B is the take-off with the board riding up the ramp, and well aligned with the feature. Figure 5C is the 50/50 hit where the student slides along the top surface of the feature with a relatively good A-frame stance. The student exits off the end of the feature, ready for the next hit (Figure 5D).

Figure 6A-6D depict some examples of snowboarders attempting a 50/50, which serves to illustrate movements that should be corrected. Figure 6A shows a student's typical difficulty in lining up with a feature. Some students turn reasonably well, but lining up with a feature presents a challenge. The instructor may need to continue to emphasize the A-frame stance and encourage repeated attempts at the feature. A typical problem with young riders is attempting to turn the board on the feature using the edges of the snowboard (Figure 6B). Emphasize a flat board on the feature with the knees positioned over the toes. In Figure 6C, the student has an upper body twist which will result in a board slide rather than a 50/50. Review of the A-frame stance would be appropriate, along with some all-mountain riding drills emphasizing a proper stance.

Conclusion

Beginning terrain park instruction can be fun for your students and help correct any riding deficiencies, thereby improving their all-mountain skiing or riding techniques. Choosing a feature, reviewing terrain park etiquette, demonstrating the 50/50, and utilizing movement analysis and correction are ingredients for a successful beginning terrain park lesson for youngsters. Further, skills developed in the beginning terrain park lesson will serve the students well when pursuing more advanced moves, and enhance their all-mountain skiing or riding.

References

1. 10 Years’ Experience with Portable Terrain Park Features, Central Line, 2015.

Chuck Roberts teaches at Wilmot Mountain, Wisconsin. He is a Level III ski instructor and a Level II snowboard instructor, teaching skiing since 1970 and snowboarding since 1987.
But she started acting agitated, flustered. She looked over to her father, turned back to me, and incredulously shrieked:

**But, we’re not done yet!**

She pointed up the hill at the chairlift, and shouted “I want to learn to do that today.”

She turned back to her father, stared fiercely at him, and told him (basically), “Make it happen.”

Just like Veruca Salt’s father, in the Willy Wonka movie, this browbeaten man didn’t hesitate one moment in obeying his little princess. He politely inquired whether I would resume the session. Then, he rushed off to the ski school desk to pay for another one-hour private lesson.

Needless to say, I didn’t hesitate one moment either. I continued the lesson.

Gary M. Evans holds a CS2 credential and a Children’s Trainer Divisional Award. Reference: Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.
More Than a Lesson,
It’s a Snowsports Adventure

By Brad Miller

Hickory Hills is a little ski area owned and operated by the City of Traverse City. Hickory is nestled in a wooded valley in the western ridges above the city proper. With five tow ropes, one illuminated cross country trail, and “Buck’s Lodge,” Hickory remains virtually the same as it was six decades ago. Two years ago, I was fortunate enough to have taught snowsports at Hickory. Every once in a while, folks from downstate would come for a visit and take a ski lesson. It was on such an occasion that I met six-year-old Colin for his first snowsports adventure.

I made the acquaintance of Colin and his family at the ticket desk where they were all greeted by my friend, Jeana. Jeana has the ticket office set up to be kid friendly. The warm greetings and fun wall decorations make kids and their respective parents feel right at home. Did I mention Jeana’s pets? Jeana has a fish tank located near her desk containing several goldfish, each with their own name. Like the majority of the kids that walk into the ticket office, Colin was immediately fixated on Jeana’s pets, and took time to peer at each and every fish. Our next stop was “Bucks Lodge,” a large adjoining room. Near the west wall sits a round fire pit always roaring with freshly split oak or ash wood, and always surrounded by kids. Although Hickory Hills is a warm blanket to kids and parents alike, it does have its drawbacks. Rope tows are a lot of work when compared to the Poma Lifts and Wonder Carpet lifts offered at many modern areas.

“Bunny,” Hickory’s beginner slope, can be a chaotic maze on the weekends, providing little room and many distractions for any lesson. In short, my work was cut out for me the next two hours. Colin and I started our trek to “Bunny,” getting used to Alpine ski boots along the way. Although walking in boots is second nature to ski instructors, it takes a huge physical output from six year olds, especially on their first ski adventure. By the time we got to “Bunny,” Colin was already tired, however, we still spent time walking around on first one and then two skis. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to see that boredom and distraction started to take over the lesson. Walking around in boots and skis were not enough of an adventure to help keep Colin’s attention. It was time to incorporate some other special things Hickory Hills has to offer as well as reflecting back to things that I loved to do in the Winter as a kid.

Beside Jeana’s office and Bucks Lodge, Hickory Hills has some almost magical forests within arm’s reach of every slope. Playing in the

continued on page 18
I have always believed that if we can get our students to feel what we’re talking about, they will be more likely to understand and really achieve the movements that we are trying to teach them. Over the past few years, I have found that this goal is much easier to accomplish if we can use some “Ground Control”, (a.k.a. Terrain Based Teaching/Learning).

Last winter, I implemented a new children’s program at Alpine Valley Ski Area in White Lake, Michigan which utilizes Terrain Based Teaching/Learning. The program is called Alpine Astro’s Kids Ski & Ride School. The lessons take place in Astro Land, a beginner’s hill which is fenced off and dedicated to this children’s program. You can probably tell by the name “Astros,” that our theme is Outer Space.

Parents sign up their child for the program at the Mission Control Desk. At the beginning of the lesson, we all meet on the Observation Deck where the kids are introduced to their instructors and the mission begins. The first mission is entitled “Ground Control”, and as you progress, you are moved to “Flight’s One, Two and Three. We teach “Rocket Ships” (Wedge), and “Rocket Boosters” (Parallel). We enjoy a Re-fueling break (Hot Cocoa) half-way through the mission at our Refueling Station.

Full-day students are treated to an Astro lunch in between missions.

We have found that by using Terrain Based lessons, the children learn how to ski and snowboard fairly quickly. Our Astro’s beginner hills contain great terrain features, including some really cool banks and rollers as well as an inclined area (return) at the bottom of the hill to help them stop. These features are very useful in helping us to teach students how to remain balanced over their feet. The first few times that the students ski or ride over the rollers, they quickly become aware that leaning back and putting weight on the back of their skis could result in a crash landing!

Unlike teaching kids on a flat surface, our terrain features “push back,” which gives the student much more sensory feedback-especially from the feet. Through the use of these terrain features, the students can feel what is actually going on in their feet, ankles, legs, hips and spine while they ski or ride up one side of a roller and down the next. Once they become aware of, and begin concentrating on these feelings, it is easier to explain to them the value of flexing at the ankles as they move upward onto the roller, and how extending their ankles as they ski or ride back down the roller (pressure control), will result in a better experience on the hill, while making each run more fun! While using the rollers they also learn that in order to remain in balance, they should keep their weight forward and remain centered with their hips positioned over their feet.

While skiing or riding on the banked turns, our students can feel the pressure increase on the outside ski, or on the toe or heel-side edge of their snowboard, towards the midpoint of their turns, while the pressure

“If you can feel it, you can fix it,” is one of my favorite quotes.

Ground Control to Major Anne!
The Rugrats Rip & Ride Program:
Teaching Our Littlest Guests

By Elaine Koyama

A few years ago, as a Level 1 snowboarder, I earned my Children’s Specialist credential at Buck Hill, in Burnsville, Minnesota. Veteran Education Staff Member Ned Pinske led the CS1 clinic. I was a bit nervous at the time, because I was the lone snowboarder among a handful of skiers. Prior to the clinic, our group had completed the Children’s Specialist 1 Workbook pre-clinic assignment. We had also studied the PSIA-AASI Children’s Instruction Manual, and the PSIA-AASI Central Division Children’s Educator reference materials.

Leader Ned was a wealth of information, drawing on his experience and involvement with a core group of educators who had been instrumental in putting the children’s program together. Ned encouraged an on-the-snow sharing of tips and tricks among all of the attendees. I learned many valuable teaching tips from the skiers, which translated well to snowboarding. This was one great clinic, where learning flowed from all directions. Also, Ned’s teenaged son was assigned to be my “student” for the final examination, so that I could enjoy a “real” snowboard teaching experience. We all had great fun, while I learned a tremendous amount about the VAK model, the CAP model, and age stages: puppies, monkeys, sheep and horses.

But the real learning moments came when I returned to my snowboard school, the following week, at the Hyland Snowsports Academy, in Bloomington, Minnesota. Hyland is metro-bound, boasts three chairlifts, and has 182 feet of vertical. Hyland also has one of the largest snowsports schools in the Midwest. The majority of our snowboard instructors range between the ages of 16-25, while most of our snowsports students at Hyland are younger than 15 years old. While on the Hyland Bunny Hill, I watched some frustrated young instructors trying to teach some 5-7 year old never-ever boarders how to stand up and perform a straight run. The group was attempting this task while dodging heavy traffic and trying to maintain safety and order. If they were lucky, and really good, after two or three lessons, the students were getting in a little J turning, side-slipping, or scary straight runs down Bunny. Variations in learning for each student were vast. Each instructor had 2-4 students to manage, which reminded me less of a “pile of puppies” and more like “herding cats.” Our classes run 1.5 hours per lesson, with one lesson per week over a period of three weeks. Many times, instructors and students were ending the lessons feeling both tired and frustrated.

Just two runs away, the skiers at Hyland had placed “walking carpets” (heavy indoor/outdoor carpets) on the ground in order to facilitate hiking up the hill. The ski instructors were working with their young students on a group learning progression. Knowing that imitation is often the best form of flattery, we copied the skier’s plan and added a boarder’s spin on it!
With the knowledge I had gained from the Children's Specialist clinic fresh in my mind, and taking into account what the skiers were already doing in a team format, I spoke with Glen Peterson, our area ski school director, about implementing a similar carpet use plan for snowboarders. As a result, Glen purchased “walking carpets,” brooms (to keep the carpets from snow build-up) and fencing. Glen also coordinated with the area maintenance crew in creating a RugRat teaching area which had special grooming and sloping features.

Changes in Attitude

The result from all of these changes was that instead of instructors working independently, with two or three never-evers, we now team-teach the first lesson. We cordon off a “special” area which is dedicated exclusively to the RugRats. Rugrats in group lessons range in age from 5-7. In the “Little Shredders” program (which includes a parental figure), we have 3 & 4 year old children. This ensures a safer environment, as they are separated from the other students and public boarders who share the Bunny hill. We still use the AASI progression, but we utilize some “little kid’s” words and phrases. When teaching basic snowboard lessons, we also recognized that the youngest students need to be reminded where their “heels” and “toes” are located—“left” and “right” are also defined. We don’t worry about “regular” or “goofy” terms. Everyone starts with the left foot in (forward).

Other Fun Stuff

We teach the kids how to utilize their bindings by describing the “alligator mouth and the licorice”—they “feed” the licorice to the alligator to tighten the bindings. The alligator “throws up” the licorice to take off the bindings. We also borrowed some phrases from the skiers in my accreditation clinic and now teach the kids to “climb the hill on their toes” (to reinforce use of the toes) and to “walk like zombies” down the hill on their heels. We teach the lateral skating movement through an exercise called “snow-slapping” where the students bring their boots together and try to make the snow “go-poof” when their boots smack together.

The “walking carpets” described above are laid out in a big upside-down U-shape to make climbing up the hill easier. Team teaching helps, as students need assistance in skating to-and up the carpet. One instructor is stationed at the top of the carpet to help the student get positioned. This instructor then sends them down the hill. A second instructor acts as the “catcher” at the bottom of the run.

Halfway through the lesson, the children get a break for playtime! Play can involve using their board as a sled and zipping down the RugRat area. Other playtime activities include swinging on our stationary chairlift chair, traveling down the slide, or just running around, playing tag, grey goose, or making snow angels.

The Second Half

In all of our lessons, our instructors focus on Safety, Fun and Learning. We teach even our youngest students how to carry their own boards and how to behave in a safe manner. The students are taught to place their boards bindings down so that the boards don’t slide away and hurt someone downhill. We teach the youngsters to sit/fall down as a method to stop. We believe that if the kids are having fun, they are probably learning. And, we also want our instructors to have fun during the lesson! Instructors who are having a good time convey their positive attitude to their students, and ultimately to the students’ parents. And that makes everyone happy!

We work on J turns using analogies like “turtle head out, turtle head in” or “Belly button out, belly button in.” Because we’ve worked with the students on using toes and heels, we talk about “smashing the spider” under their toes to turn toeside, or “don’t hurt the butterfly under their toes” for a heel-side turn. We have
also seen that a traditional edge turn is a fairly sophisticated maneuver, and have added static 90 degree hops and windshield wiper turns (“swooshies,”) to get the board to move from a straight run to a side slip. All-in-all, the RugRats program has been very successful at Hyland.

A goal in the second half of the first lesson is to get the RugRats safely to the bottom of the Bunny Hill to meet their parents—with a smile on their face! We don’t struggle with trying to teach sideslip traverse right away. Instead, with both feet strapped in, we show them how to do a Crab Walk or Dog Walk down the hill. These are tricks that another AASI Certified/Children’s Specialist instructor brought to us. A Crab Walk is a heel-side slip with both hands behind to control slip. The Dog Walk (or Bear Crawl) is the opposite—it’s the toe-side slip with the butt in the air, hands on the snow, and looking through the legs down the hill. We often use the green light/red light game/commands to control the group. This process is guaranteed to get a kid down Bunny (with both feet strapped in) by the first lesson.

**Rocker Baby & Boarder Bear**

During the RugRat teaching progression, we place a stuffed toy bear named Rocker Baby, and a large kid-sized Boarder Bear, nearby, to help the students have fun. These two stuffed bears wear snowboard boots and boards, and are used to demonstrate exercises, help teach,” and infuse excitement into each class. We use the stuffed bears as targets when we are skating (“skate around Rocker Baby and come back to me,” for example) and they are focal points where the children can congregate.

The friendly bears have added excitement and fun to our instructor training clinics—as they are quite skilled at performing falling leaves, and even sideslipping, with the help of an instructor.

**Conclusion**

Our Hyland Hills instructors have found that the initial lesson is generally the most difficult for both the student and the instructor. When given a solid foundation, however, the youngest students can “launch” from there. After the first RugRat lesson, the students are divided into similar ability levels. The same instructors that team taught the RugRat lesson then take a subset of students, based upon similar ability, for the remaining two lessons. As with any lesson, we often have to revert to previously covered exercises to refresh, relearn, and progress. As with any program, we are continuously looking at how we might improve the process. Constructive input is always welcomed. We are also currently refining an index card sized progression guide for our instructors, and we are considering extending the RugRat program beyond the first lesson.

The Little Shredders program for 3 & 4 year olds is supervised by Andrea Kurilla, AASI-C Level 1 certified. Photography by Gina Szafraniec, PSIA-C, Level 2 certified and Elaine Koyama.

For more information on the HSSA RugRat Rip and Ride program, or if you have tips and tricks for children, contact Elaine Koyama at ekathssa@gmail.com or Glen Peterson, Hyland SnowSports Director at gpeterson@threeriversparkdistrict.org. To see the program in action, call us to schedule or attend a lesson.

Elaine Koyama is a Level 1 AASI snowboard instructor with a CS1 accreditation. She teaches at the Hyland Snowsports Academy, in Bloomington, Minnesota.
Through the Eyes of a Child

By Paul Hage

The day I met Miss Mia was not unlike many at the ski lodge. Fun, Snowy and a little on the crazy (busy) side. After hearing my name being called, I make my way to our ski school desk and see an adult couple standing there. Hoping that this is my next class, I introduce myself and ask what it is they are looking to work on today. While I’m talking, I notice that there is a little girl hiding behind the woman, and she is peeking through her legs. The woman then explains that it’s not them but their daughter, Mia, with whom I’ll be working.

“Ahhh,” I say as I crouch down and say hello to Mia, who giggles and hides behind mom again. While talking with Mia’s parents and Mia, I learn that she is a 5 year old girl who has skied before and has her own ski equipment. I immediately start mentally creating my lesson plan in relation to Mia’s goals. After checking Mia’s ski equipment to ensure that everything fits right and is working properly, her parents and I agree on a post-lesson meeting time and place. Miss Mia, and I, then head off to begin our time together on the slopes.

As we begin working on a basic learning progression, I notice that Mia is constantly looking around at the other people on the hill. This is nothing new, I think, even though at times it’s somewhat of a challenge to reel her back into the drills on which we’re working. I quickly recognize that Mia knows her way through most of the flat-land warm-up games that we are playing, and that she has likely practiced some of them in earlier lessons.

Once we are “warmed up” and ready to make our “pizzas,” we start playing with how to make a “slice of pizza” shape with our hands, to show our feet what we want them to do. I explain how the pizza position helps us slow down and make turns. Mia struggles a little getting both feet to mimic her hands, as her left foot just doesn’t seem to want to obey her wishes.

Mia quickly gets upset. When I say that it is alright, we can just try again, she bursts into tears. I try comforting her by telling her “It’s okay,” and that we can try working on something else. I ask her if she’d like to try making some turns with me. She looks up at me tentatively, and her crying slows. She starts to smile and nods a little, so we make a run together.

While I’m skiing backwards and holding her skis in a wedge, I notice that she keeps looking behind her. I ask her to point her hands towards me and try to touch my nose. Mia turns backs toward me, leans forward a little, reaches for me, and then laughs as she tries to grab my nose. Once we make it back up the hill, I explain that we need to work on keeping our eyes looking where we’re going next time. I ask Ms. Mia if we can practice some more pizzas turns together so that she can go down the hill by herself next time. She looks scared, and says “No!”

Now, anyone who’s worked with kids knows they can be challenging at times and that some things are not easy to understand, nor are they always what they seem to be.

Mia nods when I ask her if she likes going down the hill. I tell her that in order to ski safely, we have to work on making our pizza turns. Instead of smiling, she begins to cry again. I ask her what’s wrong and she says “Stop laughing at me”. At this time, I’m very confused by her response, so I say, “I wasn’t laughing was I?” She shakes her head, no, and I ask “Then who was?” She responds by pointing toward some people on the side of the hill. I tell her that they aren’t laughing at her, they must be laughing at something they are doing over there. She shakes her head. “Not them, she says, Her!” As she points again to the side of the hill, she says “She’s making fun of me because I can’t do the pizza right!” Mia starts to cry once again. I turn and look at where she has just pointed, but there is no one there. I don’t see anyone there I tell her, but she points again and says...
“Sure, I love Tag!” I seem to be “IT” a lot, during this game, going to have a difficult time running anyone over, I say tag the next person. Since one of the three of us is probably you can expect kids to run into each other while trying to understand, although not one I normally get to play, since “IT .” Luckily, Mia picked a simple enough game for me to and turning to ski away from someone who happens to be These aspects includes: stopping, going faster or slower as aspects of skiing.

games we play in the snow, tag can help us with different can think about is how am I going to tag Leah? Like most answered “TAG!” loudly, and with lots of excitement, all I “What’s your favorite game to play at school?” When Mia to turn, it is time for us to log some miles. So, I ask Mia, “Do you think that Leah is making her pizza right?”

“Yes, but not with her hands!” Says Mia. “Ahhh,” I say, “So Leah has some things to work on too doesn’t she?” Mia nods. So I do the only thing I can to solve our problems-I turn to where Mia points and say “Leah, if you are going to play with us, and learn, you have to be nice, okay?” I look at Mia and whisper “Did she hear me? She nods and smiles a little. I say to Mia, “Do you want to show Leah where we hold our hands?” Her smile widens and she says “Like this!” Mia shows her friend, Leah, a correct hand position while skiing. I look at Mia and ask, “Now can we try making our pizza again?”

Mia tries to do it and looks up at me. I smile and ask “Is Leah doing it right, or do we need to show her again? “Show her again,” Mia says. So I get back into my pizza shape. Mia imitates me by performing a beautiful wedge while standing there. I look over to the side of the hill and say “Well, Leah, I hope you can make a pizza shape as good as Mia can, because hers is perfect!” Mia giggles and asks that we try sliding again now that she knows how to do her pizza. I smile and say “Yes, but we have to go slow, and if you pass me you have to stop.” I also tell Mia that Leah has to ski really slowly so she doesn’t run into Mia. We then continued skiing.

Once the three of us practice a little bit more, have a better grasp of how to stop, and are starting to understand how to turn, it is time for us to log some miles. So, I ask Mia, “What’s your favorite game to play at school?” When Mia answered “TAG!” loudly, and with lots of excitement, all I can think about is how am I going to tag Leah? Like most games we play in the snow, tag can help us with different aspects of skiing.

These aspects includes: stopping, going faster or slower and turning to ski away from someone who happens to be “IT.” Luckily, Mia picked a simple enough game for me to understand, although not one I normally get to play, since you can expect kids to run into each other while trying to tag the next person. Since one of the three of us is probably going to have a difficult time running anyone over, I say “Sure, I love Tag!” I seem to be “IT” a lot, during this game, and I must say it is far harder to ski away from someone when they are part of someone else’s imagination, but never-the-less, we have a blast.

By the end of our first hour, Mia is making wedge turns while stopping on her own, and enjoying every minute of it. Despite the fact that I consider myself to have an imagination, I have no idea of how Leah is progressing, though once Mia did stop to show Leah how to fix something Leah was apparently doing wrong. At that point, I knew the three of us were going to have fun during the rest of the lesson.

At the end of our time together, Mia and I met up with her parents and discuss how Mia has made “awesome breakthroughs” in her skiing ability today. I explained how Leah came along today and how we incorporated her into the lesson. We discussed how Leah helped us work on our skiing drills and played some fun games with us. I also hinted to Mia’s parents that since she is now making pizza (wedge) shaped turns and can stop on command, maybe next time we can work on Mia leaving her imaginary friend at home.

In conclusion, this lesson was quite different from any which I had previously taught. I was confronted with a major challenge, in deciding how to help a very young child learn how to ski, in a situation where she had brought along an imaginary friend who was also, apparently, an active participant in our lesson. Leah obviously gave Mia mental comfort and made her feel safe on the ski hill. Leah initially was distracting to Mia and prevented her from achieving her goals. Leah’s “presence,” however, turned out to be a very helpful and reassuring factor for Mia. After I made an adjustment in my teaching plan by including Leah as an active participant of our lesson, Mia’s positive reaction was immediate as she gained a new sense of control and comfort from knowing she had a supportive friend nearby. During that day on the snow, Miss Mia and I both found that we could learn some new things, while we found adventure and had great fun. I just had to take the time to look at things through the eyes of a child.

Paul Hage is an AASI Level 2 Snowboard Instructor, a PSIA Level 1 Alpine Ski Instructor and also holds a CS2 credential. He teaches at Swiss Valley Ski Area, in Jones, Michigan.

Photograph: Paul and student (the student’s scarf was safely tucked inside her zipped-up jacket at the time of the lesson).

“A penny saved is a penny earned.” - Benjamin Franklin

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PSIA-AASI CENTRAL DIVISION 2014-2015

Certified Instructors

The following members successfully achieved certification this past season. We congratulate them on this accomplishment and appreciate their commitment to advancing their education and expertise.

Alpine Level 1

Aitken, Ann
Anderson, Bruce
Armbuster, Rick
Arwin, Leslie
Austin, Jane
Balch, Anna
Barberena, Javier
Barefoot, Michelle
Barrett, Patrick
Bates, Austen
Beaulieu, Kimberly
Beier, Katherine
Bendtson, Eileen
Bendtson, Michael
Benko, Jaro
Berg, Erik
Betten, Emily
Blackburn, Ryan
Blauvelt, Luke
Boboltz, Dave
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Bolduc, Baron
Braak, Derek
Brabec, Denise
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Braley, Gabrielle
Brambilla, Vincenzo
Bramel, David
Brooks, Jack
Brown, Andrew
Bueter, Morgan
Castro, Alan
Clarkson, Lauren
Colby, John
Connor, Brett Allen
D'Agostino, Matthew
Decaire, Jeff
Denney, Joel Robert
Dressen, Austin
Earhart, Clayton
Earhart, Robert
Efland, Alissa
Eliasen, Owen
Eliasen, Steve
Esser, John
Evans, Robert
Everts, Joshua A.
Farwell, Carla
Fee, Edward
Fehrenbach, Jenny
Feidt, Daniel
Fenichak, Thomas
Fischer, Courtney
Fitzgerald, John P.
Fosler, Zachary
France, Lenore
Frank, Amos
Fugere, Paul
Gaertner, Karin
Gallagher, Jill
Glass, Russell
Guill, Hana
Guthrie, Patricia
Haase, Douglas
Hammes, Mark
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Hartley, Scott
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Heichelbech, Bruce
Held, Markus
Helgaas, Tait A.
Herrmann, Del
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Hoggard, Ben
Huenecke, Joshua
Hustad, Todd
Jahner, Jocelyn
Johnson III, Joseph
Johnson, Dennis
Joseph, Bill
Kholi, Ryan
Kief, Beth
Kief, Brian
Kim, Seok Joo
King, Courtneyn
Kjelshus, Joe
Klaetsch, Jerry
Knapp, Sarah
Knutsen, Michael O.
Kolberg, Taylor
Krochmal, Michael
Lamont, Jonas
LaVene Jr., Leon
Leffler, Emily
Legris, Nancy E.
Lemir, Agustin
Lin, Harrison
Lukes, Daren
Mackey, Patrick
Madsen, Tim
Maher, Owen
Malinowski, James
Martin, Margery H.
Massie, Marc
Mathers, Alan
Mathers, Robert
May, Tim
Mazza, Martin
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McKeough, Marina
Meschke, Paul F.
Meyer, Gwen
Millang, Alyssa
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Miller, Stephen
Millholland, Raymond
Miner, Alan
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Mosier, Colin
Mourn, Brody
Nakata, Matthew
Nattrass, Keith
Nowak, Michael
Nugent, Dale
O’Dell, Jon
Padden, Sara
Page, Jeff
Pederson, Brian
Pfifer, Frank
Pope, Ian
Pope, Sarah
Prigge, Jill
Radionoff, Steve
Ramsey, Victor
Reber, Kristen
Roberts, Mackenzie
Robinson, Leslie C.
Roche, Bill
Rocheford, Sean
Ronkainen, Timothy
Roos, Olivia
Rosenberg, Evan
Sano, Dennis
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Sivertson, Boyd
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Store, Rylie
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Taylor, Riley
Tenpas, Susan
Tenpas, Tim
Terry, Victoria
Thomas, Shane
Thompson, Craig
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Tuinier, James
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Valencia, Javier I.
Valenty, Peter D.
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VanDixhorn, Tim
Vaught, Linda
Virag, Tiffany
Vorenkamp, Dale
Walberer, Daniel
Waltz, Alex
Warner, Derek
Watkins, Halley
Watson, Jackie
Weida, Daniel
Weissmueller, Daniel
Welsh, Stephen P.
White, Matthew
Wilson, Loren
Wondrasek-Lane, Gale
Zak, Jennifer

Alpine Level 2

Anderson, David
Ball, Patrick
Ballou, David
Bramson, Jeffrey
Brown, Jackson
Cole, Benjamin
Donelan, Michael
Fisher, Colleen
Gibson, Douglas
Golden, Beth
Grantham, Peter
Gutik, Andrej
Harrison, Brian
Hersay, Galen
Katlehn, Dan
Kunkel, Larry
Linn, Alex
Markier, Matthew
Nawrocki, Mark
Olrogge, Kevin
Parkins, Carl
Petrich, Bill
Rechten, Jeff
Schang, Craig

Snowboard Level 1

Albertson, Trent
Allen, Ann
Angert, Jonathan
Baker, Tyler
Balliet, JonPaul
Blakley, Cole
Bogue, Curtis
Bowles, Sarah
Bradbury, Robert S.
Bramble, Jordan
Brennan, Katherine
Brink, Cody
Brundy, Rick B.
Carlson, Ariel
Carney, Angela
Chayet, Christopher
Cleary, Kalysta
Clemons, Joshua
Converse, Mei-Lien R.
Cook, Andrew
Cornish, David
Coyne, Brad
Cutter, Leeds
Dault, Christian

Alpine Level 3

Brandt, Nicole
Dunsworth, Mark
Frederick, Joseph
Gibson, Forrest
Griffin, Kyle
Kagan, Joseph
Nitzsche, Julie
Quinn, Kristen
Reichert, Jamie L.

Alpine Level 3

Brandt, Nicole
Dunsworth, Mark
Frederick, Joseph
Gibson, Forrest
Griffin, Kyle
Kagan, Joseph
Nitzsche, Julie
Quinn, Kristen
Reichert, Jamie L.
DeCoste, Foley J.
Densmore Jr., Jeffrey
Efimenko, Azariah
Flor, John
Foster, Adam
Frederick, Sarah
Harberts, Isaac
Hawkins, Spencer
Helwig, Kyle S.
Holzgrove, Andrew
Jenkins, Alyssa
Johnson, Brandon
Johnson, Emily
Kagan, Thomas
Keats, Andrew J.
Kleinsteuber, Cody
Kuehl, Devin
Kurzhals, Devin
Lindahl, Ian
Loiacono, Daniel
Marks, Kyra
Marr, Logan
Mathes, Krista
Matuszak, Brittany
McAslin, Joseph
McLeod, John
Melhus, Troy
Meyer, Chad
Mortenson, Suzanne
Myli, Phillip
Nitardy, Michelle
Novak, Ryan
Ontko, David
Osborn, Eric
Penland, Adam
Perkofske, Riley
Petersen, Timothy J.
Phillips, Eric
Pomerich, Ashlyne
Pratt, Hunter
Reed, Robert
Regenold, Logan
Reyes, Andrew
Ries, Doug

Rinkus, Eric
Riolo, Angelo
Shearer, William
Shinn, Christopher
Smith, Derek
Smith, James
Spierer, Eric
Stewart, Adam M.
Stielstra, Damon
Tanda, Katsuhiro
Todd, Nathaniel
Torp, Angela
Troszak, Tori
Troxel, Tim
Tynik, Dan
Ulseth, Lee
Vander Zwagg, Justin
Vinson, Jon-Michael
Wipperfurth, Tyler

Children’s Level 1
Anderson, David K.
Antczak, Paul
Ball, Patrick
Barefoot, Michelle
Bartz, Tom
Carrera, Sam
DeMarco, Bridget
Driscoll, Sarah
Eakin, John
Eney, Mark
Eney, Patricia R.
Ferrell, Julie
Fiisher, Jayme
Gannon, Kristen
Gerdes, Katherine
Griffin, Larry
Guest, Colleen
Guest, Howard
Haas, Edward
Hartsook, Samuel
Hofstetter, Joe
Hool, Michael
Johnson, Craig M.
Johnson, Joseph
Karnes, Jenny
Kendall, Tom
Kohlhorst, Troy
Laurich, Matthew
Levenberg, Margy
Levenberg, Milton
Lillehei, Brooks
Mallach, Lynn
McClintock, Mark
McDonnell, Mary Linda
McHugh, Dan
McKeown, Jae
Mitschrich, Megan
Moledor, David
Morris, Merry
Nagel, David C.
Nickell, Susan
Nitzsche, Julia
Parsons, Priscilla
Peterson, Alisa Jo
Polaski, James
Rapp, Jason
Roell-Carlson, Suzanne
Ryan, Shawn
Schneider, Steven
Schwartz, Andrew H.
Seely, Steven
Shinn, Alexander
Skerencak, Mark
Slavic, Lisa
Smith, Philip
Thompson, Scott
Tuttle, Herb
Vece, Grit
Wersinger, Toemas
Wittman, Jonathan
Young, Darryl
Yunker, Remy

Freestyle Level 2
Garbe, Jon

Freestyle Level 3
Thompson, Kyle

Telemark Level 1
Bolduc, Baron
Causley, Susan
Hammes, Mark
Hemminger, Alan
Jacob, Hugh
Johnson, James
Mundy, Steve
Olsen, Samantha
Osborn, Ryan
Shaw, Madison
Smith, Randy
Werts, Timothy
White, Douglas

Cross Country Level 2
Miller, Bradford
Noren, Brad
Okerstrom, Eric
Peterson, Curt

Cross Country Level 3
Fashingbauer, Zeke
LaBlanc, Dan
Mueller-Brumbaugh, Carole
Smith, Randy

Adaptive Level 1
Fett, Daniel
Leugers, Nora
Lorenzi, David
Moum, Anne
Rakowski, Matthew
Schoenborn, Kim
Ternes, Marilyn

Adaptive Level 2
Mitchell, Alex
Tomsevics, Linda

Snowboard Level 2
Anderson, Connor
Andrews, Kevin
Cook, Spencer
Ethen, Patrick
Evans, David
Hill, Judd
Jarboe, Stephen
Melnus, Troy
Norton, Travis
O’Leary, Brady
Rovito, Mitchell F.
Rush, Joseph
Shinn, Alexander
Williams, Kevin
Willmann, Eric
Zinsner, Anthony

Snowboard Level 3
Decker, Zane
Withrow, Max

Children’s Level 2
Dunning, David
Freeman, Paul
Freuck, James
Gal, Engelbert
Hage, Paul
Kagan, Joseph
Morris, Merry
O’Meara, Thomas
Polaski, Kathleen
Rogers, Bill
Rosenbrook, Dave
Shinn, Petra
Van Fleet, John

Freestyle Level 1
Kleinsteuber, Charles
Kohlhorst, Troy
Krpmotich, Ava
Thell, David
Wittman, Jonathan

Telemark Level 2
Downey, Bill
Luebke, David
Mallett, John
Rivera, Robert W.
Werner, Derek

Cross Country Level 1
Everts, Michael
Hanne, Kaitlyn
Kirt, Karen
Klave, Gregory
Lysne, Edric
Magill, Andrew
Miller, Bradford

Okerstrom, Eric
Peterson, Curt
Scheiern, Evan
Seaman, Michael
Ward, Lorrie
Wurzer, Susan
lightens toward the end of the turn as the banked turn flattens out. These sensations aid the students in understanding the need to release their edges at the end of their turn to allow their skis or snowboard to flatten and to then begin to tip the skis or snowboards in the direction of the new turn. An added bonus to using the banked turns is that the students can play with creating different edge angles. Most of the kids in the program learn quickly, and aren’t afraid to let their skis or boards skid sideways a little bit which helps to teach them skidding. The banked turns also give them some additional security by preventing them from rocketing straight down the hill, should they fail to engage their edges! By learning to use different edge angles, the kids learn to make both carved and skidded turns.

We found that another benefit to using terrain based features with young students is that we get to teach them by using some “guided discovery.” We can just let the kids explore the terrain, and without a lot of prompting, the children will follow the instructor through the banked turns resulting in spontaneous turns. By using these fun terrain features on a very gentle hill, with a natural run-out, our students experience very little anxiety because their speed is minimized. One of my favorite features on our Astros area is the final banked turn at the bottom of the hill that moves our students gently toward the tow rope so they don’t have to skate or climb to get there.

I’ve heard both the terms Terrain Based Learning, and Terrain Based Teaching, used over the past few years. I think that we should consider using the term “Terrain Based Lessons” instead, because it combines the typical teaching of the skills along with some Guided Discovery! We can provide instructions on how to perform various tasks to our skiers and riders, but if we let them feel what we’re trying to teach them, by experiencing these edging, rotary and pressure control sensations through terrain based lessons, learning becomes a fun and much easier process!

To teach children through these methods makes for lessons that are truly Out Of This World!

Anne Mattack is a P.S.I.A. Level 3 Alpine ski instructor, Children’s Specialist 2 and Trainer Accredited. She is a member of the Central Division Education Staff. Anne developed and was the director of the Alpine Astro’s Kids Ski & Ride School last season. This season, Anne is the Director of the Alpine Valley Instruction Center and the Alpine Astros Ski & Ride School at Alpine Valley Ski Area in White Lake, Michigan.

snow-covered woods was one of my favorite things to do when I was a child. Would it work, I asked myself, with Colin? We popped off our skis and started yet another trek, this one to the woods just to the north of “Bunny.” On our way, we talked about the skiers we saw go by and also about the woods. I told Colin that the woods were full of woodland creatures, some awake, and some sleeping for the Winter. Colin said that it might be a good idea to be really quiet so that they wouldn’t wake up. I agreed, and suggested we find a place in the woods to set up camp. We found a perfect spot at the base of an ancient Beech tree. We placed our skis on the ground and settled in. We whispered our thoughts about a lot of things: What type of creatures likely roamed Hickory Hills? How come the Beech trees held their leaves until Spring while the branches of all the other trees were bare? How were the other kids able to go up the tow rope and down the hill? After a short while, we put on our skis and made our first trip down Bunny’s pitch. The next hour had its highs and lows but Colin’s attention was always at a high level.

When the lesson was over, we went back to Buck’s lodge to meet with Colin’s parents and re-capped our lesson. Before Colin and his parents departed, they stopped by Jeana’s office to check on her pets.

Not everyone is blessed with an area like Hickory Hills—with its welcoming folks, nostalgic facilities and a magical forest, it is truly a special place. If you look around your own areas you may also find those special things that can make a six-year-olds experience more than just a ski lesson. It can become a Winter Adventure! Ciao!

Brad Miller, Level 3 Alpine (Alpine Education Staff), Level 3 Telly (Nordic Education Staff), Cross-Country Level 2, CS2. Instructor and Coach since 1979. Always an Adventurer.
EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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PUBLICATION CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>ARTICLE &amp; AD SUBMISSION DEADLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 Issue 3</td>
<td>July 2, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Issue 4</td>
<td>October 5, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Issue 1</td>
<td>January 5, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Issue 2</td>
<td>May 5, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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To ensure the most effective representation, PSIA-AASI Central Division members should contact their Section Representative to share concerns or opinions on the policies, procedures or content of The Central Line. Materials that have been provided by persons not writing as PSIA-AASI Central officials are the responsibility of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by PSIA-AASI Central Division.

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All articles and photographs intended for publication in The Central Line should be submitted to the Editor.

COVER PHOTO / BACK COVER ILLUSTRATION

Cover photo depicts five snowboard students who are members of the Rug Rats program. Photo courtesy of Gina Szafraniec. Cartoon illustration on back cover courtesy of Education Staff Member Brad Miller.
Be like Brad! Share your off-hill skills with the Central Division

The Central Division needs your help! We all have great ideas on how to create awesome member experiences, but we need your knowledge, expertise and passion to make it happen. If you have experience working with non-profits (501(c)(6) membership organizations or 501(c)(3) education or charitable organizations); HR expertise; marketing experience; graphic design; printing; writing; editing; proofreading; website user experience design; Wordpress website updates; video production; budgeting; meeting planning; education programming; IT; strategic planning; group facilitation; mediation; or if you have a desire to serve in any other capacity, please contact the Central Division office at 855-474-7669 or info@psia-c.org. You ARE the PSIA-AASI Central Division. Make it yours through the power of volunteerism.