

04 December 2009

Feeling B.O.L.D.

You can warm your heart this ski season by lending your skiing skills—and most importantly your sight—to those who wish to experience the slopes but who are visually impaired and require a guide.

Western Pennsylvania B.O.L.D. organizes outdoor and other leisure activities for its blind and visually impaired members, and is always interested in recruiting volunteer guides for its ski outings. It's a terrific organization, and as you might imagine, the participants are there to have fun!

Some visually impaired members have been skiing for years, and some are new to the sport. Some confidently venture onto black diamond slopes, and some are thrilled to simply slide around in the learning area—feeling the cold breeze and the forces of gravity at work. Guiding generally involves skiing several feet behind the skier, and calling out instructions for when to turn. It's a very outgoing group, the participants have a lot of fun, and they are always most appreciative.

B.O.L.D., which stands for Blind Outdoor Leisure Development, sponsors events on five Sundays each winter at 7 Springs. Lift tickets for skiers and guides are generously provided by the resort. A mandatory training clinic for guides is scheduled for December 20, focusing on safety, guiding techniques, and special challenges faced by visually impaired athletes. All events begin at 9 am.

It would be wonderful if some club members could volunteer to participate. Maggi Ostrowski coordinates the events. Contact her at 412-766-0312, or email her at mio528@comcast.net. The organization's website is www.wpabold.org.