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# SUCCESS STORY

## Skiing with Grace at Summit West

On any given Saturday during the Outdoors for All winter ski program you can ask Grace which runs she has skied down and her answer will likely be, "all of them!"

Watching the smile on Grace's face as she independently skis down the mountain makes it easy to forget she has Down syndrome. During her first year in the program, at the age of 6, Grace found skiing to be difficult and frustrating. She initially needed direct hands-on assistance from her instructor, but over time, eventually worked her way up to only needing tethers. With every passing winter, she continued to come back and show improvement. Now, at the age of 12, Grace's persistence has paid off and she has gained the skills necessary to ski without direct assistance from her instructor. Her confidence and athleticism have grown greatly since the first year of the program, and Grace's mental focus on safely and efficiently skiing down the mountain is evidenced by the look of pure concentration and determination on her face during each and every run. In addition, the bonds formed with her Outdoors for All instructors create a platform for social interaction she wouldn't otherwise have.

In addition to Grace's perseverance and determination, a large part of her success can also be attributed to the bonds she has formed with her instructors and the other participants during the six years she has been in the ski program. Grace's parents recognized those connections and noted that Grace was much more motivated to learn to ski when she was being taught by Outdoors for All instructors than if they tried teaching her themselves. They can see how much fun Grace has when she is skiing and they are happy knowing she has found something at which she can be successful and independent.

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