“Happiness depends on leisure.” - Aristotle

Returning home from the hospital with a physical disability can be an anxiety-provoking time. Some of your immediate thoughts may include: How am I going to get around my home? How will I handle getting dressed and ready for each day? What will I do for transportation? These are big questions, but what about your leisure time? How you spend your time can have a big effect on your outlook and mental health. Recreation includes a wide range of activities, ranging from socializing with others, to volunteering or being involved in competitive sports. It all depends on your interests and talents. You have a lot to contribute, so do not neglect yourself. This guide offers real life stories and information on a variety of activities, along with contact information to help get you started!
Charlie Martin had everything he had ever dreamed of, everything he had worked for, and was doing what he loved. He was the drummer and primary back-up vocalist for Bob Seger. Life was good.

On February 22, 1977, at the age of 24, everything changed for Charlie. He was coming home from a rehearsal with the band when he ran out of gas. Leaving his car on the side of the expressway, he walked to the nearest gas station. On his way back to his car, a young girl, speeding without her lights on, changed his life. He woke five weeks later, only to find out what had occurred. He had become a T12 paraplegic who would need to use a wheelchair full time.

For the next five years or so, music and performing were put on the “back-burner.” Martin reflects, “There is an image of yourself that you have to visualize, the image you want others to have also... you cannot walk out onto a stage unless you know who you are and have an image of yourself... I hadn’t reached a point where I could rebuild that vision, I could not imagine myself as a performer—a musician in a wheelchair.” So, he used his creative talents to develop a t-shirt business, a radio talk show about the music industry, and created and published a magazine, The Detroit Music Times.

Charlie was driven and stubborn. He was determined to prove to himself and others that he could do everything on his own, without any assistance. Over time he realized that “people are not islands, they are very interdependent—whether you have a disability or not, you need other people.” He had been in denial of the impact his physical loss was having on him psychologically. He had erected a shield, which separated him from his own emotions. Finally, after almost 10 years, he began to admit that his life had permanently and dramatically changed. With this awareness he finally allowed himself to shed actual tears and to emerge from the depression, which had become a barrier to his rebirth as a musician and performer.

He started to rebuild an image of himself in his mind. He went to “jam sessions” to see how he would feel on stage, how the audience and his fellow musicians would accept him as a performer who used a wheelchair. It took him a long time to start singing and playing music again with the same confidence and enthusiasm he had before his injury. By 1985, though, he gained enough acceptance from the music community to participate as a vocalist in two benefit concerts raising funds and awareness for Vietnam veterans. The
phenomenal response he drew from the crowd told him he could once again be a performer, which soon gave him the confidence to pursue his renewed dream of music-making. From that time on, he has continued to perform as a vocalist, percussionist, and keyboard player. In 1987 he organized a benefit concert for the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (AACIL) and even studied recording engineering and sound reinforcement. In 1989 he joined a band called the “Late Show” as the lead vocalist and keyboardist.

Over the last 15 years, Charlie has also volunteered in the community. In the early 80s he was a peer counselor for the AACIL, helping newly injured individuals adjust. He and his wife also facilitated a discussion group on sexuality and relationship building as it pertains to disability at the AACIL. He went back to college, and in 1996 graduated with honors in psychology from the University of Michigan-Dearborn. After an internship, he was hired by the Livonia Youth Assistance Program. Today, and works as an adolescent life skills facilitator. He also volunteers as a mentor working with troubled teens one-on-one. Since 1999 he has served on the board of directors of the Michigan branch of VSA Arts (Vision, Strength, and Artistic Expression), an international organization which sponsors

To get to this stage in his life, Charlie has had to face many challenges, some of which he still confronts on a day-to-day basis. He confides that the major trials he has grappled with since his accident are related to his feelings of self-esteem. Not being able to walk paled in comparison to bladder, bowel, and sexuality issues for Charlie. These were and are challenges both psychologically and physically. Because of Charlie’s low level of injury (T12), he has been able to adapt to architectural challenges—hotel rooms, bathrooms, even hospital rooms that are designed as “handicap accessible” but do not provide enough room to fit a wheelchair in, much less an adequate turning radius. However his frustration mounts when he thinks of his peers with higher level injuries, to whom these “challenges” may

“Whether you have a disability or not, you need other people.”
--Charlie Martin
be insurmountable obstacles.

In February 1977, the Charlie we know today was born. He has now been “a rider” longer than he had been a “vertical person.” This successful man advises that his experiences with SCI have taught him not to “get so fixated on any one thing so you will not allow yourself to try new things. Have the courage to try new things. You may succeed or you may not, but you will definitely learn something about the person you are and what your limits and capabilities are.”

Now, 25 years later, he is on stage playing music and living his dream. It took him awhile to realize that his paralysis has opened doors that he may never have discovered if he were not injured. He might not have explored his talents as a lead vocalist or keyboardist. He is active, personable, and attractive and doing what he loves to do. He has seen to it that his wheelchair did not become a prison; it is simply part of who he is as a whole person. He is definitely rocking and rolling—not just as a musician, but as a wheelchair user who has proven that the beat can and does go on.

Reprinted from Summer 2000 SCI access

Former Patient Plays Point Guard on Paralympics Team USA

By Rosalie Karunas

"Tell them the kid who started out on the 5th floor of Mott Hospital 10 years ago is going to the Paralympics, and he remembers where he came from!” suggests Paul Schulte, emphasizing his interest in "giving something back" to people with spinal cord injury. He was recalling his days spent in rehabilitation in the University of Michigan Health System following the motor vehicle crash, which resulted in his L-2 injury. He particularly noted how influential Dr. Edward Hurvitz was in his life. Now 21, and featured prominently in the news, Schulte was recently selected for Team USA, the men's wheelchair basketball team heading for Paralympics 2000 in Sydney, Australia in October. He joins seven others from the 1998 Gold Cup team that won the World Championship. He was selected for the team during a mid-May weekend of tryouts at the University of Michigan Crisler Arena. Now he is spending the summer in the area, and he works out regularly with Ann Arbor players. A native of nearby Manchester, he attends the University of Texas-Arlington on a full basketball scholarship. He is a junior in mechanical engineering. CNN featured Schulte in a June update on Team
USA. Network interviewers tagged the six-foot point guard as the "up-and-comer," looking to take over the leadership of the team in the future. As the only college player, he is the "baby" of the group, chosen from the best players on collegiate and community teams across the country. The oldest at 47 is veteran David Kiley, "in his day, the Michael Jordan of wheelchair basketball," according to Schulte. Schulte has an international classification of 3.0, in a scale where 1.0 represents a very high-level injury, with limited trunk and back muscles. During a game, players representing no more than 14 total points can appear on the floor at any one time. Schulte is a valuable asset to his team, since he easily matches in ability with opponents, such as amputees, who are rated 4.5. Schulte will have a busy summer before he returns to school in mid-August and begins daily two-hour practices for the fall-winter collegiate season. He travels to several weekend training camps, climaxing in a world tournament in Warm Springs, Georgia, in August. There, the top eight teams will compete, each seeking to gain the mental edge for the Paralympics. He hopes one more U-M training camp will be scheduled, allowing him to return to Ann Arbor, just before the trip to Australia. He is quick to point out that disabled athletes do not receive very much recognition, and limited sponsorship and lack of sufficient funding means team members sometimes must pay their own travel expenses. Schulte looks forward to returning to Michigan permanently after his collegiate career. Despite his hectic schedule, he is "more than willing to come and talk to kids," and he has spoken to school groups and basketball camps. Well aware of the impact of arriving in a chair, he enjoys relating to people of all ages, putting them at ease, and "making them laugh and have a good time with-out even thinking about it!"

Reprinted From Summer 2000 SCI access

Schulte Sinks Winner; Helps US Capture Bronze

By Rosalie Karunas

"The greatest ever!" exults former patient Paul Schulte, describing his experience at Paralympics 2000 last October, with Team USA, the men's wheelchair basketball team. To back up that remark, Schulte, who was a first-timer at the Games, had to rely on veteran teammates. They assured him that the accessibility, facilities, and hospitality, in Sidney, Australia, were superior to anything they had encountered previously. "We were treated like kings, like full-blown Olympic athletes!" Schulte exclaims.

At 22 and "the baby of the team," Schulte made a little history of his own, by lofting the winning shot as time expired in the bronze medal game with Great Britain. "More than 18,000 people saw that game," he says, "making it the largest crowd in history to watch a wheelchair basketball game. Of course, we had dreams of going all the
"We were disappointed to be knocked out by the Netherlands, who then lost the gold to Canada by a wide margin. We felt we could have matched up better with Canada!"

Schulte, who received treatment at C. S. Mott Children's Hospital about 11 years ago for his spinal cord injury at the L-2 level, was featured last year in Profiles of Former Patients in SCI access. He attends the University of Texas.

Reprinted From Fall 1999 SCI access

Tennis Player Focuses on Positive Aspects of Life

By Rosalie Karunas

Profiles of Former Patients is a regular feature of SCI access, developed to answer the question, "Where are they now?"

"I was amazed to see all of these people in wheelchairs who could do so many things!" is the way former patient Tiffany Geller describes her first glimpse of wheelchair tennis. At the age of 15 and a junior-varsity tennis player just learning the fundamentals of the game, Ms. Geller was involved in an automobile crash, resulting in T-10 paraplegia. Now a world-ranked player, she gratefully remembers a physical therapist who knew of her budding interest and opened new worlds of possibility, by introducing her to wheelchair-tennis players from Michigan State University. "They could travel, do everything-it made me feel like I could do it, too!"

After her injury, Ms. Geller graduated from high school on schedule and then enrolled in Northwood University, in Midland. No particular issues of getting around on the campus loomed as large for her as uncontrollable factors like weather. "That was a big reason for my moving to California!" she laughs. Her degree in marketing management has served her well, as she has been steadily employed since graduating in 1994. She secured her first job in California at a medical-supply company, with the help of contacts made through a tennis tournament. Now she coordinates continuing medical education for her current employer, where she has worked for the past year and a half. "In terms of gaining promotions, I feel like I am treated equally with every other person. I have left some positions, because of the nature of the work itself more than because of barriers in the workplace."

Currently ranked 46th in the world, Ms. Geller plays in about seven tournaments per year, about evenly divided between local appearances and travel to national and international events. Men and women are categorized by level of ability, with a separate class for persons with tetraplegia. "I'm in the open division, the top level, where I compete with people with many different types of disabilities. They may have greater strength and balance than I-the only requirement is that all of us use wheelchairs."
Ms. Geller encountered her biggest adventure a year ago, when she traveled alone to Australia and New Zealand, where she competed in three tournaments. Despite problems with blood clots during and after rehabilitation, she was not discouraged by a 13-hour plane ride. Careful to maintain appropriate pressure relief, she relied upon flight attendants to help her transfer to an aisle-width chair and then to the accessible bathroom. "As much as bathrooms in a plane can be accessible!" she adds with a trace of humor. "It's awkward, because you have to catch the flight crew when they are not serving passengers, and you cannot take too much time, because you know someone is waiting for you, to help you back into your seat."

Before she met other tournament participants, she traveled around the city of Sidney on her own. Cautious about interactions with strangers and always aware of her surroundings, she ran into friendly, helpful people, including one man who pushed her up a "huge" hill, to enable her to return to her hotel after an ambitious day of sightseeing. She had not noticed the steepness when she had set out on her journey.

While she was on the tennis tour, Ms. Geller went white-water rafting and also paired with an instructor to parachute off a mountain. She and other tournament players explored, by pushing themselves as much as several miles around the cities they visited. When traveling by bus, they sometimes had to transfer from their chairs to the steps and then crawl aboard. Whenever she encounters problems, Ms. Geller tries to figure out a way to work around them. As her mentors, she looks to other people with disabilities who do not get discouraged. She came away from her rehabilitation experience in the University of Michigan Health System, as simply "wanting to move on to the next step of my life."

Along with the down times, and moments of "agonizing over why this happened to me," she recognizes a lot of positives in her life, especially opportunities to travel and meet a variety of people, which she might not otherwise have enjoyed.

Wheelchair Sports

Michigan Adapted Sports
P.O. Box 569
Keego Harbor, MI 48320
248-988-0156
www.michiganadaptivesports.org

Sports ‘n Spokes Magazine
www.pvamagazines.com/sns
888-888-2201
602-224-0500
This is the only international publication dedicated to all aspects of wheelchair sports and recreational activities. Receive top-notch coverage on a wide range of sports and recreational pursuits from bass fishing to tennis, golf to snow skiing! Each issue is packed with colorful, comprehensive coverage on training, nutrition, people in sports, international competition, new products, and a calendar of events.
suzi@pnnews.com
Michigan Sports Unlimited, Inc.  
http://www.misportsunlimited.com  
This group recognizes the value of sports and recreation in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Their mission is to educate, instruct, and provide unlimited access to a wide range of recreational activities in order to improve the physical, social, and mental well being of individuals with disabilities and ultimately empower them to achieve success. Michigan Sports Unlimited gives individuals with disabilities an opportunity to become active – socially and physically, and ultimately to empower them to achieve success in any areas of their lives, simply by showing them that “It can be done!”

Michigan Wheelchair Athletic Association  
www.miwheelchairathleticassociation.org

MSU Disability Sports  
http://edweb6.educ.msu.edu/kin866

BlazeSports America is a direct legacy of the 1996 Paralympics Games held in Atlanta, Georgia. These Games, the first held on American soil, were the realization of the dreams of thousands of Americans involved in the delivery and growth of sports for persons with physical disabilities in the United States.

BlazeSports Kentwood – Kentwood Parks & Recreation Department  
Phone: 616.656.5275  
www.ci.kentwood.mi.us

BlazeSports Oakland County (Waterford)  
Oakland County Parks  
Phone: 248.858.7596  
www.co.oakland.mi.us

Grand Rapids Wheelchair Sports Association  
235 Wealthy Street  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-242-0351  
info@grwsa.com

BASKETBALL

Ann Arbor Thunderbirds
www.michiganthunderbirds.org
Ann Arbor CIL
734-971-0277

Grand Rapids Pacers
616-242-0351
(Junior and Adult)

(Fish/Hunt)

State of Michigan
Department of Natural Resources
www.michigan.gov/dnr
517-373-2329

HOCKEY

ICE HOCKEY
616- 242-0351

(Fish/Hunt)

State of Michigan
Department of Natural Resources
www.michigan.gov/dnr
517-373-2329

THE DRAKE MUSIC PROJECT
www.drakemusicproject.com
(British website)
The Drake Project believes everyone should have the opportunity to make music. Using specialized and adapted music technology, Drake enables disabled children and adults who are unable to play conventional musical instruments to compose and perform their own music.

Access to Recreation
www.accessiorecreation.com
800-634 – 4351
Information on a wide range of adaptive exercise and recreation accessories and equipment.

Information on accessibility.

Wheelchair accessible bicycle trails in Michigan
www.trailsfromrails.com/michigan.htm

Michigan State Parks
www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/ParksandTrailssearch.aspx

Each park provides

Nature

Entertainment

Most entertainment venues are accessible to wheelchair users. Prior to attending an event call the ticket office to inquire about accessible seating and if you need to purchase tickets that are marked for that section. Go to the
Volunteerism

Volunteering is an opportunity to offer your talents and skills to others. Also, when you have been out of the workforce for a while, volunteering can be a way to test the waters again and gain valuable experience before you make a decision to return to paid employment. Opportunities for volunteering are many. Civic and community groups, healthcare and faith-based organizations, as well as corporations are all places that provide opportunities for volunteerism. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) can also provide information on volunteer opportunities. Clearly, volunteering is much more than just “working for free.”

Corporation for National and Community Service

www.nationalservice.org/state_profiles/overview.asp?ID=27

1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20525
202-606-5000
202-565-2799 (TTY)
This site has local and national information on volunteer opportunities, with a link to the national site.

SERVEnet
www.servenet.org
SERVEnet is a program of Youth Service America (YSA), a resource center and the premier alliance of 200+ organizations committed to increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities for young Americans to serve locally, nationally, or globally.
1101 15th Street NW
Suite 200
Washington, District Of Columbia 20005
202-296-2992

National Organization on Disability
www.nod.org
202-293-5960
Provides information for volunteer opportunities for individuals with a disability in the “Community” section.

Americorps
www.americorps.org
800-942-2677
A network of national service programs that engage more than 50,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. AmeriCorps members serve through more than 2,100 nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations. They tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, and help communities respond to disasters. AmeriCorps is made up of three programs:

AmeriCorps State and National,

AmeriCorps VISTA,

and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC).

Bartering
www.barter.net
Bartering is the age-old practice of exchanging a skill, service or goods for skills, services or goods from another person. For example,
you might exchange appliance repair for someone else’s help in doing your financial bookwork. There are a number of websites that may give you information on bartering. However, the best way to start is to think about what your skills are and what services or goods you need for yourself.

The Timedollar Institute
www.timedollar.org

“A new kind of money for rebuilding the Core Economy of family, neighborhood and community.”
Time Dollars are a new, tax-exempt kind of money that empowers people to convert their personal time into purchasing power by helping others and by rebuilding family, neighborhood and community. An hour helping another earns One Time Dollar.

Are Time Dollars a form of barter?
Barter almost always involves bargaining between two individuals to establish the worth of a good or a service. There is no bargaining with Time Dollars. An hour is an hour is an hour. All contributions are valued equally. So Time Dollars are something different from barter. The IRS has ruled that barter currencies are taxable, but that Time Dollars are not.

NATIONAL SPORTS CENTER FOR THE DISABLED
www.nsdc.org

Located in Winter Park, Colorado, the NSCD has been offering recreational programs for people with disabilities since 1970. Activities include white water rafting, mountain biking, hiking and fishing to name a few.

WILDERNESS INQUIRY
www.wildernessinquiry.org

808 14th Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN
55414-1516
612-676-9400
800-728-0719

Wilderness Inquiry’s mission is to make outdoor recreation accessible for diverse groups of people. Its activities are open to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities including people with disabilities.
Spinal Network: The Total Wheelchair Resource Book 3rd Edition
Published by Nine Lives Press, Inc
Chapter 4, Sports and Recreation
Distributed by Leonard Media Group
P.O. Box 220
Horsham, PA 19044
1-888-850-0344 x4
NATIONAL CENTER ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND DISABILITY
www.ncpad.org

For great information on recreation and leisure time activities, click on:
www.ncpad.org/lifetime/

800-900-8086
Email: ncpad@uic.edu

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
Sports and Recreation website:

www.pva.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sports_main

The PVA Sports and Recreation Program is proud to promote a range of activities for members and other people with disabilities, with special emphasis on activities that enhance lifetime health and fitness.

In this website section, you will find a wealth of information on the many sports and recreation events PVA sponsors, how to get involved in these events (with downloadable registration forms), a calendar of events, event results, useful sports publications, and a list of contacts.