



Northeast Passage Staff Present At International Conference In Qatar

Media Contact: [Keely Ames](#)
603-862-0070
Northeast Passage

May 8, 2008

Reporters and editors: Tom and Cara Carr can be reached at 603-862-0070 or tcarr@cisunix.unh.edu or cara.carr@unh.edu. Contact Keely Ames to schedule an interview with Tyler Walker.

DURHAM, N.H. - Late last month, two Northeast Passage staff members and one University of New Hampshire student traveled to the Middle East to present at an international forum on adaptive sports. Invited by The Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs, Northeast Passage's Tom and Cara Carr and student Tyler Walker introduced the country of Qatar to disability inclusion at the university level and brought the sport of sled hockey to the region.

Northeast Passage, founded in 1990, is a nationally recognized leader in the provision of innovative therapeutic recreation services. Northeast Passage delivers disability-related health promotion and adapted sports programs throughout New England. Northeast Passage is a program of the University of New Hampshire and is an affiliate of Disabled Sports USA.

"We were thrilled to be invited to the Shafallah Center to present on our work," said Tom Carr, assistant director at Northeast Passage. "Being able to talk about, and then show, the impact that therapeutic recreation can have to an international audience was an amazing experience."

The Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs was created at the request of Her Highness Sheikah Mozah, wife of His Highness, the Emir of Qatar, to provide comprehensive services to children with disabilities. The center provides diagnosis, evaluation, training and development services for children ages 3 with both cognitive and physical disabilities. The center focuses on education and raising awareness.

For the past three years, The Shafallah Center has sponsored an international forum that focuses on different issues within the disability community and raises awareness among the citizens of Qatar. This year's theme, "Sport and Ability," brought more than 250 delegates from 40 countries. For three days, participants toured Doha and The Center, attending workshops and presentations. Noted guests included Cherie Blair, wife of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Bob and Suzanne Wright, founders of Autism Speaks, and First Lady of Panama Vivian Fernandez de Torrijos. International Paralympic Committee President Sir Philip Craven delivered the keynote address.

Northeast Passage was invited by The Shafallah Center to have an active role in the forum. The Carrs and Walker presented "Fitting Disability into the University Student-Athlete Model" and ran that nation's first sled hockey clinic for youth with disabilities. Tom and Cara Carr facilitated purchasing sleds for The Shafallah Center and taught the staff about the equipment

and techniques for participation, so adaptive skating can be offered on a regular basis.

Tyler Walker '08 of Franconia is a member of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team and has been mentoring a 5-year-old boy from Qatar with the same disability. As disabilities are often hidden in that culture, the family contacted Walker after researching online for resources. Walker traveled to Qatar in December to meet with the family and was able to reconnect with them on this most recent trip. Walker is a member of Northeast Passage's Athlete Development Center at UNH and co-presented with Tom Carr. He also participated in the sled hockey demonstration.

"We hope to return and continue to help to move this country and the region's adaptive sports programs forward," said Carr.

For more information on Northeast Passage, visit www.nepassage.org. For more information on the Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs, visit www.shafallah.org.

-

Photograph available to download:

http://www.unh.edu/news/img/nepassage/TylerWalker_Qatar.JPG

Caption: UNH student Tyler Walker (left) gets ready to skate with a boy from Qatar during Northeast Passage's sled hockey clinic at The Shafallah Center in Doha.

Credit: Photo Courtesy of Cara Carr

