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DRAFT – HOLD FOR RELEASE 1.0

North Dakotan who died on 9/11 is poised to make a lasting impact on disabled children, young adults, and wounded warriors across state and Manitoba

“Annie’s House” adaptive ski facility at Bottineau Winter Park is almost half way to reaching \$1.5M funding goal

Target is to have adaptive ski resort fully funded by Sept. 11, 2011

May 17, 2011 – Bottineau, ND and New York, NY – Today would have been Ann Nicole Nelson’s 40th birthday. A proud resident of Stanley, ND, Ann’s life was tragically cut short when she perished on September 11, 2001 while working for Cantor Fitzgerald on the 104th floor of the World Trade Center.

But Ann’s spirit of kindness and sense of adventure is still continuing to make an impact in the world and is about to make a lasting impact on the citizens of North Dakota and neighboring Manitoba, Canada through a very special project to commemorate this year’s 10th year Anniversary of 9/11.

Annie’s House will be North Dakota’s first adaptive facility to teach disabled children, young adults, and wounded warriors how to ski. The project is the result of a year-long collaboration between the Bottineau Winter Park, Ann’s parents Gary and Jenette Nelson of Stanley, ND and The New York Says Thank You Foundation, the country’s leading volunteer service group focused on rebuilding hope on the 9/11 Anniversary.

North Dakota companies and charitable institutions statewide are invited to mark the 10th Anniversary of 9/11 through Annie’s House groundbreaking ceremony

Over \$700,000 in financial contributions and in-kind donations of materials and services have been pledged since March to construct Annie’s House and corporations, charitable institutions, and individual donors from across the state of North Dakota are being asked to contribute the remaining \$800,000 in order to help make Annie’s House a reality. The goal is to have Annie’s House capital campaign fully funded by this year’s 10th year Anniversary of 9/11 which is destined to be the largest volunteer service and giving event in United States history. Donations to Annie’s House are tax deductible via the Bottineau Area Community Foundation and New York Says Thank You Foundation.

THE FACILITY

Annie's House will be a two and one-half story, 12,000 square foot ski lodge that will replace the existing lodge at Bottineau Winter Park with a new facility designed to accommodate the needs of skiers with both physical and cognitive disabilities from across North Dakota and neighboring Manitoba. Approximately 50% the public space in the new facility will support the adaptive ski program and needs of disabled skiers and their families. This will be the first facility in North Dakota focused on empowering disabled skiers and their families to enjoy outdoor sports during winter while also providing a year-round facility to accommodate other adaptive sports like fishing, canoeing, waterskiing, and horseback riding.

THE PROGRAM

Annie's House will provide an integrated, adaptive ski facility and program to accommodate the special needs of **disabled children and young adults with both cognitive disabilities such as autism, mental retardation, and Down's Syndrome, and physical disabilities such as blindness, cerebral palsy, and spinal cord injuries**. In addition, Annie's House will be designed to provide adaptive ski equipment and programs for **wounded warriors** who returned from Iraq and Afghanistan challenged with physical disabilities resulting from amputation and traumatic brain injury.

THE NEED

In the ten counties in North Dakota currently served by Bottineau Winter Park there are an estimated 2,800 children receiving special education services. The above numbers do not include the population of children and young adults with cognitive and physical disabilities on the Canadian side of the border in Manitoba. Nor do these numbers include wounded warriors going through warrior transition programs.

PARTNERSHIPS

Annie's House will be modeled after The Adaptive Sports Foundation in Windham, NY, the country's only stand alone ski lodge dedicated to serving the needs of disabled children, young adults, and wounded warriors. In addition, over the past six months, we have received very positive feedback on the need for and viability of Annie's House from leading social service organizations across North Dakota and with whom we hope to partner with in order to plan, operate, and sustain the adaptive ski program. These organizations include North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, Family Voices of North Dakota, North Dakota Association of Community Providers, Anne Carlson Center, Special Olympics of North Dakota, Easter Seals, and Minot State University Special Education Department.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Based on ski industry research and the experience of The Adaptive Sports Foundation, it is estimated that for every \$1 spent on empowering a disabled skier the opportunity to ski, \$7 is generated for the local resort community. This multiplier is a result of the family joining the disabled skier on the slopes and at the resort (usually both parents and one sibling), as well as the incremental revenue generated from rentals, lessons, tickets, food, and lodging generated by the entire family. Also, as Bottineau Winter Park is currently used primarily by day trippers, Annie's House has the significant potential to transform Bottineau Winter Park into a destination resort for skiers faced with cognitive and physical disabilities and their families from a much wider radius than the resort currently serves.

FINANCIAL NEEDS & TIMING

New York Says Thank You Foundation in partnership with Bottineau Winter Park and Bottineau Area Community Foundation are seeking to raise \$1,500,000 to help finance the building materials and related construction costs to build Annie's House. This grant will leverage an estimated \$300,000 in volunteer labor and donated materials. Donations to support this effort are tax deductible via the 501c3 of The Bottineau Area Community Foundation and New York Says Thank You Foundation. **Over \$700,000 has already been pledged in cash and in-kind donations and the goal is to raise the remaining \$800,000 and have the capital campaign fully funded by September 11, 2011 with construction beginning in May 2012.**

For more information, visit www.SkiBWP.com or www.NewYorkSaysThankYou.org

Tax deductible contributions can also be sent to:

Bottineau Area Community Foundation
Attn: Annie's House Project
519 Main Street
Bottineau, ND 58318
EIN# 26-3121314

CONTACTS:

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