

New York Says Thank You Foundation, Jeff Parness
Founder & Chairman
917-806-8061
www.NewYorkSaysThankYou.org

Bottineau Winter Park
Cedric Jacobson
Annie's House, Treasurer
701-228-4892
www.skibwp.com

Friends of Annie's House
Johnna Westby
Minot State University
701-629-1006
johnna.westby@minotstateu.edu

Friends of Annie's House
Mary Stammen
Griggs/Steele/Trail Ctys Special Ed.
701-866-0985
mary.stammen@sendit.nodak.edu

Hundreds of disaster survivors from around the U.S. “Pay It Forward” in North Dakota to commemorate 11th Anniversary of 9/11

Goal is to build “Annie’s House” adaptive ski lodge in Bottineau and also lift the spirits of Minot flood victims with Stars of HOPE & National 9/11 Flag

Volunteers, equipment, materials still needed for Sept 6 – 9 Annie’s House build

New York, NY & Bottineau, ND – August 30, 2012 - In commemoration of the 11th Anniversary of 9/11 and in the volunteer spirit of the National Day of Service and Remembrance, the **New York Says Thank You Foundation** announced today that over 200 volunteers will travel next week to North Dakota in advance of this coming 9/11 Anniversary to help build **Annie’s House at Bottineau Winter Park** – North Dakota’s first adaptive ski lodge to teach disabled children and wounded warriors how to ski – and to also boost the spirits of Minot flood victims through the **Stars of HOPE** community art project and presentation of **The National 9/11 Flag**. Annie’s House is being built in memory of Ann Nicole Nelson of Stanley, one of a handful of North Dakotans to perish in the 9/11 attacks. The weekend “Pay It Forward” effort is a way for *New York Says Thank You* volunteers to say “thank you” for the support North Dakotans and Canadians extended to their city following September 11th while also celebrating the spirit of kindness and volunteerism that united the Nation – and the world – on **9/12**.

Among the hundreds of volunteers will be 20 FDNY firefighters from New York, many of them survivors of the World Trade Center attacks, who will be joined by Ground Zero construction workers, 9/11 family members, Hurricane Katrina survivors from Louisiana, wildfire survivors from California, and tornado survivors from Illinois, Texas, Kansas, Iowa, Arkansas, Georgia, and Joplin, Missouri where over 3,000 Stars of HOPE were planted on last year’s 10th Anniversary of 9/11 in a community-wide volunteer project coordinated by Missouri Southern State University.

While most of the volunteers driving through or flying into Minot will be volunteering at the Annie’s House build in Bottineau from Thursday September 6 through Sunday September 9, nearly 40 volunteers will be in Minot from September 4-8 to help with the **Stars of HOPE** community art project which will empower 1,000 children and adults at Longfellow Elementary and Minot State University to bring hope and color back to the neighborhoods impacted by last year’s devastating floods.

In addition, a small group of volunteers from *New York Says Thank You* including Hurricane Katrina survivors from St. Bernard’s Parish in Louisiana are driving up to Minot to volunteer on a **home-building project** being coordinated by Lutheran Disaster Response. They will be joined on September 4 by a small group of FDNY firefighters from New York who will be flying in as part of the advance team on the Annie’s House build in Bottineau.

Finally, on Thursday September 6, **The National 9/11 Flag** will arrive in Minot along with the bulk of the *New York Says Thank You* and FDNY volunteers. The flag will be displayed at Minot State University at 2PM on the steps of Old Main in front of Ann Nicole Nelson Hall, and from there it will travel up to Bottineau for the weekend volunteer effort and celebration.

ANNIE'S HOUSE AT BOTTINEAU WINTER PARK

Annie's House will be North Dakota's first adaptive ski facility to teach disabled children, young adults, and wounded warriors how to ski. The project is the result of a two-year collaboration between the Bottineau Winter Park, Ann's parents Gary and Jenette Nelson of Stanley, ND, the Bottineau Area Economic Development Office, The Bottineau Area Community Foundation, and The New York Says Thank You Foundation, the country's largest volunteer service organization on the 9/11 Anniversary.

Annie's House at Bottineau Winter Park is on Hwy 43, 10.5 miles northwest of Bottineau, ND.

Annie's House will be a state-of-the art facility 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. Other year round activities planned at Annie's House include folk festivals, theater productions, hiking, biking, running events, bird watching, and hosting community events and receptions.

THE ADAPTIVE PROGRAM

Annie's House will provide an integrated, adaptive ski facility and program for children and young adults with physical disabilities like cerebral palsy, and cognitive disabilities like Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. In addition, Annie's House will be designed to provide adaptive ski equipment and programs for wounded warriors, those brave individuals who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan and challenged with both physical and mental impacts.

THE NEED

There are approximately 13,000 children and young adults with disabilities in North Dakota. In the ten counties currently served by Bottineau Winter Park, an estimated 2,800 children receive special education services. The above numbers do not include the population of people with disabilities, both young and old, within the greater region and on the Canadian side of the border. Wounded warriors number in the hundreds across North Dakota and the greater region.

FRIENDS OF ANNIE'S HOUSE

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 people with disabilities. In addition, over the past two years, **Friends of Annie's House** has received very positive feedback on the need for and viability of Annie's House from lead agencies and community organizations across North Dakota. The Friends of Annie's House are presently working to collaborate with these agencies and organizations as well as inviting others to join the efforts in creating a wonderful recreational opportunity in western North Dakota and the greater region.

FINANCIAL & LOGISITICAL SUPPORT FROM ACROSS NORTH DAKOTA AND AMERICA

The Bottineau Winter Park and Bottineau Area Community Foundation in partnership with The New York Says Thank You Foundation have been privileged to garner the financial and logistical support from so many individuals and institutions from across North Dakota and the U.S. who have made the construction of Annie's House possible. Hundreds of individuals and scores of charitable foundations, educational institutions, corporate partners, government agencies, and service organizations and professionals focused on serving the special needs of those with

physical and cognitive disabilities from across North Dakota and the United States have joined forces to make Annie's House a reality. These supporters include the Engelstad Family Foundation, North Dakota Tourism Department, Arthur Pearson Unitrust, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, City of Bottineau, Bottineau County, Lester Buildings, Nostdahl-Liptack Architects of Phoenix, AZ, Merrill Lynch, 5LINX, ABNY Foundation, The Horncrest Foundation, Morris Bailey, Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund, Newmark Knight Realty, KPMG LLP, Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation, SNR Denton, REBNY, IATSE Local 52, Mena Mountain Resort, Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossman, and Landow & Landow Architects of NY.

VOLUNTEERS, MATERIALS, HEAVY EQUIPMENT, HAND TOOLS STILL NEEDED IN BOTTINEAU

As hundreds of volunteers from across the U.S. will be coming to build Annie's House, the local community is encouraged to come out and volunteer alongside the FDNY firefighters and other special guests. **Material donations to complete the construction and interior of Annie's House are still needed and building suppliers, heavy equipment providers, and design firms can contact Dan Nostdahl, Annie's House architect at dan@nostdahliptack.com or 701.557.3126 OR Dick Kornkven, the local general contractor overseeing the construction at 701.228.5187.**

Also local residents are encouraged to come out and volunteer their hand tools to help the volunteers with the construction, crafts projects, and building of nature trails throughout the property and woods surrounding Bottineau Winter Park. Tools can be donated for the weekend on Thursday September 6 and picked up on Sunday September 9 at the local tool shed on site run by Ben Brosseau at bbski_81@hotmail.com 701.228.4046. (note bbski underscore81).

Anyone wanting to help in the local community volunteer effort to support the Annie's House weekend can contact Diane Olson at Bottineau Economic Development Corporation at edc@utma.com 701.228.3922 or Clint Reinoehl at Bottineau Chamber of Commerce at bcc@utma.com 701.228.3849 or Cedric Jacobson at c.jacobson@lycos.com 701.228.4892.

TO DONATE TO ANNIE'S HOUSE

Contributions are welcome to assist in the construction of Annie's House as well as to help develop, manage, and sustain the adaptive ski and sports program well into the future. Donations to support the project are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law and should be specified for "Annie's House Building fund" or "Friends of Annie's House Adaptive Ski Program" and sent to:

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

or

Bottineau Winter Park
P O Box 168
Bottineau, ND 58318

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND LOCATIONS ATTACHED TO THIS RELEASE

###