

Lock Haven University
Official Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Mary White

Phone: (570) 484-2253

E-mail: mwhite4@lhup.edu

Release Date: 23 September 2011

Helping the disabled participate in outdoor activities
LHU PA student is L.L. Bean 2011 Outdoor Heroes Winner



Sylvie Fadrhonc could define herself in many ways. She is an excellent skier and a lover of the outdoors. She is an aspiring physician assistant. She is also the L.L. Bean 2011 Outdoor Heroes Winner for her work with the disabled at the Telluride Adaptive Sports Program (TASP) in Telluride, Colorado.

In 2007, Sylvie was an outdoor guide and field instructor in Colorado. Her career appeared to be cut short on September 13, 2007 when she was in a car accident that left her paralyzed from the waist down. But Sylvie is not a person who sees an obstacle and gives up. Within a few months, with the aid of adaptive equipment, she was back on the slopes.

Sylvie also went to work as a volunteer coordinator with the Telluride Adaptive Sports Program, where she created outdoor programs for the disabled and became a strong advocate for outdoor participation for the disabled and for disability awareness.

A 2003 graduate of Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts, Sylvie went to Colorado College where she majored in Geology and was Pre-Med as well. She graduated in 2007. She is now in the Lock Haven University Physician Assistant Program, taking courses toward at the university's Dixon Center in Harrisburg, Pa.

“I have wanted to pursue a career in medicine for quite some time,” Sylvie says, “long before I was injured! And I feel the PA profession is a great way to play an integral role in the health care system with a strong focus on patient care.” Sylvie hopes to work as a PA in Pediatric Neurodevelopment, “working with children with congenital and acquired physical and cognitive disabilities such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, traumatic brain injuries, and more.”

Sylvie believes that disability awareness has helped shape her life. “While my work with the Telluride Adaptive Sports Program (TASP) had large components of disability awareness directed towards our volunteer instructors, staff, and a youth outreach program for local 5th and 6th graders, I believe disability awareness has been a large part of my life beyond TASP as well. It has been an amazing learning process for myself and those close to me, to learn about the limitations of life with a new disability but more importantly how passion, perseverance, an incredible support network, and a dose of ingenuity can help navigate these apparent obstacles. I hope to use my LHU education work in a health care setting where I can show others, especially pediatric patients with disabilities, that there are still unlimited possibilities despite physical, cognitive, emotional, or other impairments.”

Sylvie’s professors and classmates are an important part of her support network. “Just a few months into my masters education at LHU, I can already tell that I am being well prepared for a career in medicine thanks to the incredible teaching and guidance from the PA Program professors and fellow students. I am surrounded by an amazing network of individuals who want to impart as much knowledge as possible to help me and my peers succeed as physician assistants. What a gift!”

Outdoor activities, graduate studies, helping others--Sylvie Fadrhonc may be defined by many aspects of her life, but not by her disability. As she approached the four-year anniversary of her automobile accident, she received encouraging words from her brother. “You know I don't like to make a big deal of this day because it is not your accident or your disability that defines you, but the power of your character and unique qualities that have enabled you to overcome them. You have more courage, strength, conviction, ability and generosity than anyone I know. September 13th isn't a big deal to me because you dig into this reservoir of quality every day, and that's what makes you who you are.”

Sylvie Fadrhonc is, truly, a hero.

To read more about Sylvie Fadrhonc, L.L. Bean 2011 Outdoor Heroes Winner, go to http://www.llbean.com/outdoorsOnline/conservationAndEnvironment/outdoorHeroes/nominee_5.html

Lock Haven University is a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), the largest provider of higher education in the commonwealth. Its 14 universities offer more than 250 degree and certificate programs in more than 120 areas of study. Nearly 405,000 system alumni live and work in Pennsylvania.

#####

