

**Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living**

**University of Michigan  
Model SCI Care System**

**Michigan Resource Guide  
for Persons with Spinal Cord Injury**



# Recreation

In this section

Introduction

**Introduction**

**People In Action**

**Wheelchair Sports**

**Games**

**Nature**

**Music**

**Entertainment**

**Volunteerism**

**Adventure**

**More Important  
Web Links**

"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!

## People In Action

Reprinted from  
Spring-Summer 2002  
*SCI access*

### **Rock and Rolling Better than Ever: Musician Encounters SCI, Today the Beat Goes On...**

by Ann Swartz, Ph.D.

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

*“Whether you have a disability or not, you need other people.”*

*--Charlie Martin*

opportunities for disabled children and adults to express themselves through the arts.

He recently participated in the U-M Wellness with SCI research project. Both his volunteer work and his job as a musician provide him with satisfaction, knowing that he is positively impacting the lives of others.

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

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.



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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 inter-viewers 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!"

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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

way," he adds. "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.

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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](http://www.michiganadaptivesports.org)

### **Sports 'n Spokes Magazine**

[www.pvomagazines.com/sns](http://www.pvomagazines.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](mailto:suzi@pnnews.com)

**Cannonsburg  
Challenged Ski  
Association**

[www.skiccsa.org](http://www.skiccsa.org)

P.O. Box 352  
Ada, MI 49301  
616-874-3080

**GENERAL SPORTS  
RESOURCES**

**Adaptive Sports  
Coalition**

2845 Crooks Road  
Rochester Hills, MI  
48309

248- 829-8318

[www.adhof.org](http://www.adhof.org)

Adaptive Sports Coalition is a group of community-based smaller organizations that support sports and recreation programs for the disabled throughout the state of Michigan. By hosting awareness clinics and training events in local communities, the Coalition helps people better understand the recreational opportunities available for people with disabilities. The Coalition specializes in activities such as wheelchair basketball, tennis, air rifle, track and field, sled hockey, water and snow skiing, hand cycling, adaptive golf, and baseball.

**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!”

**BlazeSports**

BlazeSports America,  
280 Interstate North  
Circle Suite 450  
Atlanta, GA 30339  
Phone: 770.850.8199  
FAX: 770.850.8179  
<http://www.blazesports.com/>

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](http://www.ci.kentwood.mi.us)

**BlazeSports Oakland  
County (Waterford)**

Oakland County Parks  
Phone: 248.858.7596

[www.co.oakland.mi.us](http://www.co.oakland.mi.us)

**Grand Rapids  
Wheelchair Sports  
Association**

235 Wealthy Street  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-242-0351

[info@grwsa.com](mailto:info@grwsa.com)

**Michigan Wheelchair  
Athletic Association**

[www.miwheelchairathleticassociation.org](http://www.miwheelchairathleticassociation.org)

**MSU Disability Sports**

<http://edweb6.educ.msu.edu/kin866>

## **BASKETBALL**

**Ann Arbor  
Thunderbirds**  
[www.michiganthunderbirds.org](http://www.michiganthunderbirds.org)  
Ann Arbor CIL  
734-971-0277

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

**Sterling Heights  
Challengers**  
(*Junior*)  
Diane Winterstein  
PO Box 40555  
Utica Road  
Sterling Heights, MI  
48311-9008  
[www.sterlingheightschallengers.com](http://www.sterlingheightschallengers.com)

**Kentwood Rollers**  
City of Kentwood Parks  
and Recreation  
616-656-5275

## **FISHING/HUNTING**

**State of Michigan  
Department of Natural  
Resources**  
[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)  
517-373-2329

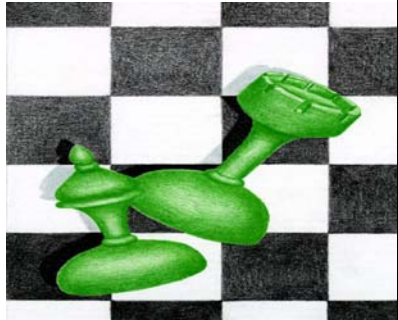
## **HOCKEY**

**ICE HOCKEY**  
616- 242-0351

(Grand Rapids Area)

## Games

**Access to Recreation**  
[www.accesstorecreation.com](http://www.accesstorecreation.com)  
800-634 – 4351  
Information on a wide range of adaptive exercise and recreation accessories and equipment.



## Nature

**Wheelchair accessible  
bicycle trails in  
Michigan**  
[www.trailsfromrails.com/michigan.htm](http://www.trailsfromrails.com/michigan.htm)

**Michigan State Parks**  
[www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/ParksandTrailssearch.aspx](http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/ParksandTrailssearch.aspx)

**NATIONAL PARK  
SERVICE**  
[www.nps.gov/parks.htm](http://www.nps.gov/parks.htm)  
↓  
Each park provides

information on  
accessibility.

## Music

**THE DRAKE MUSIC  
PROJECT**  
[www.drakemusicproject.com](http://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.

## 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

following resource for more information.

Understanding Disabilities, Creating Opportunities  
[www.ucp.org/ucp\\_channelsub.cfm/87/15/65](http://www.ucp.org/ucp_channelsub.cfm/87/15/65)

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.nod.org)  
202-293-5960  
Provides information for volunteer opportunities for individuals with a disability in the “Community” section.

### **Americorps**

[www.americorps.org](http://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](http://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](http://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.

**Adventure**

**NATIONAL SPORTS CENTER FOR THE DISABLED**

[www.nscd.org](http://www.nscd.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](http://www.wildernessinquiry.org)

808 14<sup>th</sup> 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.



For more information on any of the above resources, contact University of Michigan Health System's Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, **Robert Wolfe, CTRS.** [recreat@umich.edu](mailto:recreat@umich.edu)

More Important  
Web Links

**Spinal Network:**  
**The Total Wheelchair**  
**Resource Book**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.ncpad.org)

For great  
information on  
recreation and  
leisure time  
activities, click on:  
[www.ncpad.org/life  
time/](http://www.ncpad.org/life/time/)

800-900-8086

Email:  
[ncpad@uic.edu](mailto:ncpad@uic.edu)

**PARALYZED**  
**VETERANS OF**  
**AMERICA**

Sports and Recreation  
website:

[www.pva.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sports\\_main](http://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.

