

BCMOS On-Site Interviews Pt.2 | Discover Stories Episode 59

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Noah Stolte 0:58

All right, I am now interviewing Laida, who is a client here at BCMOS paddling. Hello, Lyda, could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Laida 1:07

So my name is Laida and I've been coming to BCMOS kayaking for, I think it's about three years. I have multiple sclerosis, and I have difficulty walking, so I have weakness in my legs, and so being able to come kayaking has been a super big part of the joy of my summers.

Noah Stolte 1:28

That's awesome. Awesome. How did you find out about paddling and what made you like really decide that you wanted to get into it?

Laida 1:35

So, it was kind of a mistake, to be honest, or just something that I noticed, I come down to Olympic Village pretty frequently, and as I was using my scooter, I noticed a sandwich board that said BCMOS. Honestly, it was a little bit of a smaller font. And I was like, "Oh, what's that about?" So it must have been a couple days later, ended up Googling BCMOS and saw that it was a mobility opportunity service, and was really excited about the different opportunities that exist with sporting things, so kayaking and sailing and the hiking and things like that. So I just started to investigate, and I had, I don't remember the exact first kayaking session I had, but I remember being super excited about the people and just how easy it was, they helped me into the kayak. I felt 100% safe, and being on the water was just a beautiful experience. And I just came back as often as I possibly could.

Noah Stolte 2:32

That's great. You mentioned the other sort of activities. Did you end up getting involved with those, like sailing?

Laida 2:41

So, I think it was last year I got involved with the trail, what's it called, trail riding. So I did that a couple of times, and it was so fun to go where they take you into these trails, that there's no way I'd be able to get in there by myself. The two workers, like, they brought me in between the like, rotting out trees, and it was an amazing experience. And then they were having a pilot for hand cycling. So I did that a couple of times. That was awesome. And I tried to get into sailing, but it booked up pretty quick, so I was able to go this year, though. I think I've been four or five times this summer, and that's amazing. So yeah, there's tons of opportunities, and it makes my summer a million times more enjoyable. Yeah.

Noah Stolte 3:32

That's great, awesome. Yeah, there's some pretty cool stuff available. What's your favourite part about like, coming here? Let's just describe maybe what you get up to here.

Laida 3:43

The best part of BCMOS are the people. Like, every activity that I go to, the people are so friendly, so smart, so focused, so helpful. We always have amazing conversations. Doesn't matter who is interacting with me. I love the people. You're always greeted with a smile, never treated differently because you have a disability. It never even comes up, barely, and if it does, it's more thoughtful conversation about, like, your life and what brings you joy. So I would say the people are amazing. However you guys select your employees, it's a great process, because everyone's amazing.

Noah Stolte 4:24

That is great to hear. And then a little bit more about your own life, I hear that you are a teacher. That's very cool. Where do you teach and what do you teach?

Laida 4:33

So I teach in Burnaby, and I'm a high school science and leadership teacher. So I typically teach science eight, science nine, and Bio 12. And yeah, I think, you know, people often say, "Oh, you're a high school teacher." And they're kind of like, "Oh, must be terrible." But I

think they just don't have experience working with high school kids, because they're pretty amazing, pretty inspiring people. So, yeah, does that answer the question?

Noah Stolte 4:59

Yeah, that's great. I guess being a teacher frees up your summers to do fun things like this.

Laida 5:05

Yes definitely. So it's nice to have two months off. And so I try to book, like I booked my sailing sessions in May. Kayaking, thankfully, or maybe, unfortunately for some people, there's cancelations, and they always call me pretty quickly. And so it's nice to come down and have an impromptu session as well.

Noah Stolte 5:25

And you were saying you even might want to start learning guitar at VAMS.

Laida 5:29

So when I saw that there's music, I was like, "Oh, yes, please." So I think music is kind of therapy for the soul. There's a lot of music therapy, I'm sure, you know, and it's, it's nice to have these, these services. And again, it's about awareness. So I hope that with this podcast that people start to learn about things that exist for you, and even though you have a disability and maybe you have difficulty getting around or accessing certain things. BCMOS and all the other organizations do a really amazing job of making these activities accessible to you and it feeds you like it makes you feel better amidst all the difficulties in your life, and music is a beautiful medicine for our souls.

Noah Stolte 6:15

Awesome. Thanks so much for talking. Um, yeah. I hope you have a good season of school, since this paddling is ending soon and school is starting up.

Laida 6:26

One more week, and that's it, we're back at it.

Noah Stolte 6:28

Alright. Thank you very much.

Laida 6:30

Thank you.

Noah Stolte 6:35

I'm now interviewing Emily, who is a client here at the paddling centre. Hello, Emily, thanks for joining us today. Could you mind telling us a little bit about yourself?

Emily 6:45

Hi, my name is Emily. I am a blind snowboarder, and I am also an educational assistant with the school board here in Vancouver. BC.

Noah Stolte 6:59

Awesome. How did you first get involved with paddling here? Yeah, what made you want to pursue this?

Emily 7:05

So as I said before, I'm a blind snowboarder, so I was doing stand up paddle boarding as a cross training sport. I'm originally from Ontario, and so I started doing paddle boarding in Ontario about five years ago. My paddle boarding coach ended up moving to Vancouver a few years ago, and so I got permission to continue training with him. So I came out to Vancouver one summer to do training with him. And then I was looking for different things to do while I was out here training, because I had, like, extra time and stuff. So I found BCMOS, and so I started with them.

Noah Stolte 7:57

That's awesome. And if you can hear some thumping, that's Emily's dog, Darling, who is very happy.

Emily 8:04

She always loves getting on podcasts and stuff whenever I'm on it.

Noah Stolte 8:08

That's great. Yep, she'll definitely be in the background. So, do you normally stick to paddle boarding, or do you like to sort of do all the different types of paddling they have here?

Emily 8:18

So I was doing paddle boarding with my paddle boarding coach. So with BCMOS, I was doing kayaking, and I'm still doing kayaking, obviously. So I'm doing lots of kayaking. We've been doing it, this is my fourth year doing it now, so it's been super, super fun. So that's great.

Noah Stolte 8:39

Do you participate with any other Disability Foundation activities? Have you ever gone to the sailing or to the hiking or anything like that?

Emily 8:48

My first year, I got into a little bit of the hiking. I haven't done it since, but I want to get into more hiking again. I've also heard about the cycling program, and I didn't, I wanted to get into that this summer, but didn't get a chance to so hopefully next summer.

Noah Stolte 9:07

That's really great. Do you have, like, a favorite memory about coming here, maybe from this summer, or even from other summers? Do you have a good, maybe a good paddling story you could tell us?

Emily 9:18

Yeah. So I have been learning how to kayak with BCMOS. One of the staff here, Magalee, has been teaching me how to kayak. So she's been like teaching me different like kayaking skills for kayaking. And so we started out in the double kayak for the first few years, and then this year, we've started to like play and transition over me to the single kayak. So that's been really super fun to it's been an adventure for both of us, and we both learned a lot. So that's definitely a highlight of this summer.

Noah Stolte 9:18

Yeah, that's great. Awesome. Yeah, I guess the season is coming to a close, but now you'll probably start getting pretty active on the slopes, then. Can you tell us a little bit about how that goes for you and what the training process is like?

Emily 10:14

Yeah, so because the paddling season is coming to a close, it just means snowboarding is coming up. So that's really exciting. So we're kind of like in pre-season training right now, so everything like, so I do a lot of training in the gym, and so that gets ramped up for like, the next few months, up until about a month before we go on, before we hit the slopes. And so right now, it's just a lot of like, conditioning and strengthening, making sure, like, all my muscles are ready for snowboarding when it's when we're ready to get on the mountains, and then we do. I've also started to learn it's called snowga. It's yoga specifically for snowboarders, that's been created by snowboarders. So, yeah, it's pretty fun. Actually, I just started it a few weeks ago, just trialing out to see how it goes. And it's actually going really well. And I really like it. So because it's literally like yoga specifically for snowboarders. So it's like all the same moves that you would be doing, like on a

snowboard. So it's just kind of like just further conditioning the body to make sure, like you're ready for the snowboard season and so you're nice and mobile and stuff. So, yeah.

Noah Stolte 10:30

That's cool. Maybe we'll wait one second here while they do a little bit of things around us. Alright, and I hear you're working towards going to the Paralympics, was it?

Emily 11:43

Yeah, so I'm a blind snowboarder, so working towards building this board of parasnowboarding. It just started in the Paralympics in 2014 so my category is still being developed. So working to develop the category, and just like get more exposure for blind snowboarding, because it is fairly new, and they just need more athletes in order for it to get to the Paralympics. So working super hard to, like, get the word out there that blind snowboarding exists, because a lot of people don't really know it exists, because we're so it's, it's such a small group of us, but yeah, my ultimate goal is to get to the Paralympics and to, like, obviously, get blind snowboarding into the Paralympics, so yeah.

Noah Stolte 12:30

And then hopefully win at the Paralympics, right?

Emily 12:33

Absolutely.

Noah Stolte 12:34

Yeah. Okay, that's great. I hopefully maybe we can even have you back on some time to talk more about blind snowboarding, I think that would be an awesome episode, but until then, thanks so much for being on the podcast today. It's been great. I hope that you have a really great season of snowboarding ahead of you, and hope your summer was really great.

Emily 12:55

Thank you for having me on the podcast, and I'd definitely love to come back.

Noah Stolte 13:00

Awesome. Great. Thank you.