

Mary Free Bed
Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports

PROGRAM GUIDE





Enjoy the exhilaration of physical competition, and experience the intensity and focus that comes from challenging the body and mind.

Mary Free Bed Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports is one of the largest programs of its kind in the United States, offering an array of enriching recreational opportunities that serve hundreds of people with disabilities each year.

Our six-week class sessions offer participants a more relaxed and leisurely experience.

Participants must be cognitively or physically impaired. Common diagnoses include amputation, spinal cord injury, spina bifida, stroke, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, spinal muscular atrophy, hip dysplasia, cerebral palsy, arthrogryposis, traumatic brain injury and post-polio syndrome.

There may be some restrictions based on individual barriers, such as difficulty swallowing water, personal fears or age. Each sports class coordinator will answer any questions.

FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

This fitness program features constantly varied and functional movements using different workout methods. Professional coaches provide instruction with the help of a certified personal trainer.

FUTURE FRENZY

This program is for youth ages 12-16 who are interested in trying wheelchair lacrosse. The sport provides an opportunity for both able-bodied athletes and those with physical disabilities to play on the same team. Wheelchair lacrosse is a popular choice for sled hockey and wheelchair basketball athletes.

OFF-ROAD HANDCYCLING

Get out and shred the trails with the Fat Explorer III, an off-road handcycle with power-assist capabilities that can tackle single-track terrain. Off-road handcycling is offered to people with physical disabilities who can independently operate a handcycle.

ROCK CLIMBING

This exhilarating sport will challenge you to reach new heights. Variations of rope and rock climbing instruction will be offered by seasoned enthusiasts.

SPORTS SAMPLER

Children not yet old enough to join a team learn skill building, teamwork and game play. Instruction includes basketball, softball and tennis.

SWIM LESSONS

Participants with physical and cognitive disabilities safely learn to swim in a positive and fun environment. Includes one-on-one instruction from a certified water safety instructor. Adaptive swim lessons are available for school-aged children. Private swim lessons are available for people of all ages.

TENNIS

People who are ambulatory but have cognitive impairments or other challenges that make it difficult to find success during a typical tennis lesson may enjoy this class.

YOGA

Experience inner peace through the guidance of certified instructors with extensive adaptive yoga practice. This class is offered to those with cognitive and physical deficits.



Sports clinics are an opportunity to explore

a variety of sports or activities without the cost of acquiring equipment or the commitment of joining a team.

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ARCHERY

With archery, one of the original Paralympic sports, you'll feel the power of aiming at the bullseye, drawing back your bow and releasing the arrow. This clinic is offered in coordination with the West Michigan Archery Center and Kentwood Parks and Recreation department.

BOCCIA BALL CLINIC

Boccia is a precision ball sport similar to bocce ball, specifically designed for athletes with disabilities that affect motor skills. It's a Paralympic sport, meaning it's played at the highest level of competition for athletes with disabilities. Players aim to throw leather balls (either red or blue) closer to a white targeted ball, called the "jack," than their opponents.



DISC GOLF CLINIC

Whether you've never thrown a frisbee, or have played before, come learn more about this competitive sport that is growing at a rapid pace!

DOWNHILL SKIING

An invigorating schuss down the slopes provides both a good physical workout and social networking opportunities. Downhill skiing is available to individuals with various types of disabilities. Professional volunteers are provided by the Adaptive Ski Association of West Michigan. This program is offered in partnership with Kentwood Parks and Recreation.

GOLF

Our adaptive golf clinic is for those new to the sport or anyone who's spent time on a course.

In partnership with The Pines Golf Course and Ambucs, participants learn everything from the mechanics of a golf swing to balance and stance. We also explore adaptive equipment and techniques to help each player get the most out of the game.

KAYAK AND CANOE

Experience the freedom and tranquility that comes from gliding across the water's surface in a kayak or canoe. Participants receive an individual assessment to determine if adaptive equipment is necessary to enjoy these sports. The program is offered in partnership with Kentwood Parks and Recreation.

PICKLEBALL

Whether you've never picked up a paddle or are a seasoned enthusiast, join us to try this growing sport that combines ping pong and tennis. It's offered in partnership with the Grand Rapids Pickleball Club.

SAILING

Sailing is an inclusive sport with the potential to become a lifelong leisure activity. Opportunities abound for competitive pursuit or purely recreational enjoyment. This clinic provides participants with sailing techniques and the gentle finesse necessary to control the sails when heading into open waters. Adaptive sailing has been a part of the Paralympic Games since 2000 and recognition of this sport as a serious athletic discipline continues to grow. This clinic is offered in partnership with the Grand Rapids Yacht Club and Traverse Area Community Sailing.

SCUBA DIVING

Our scuba diving clinic gives participants a chance to experience the silence and weightlessness of being underwater. The clinic focuses on underwater swimming, managing scuba gear, use of adaptive swimming equipment and underwater propulsion equipment. Participants work one-on-one with a trained dive master.

WATER SKIING

For those who wish to experience the thrill and exhilaration of flying across the surface of a lake this adaptive clinic teaches sitting and standing skiing. It's offered in partnership with Kentwood Parks and Recreation.

ZIP LINE

Soar through the air during this adventurous clinic where participants are securely belayed at all times as they sail above the ground.





Mary Free Bed teams are open to anyone with a permanent physical disability that limits participation in able-bodied sports. Participants must have a physical impairment and also:

- In need of modification to participate in leisure and sports activities due to physical disability
- Able to benefit from participation in group activities
- Alert, oriented and able to follow directions
- Free of disruptive behavioral issues that would create a danger to self or others
- Living in a non-institutional setting
- Cognitively able to participate in the program at an appropriate developmental level
- Evaluated by a team coordinator and coach prior to placement
- Able to use upper extremities to independently push a sports chair or handcycle or to independently propel on the ice using sled hockey sticks. (Power wheelchairs may be used in power soccer and wheelchair tennis, based on coordinator and coach evaluation.)

BASKETBALL

MARY FREE BED JUNIOR PACERS

Wheelchair Basketball Team

The Junior Pacers have varsity and prep teams based on age and ability. Competitive athletes with good upper extremity function are invited to participate, connect with basketball and remain active with other children their age.

MARY FREE BED PACERS

Wheelchair Basketball Team (DI)

The Pacers program offers competitive wheelchair basketball for adults who live with a physical disability. Players have the opportunity to participate on a National Wheelchair Basketball Association Division I basketball team, a level of play that's fast-paced and fun to watch. The team travels to competitions across the country.

MARY FREE BED PACERS

Wheelchair Basketball Team (DIII)

This team is registered under the National Wheelchair Basketball Association and is entry-level play for individuals 16 and up.

MARY FREE BED PACERS

Wheelchair Basketball Team (Women's)

This team is for female athletes ages 14-17 who are rostered on the Mary Free Bed Junior Pacers team, as well as for women 18 and older who live with a physical disability. This team is registered under the National Wheelchair Basketball Association.

HOME TOURNAMENTS

KEEP UP THE PACE

Junior Wheelchair Basketball Tournament

This exciting annual tournament, hosted by the Junior Pacers, welcomes both varsity and prep-level teams from across the United States.

MARY FREE BED INVITATIONAL

Adult Wheelchair Basketball Tournament

The annual Mary Free Bed Invitational is hosted by the adult wheelchair basketball teams and welcomes teams in the DI, DII, DIII.

GOALBALL

In partnership with the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI), Mary Free Bed is thrilled to revive the sport of goalball. Goalball is a team sport designed specifically for athletes who are blind or visually impaired. Goalball is a unique and inclusive sport that relies on the sense of touch and hearing, allowing individuals with visual impairments to participate in a team-based athletic activity.

HANDCYCLING

The Mary Free Bed handcycling team meets weekly to ride together at Millennium Park. Individuals have the opportunity each season to participate in a number of races, including local and out-of-state. It's a great way to gain camaraderie and support when training for races, or to simply enjoy group riding.



LACROSSE

Wheelchair lacrosse is played on a roller hockey rink or box lacrosse pad. Eight players on each side use a no-bounce ball and basketball chairs.

The Frenzy, our wheelchair lacrosse team, is an opportunity for athletes with physical disabilities and able-bodied athletes to play on the same team. It's popular among sled hockey and wheelchair basketball athletes.

HOME TOURNAMENT

FRENZY FEST

Wheelchair Lacrosse Tournament

The annual Mary Free Bed Frenzy Fest is hosted by the Frenzy wheelchair lacrosse team and welcomes USA Lacrosse member teams.



RUGBY

Wheelchair rugby is not for the faint of heart. It's fast, highly aggressive and involves chair-to-chair contact. The sport is as physical and extreme as conventional rugby. Members of the co-ed Grand Rapids Thunder rugby team use specialized equipment to engage in competitive play. This sport is available to everyone who has a physical disability that involves all four limbs, including limb differences. Athletes play with heavy-duty sport chairs on a basketball court.

LOW POINT TEAM

The Grand Rapids Thunder Low Point Team is for wheelchair rugby players who are classified as a 1.5 and below. The team travels to tournaments once monthly, and nationals are held in September.

HOME TOURNAMENT

LOW POINT THUNDERFEST *Wheelchair Rugby Tournament*

The annual tournament is hosted by the Grand Rapids Thunder and welcomes DII-DIII teams.

SLED HOCKEY

GRAND RAPIDS SLED WINGS

The adult Sled Wings program is ideal for competitive athletes who enjoy the sport of hockey and have lower-limb disabilities. Participants register with USA Hockey, practice weekly and compete in home and away games in and outside of Michigan.

HOME TOURNAMENT

SLED WINGS HOME WEEKEND TOURNAMENT

hosted by the Grand Rapids Sled Wings, is a two-day annual tournament that showcases our talented adult and junior teams. Opponents travel all over the Midwest and beyond to participate.

POWER SOCCER

An exciting team sport! Players use their own power wheelchair and learn how to play through drills and scrimmages. Other equipment is provided that can easily be attached to your power chair.



OVERDRIVE POWER SOCCER INVITATIONAL *Power Soccer Tournament*

This tournament is hosted by the Mary Free Bed Overdrive Power Soccer team. Teams travel from all over the Midwest to compete in Grand Rapids. The tournament is open to all USPSA teams.

SOFTBALL

The Mary Free Bed Rollin' Whitecaps wheelchair softball team is registered under the National Wheelchair Softball Association. This sport is great for those who are looking to stay active in the summer. The Rollin' Whitecaps participate in the Wheelchair Softball World Series each summer as well as other monthly tournaments. Home base is the Mary Free Bed YMCA.

HOME TOURNAMENT

MARY FREE BED WHEELCHAIR SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

The West Michigan Rollin' Whitecaps host this tournament at the Mary Free Bed YMCA outdoor wheelchair softball field. Opponents from all over the United States travel to participate.

TENNIS

Discover the joy of tennis, a sport for life! Whether you're aiming to build strength, have fun, or ignite your competitive spirit, let's explore what tennis can mean for you!

MARY FREE BED JUNIOR WHEELCHAIR TENNIS

Children and teens with physical disabilities are coached in basic tennis skills and competitive play. Juniors practice alongside the adult team to learn drills and mobility skills, join in cardio exercise and participate in match play. Practices and games are on a standard tennis court; no special equipment or modifications to the court are necessary. This inclusive program provides practice and playing opportunities for children and teens who are full- or part-time wheelchair users. Practices are held during the summer.

MARY FREE BED ADULT WHEELCHAIR TENNIS

Adults with physical disabilities are coached in basic tennis skills and competitive play. No prior knowledge or experience playing tennis is needed to participate in our Adult Wheelchair Tennis program. Practices and games are on a standard tennis court; no special equipment or modifications to the court are necessary. This inclusive program provides practice and playing opportunities for adults who are full- or part-time wheelchair users. Practices are year-round, and team participation includes travel to tournaments across the United States.

MARY FREE BED PARA-STANDING TENNIS

This team is for adults with physical disabilities who wish to play standing up rather than playing from a sports wheelchair. Individuals who play para-standing tennis have decreased mobility due to amputations, cerebral palsy, hemiplegia, limb difference, dwarfism and other congenital conditions. This inclusive program provides practice and playing opportunities for adults of any skill level. No prior knowledge or experience playing tennis is needed to participate. We play on a standard tennis court – no special equipment or modifications to the court are necessary. Practices are throughout the season and participation includes travel to tournaments across the United States.

HOME TOURNAMENT

MIDWEST WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

You're invited to watch Mary Free Bed's own adult and junior wheelchair tennis team players compete in a highly competitive, must-see hometown tournament. More than 70 athletes participate in the adult and junior wheelchair divisions, in addition to the para-standing division. Athletes travel from across the country to Grand Rapids to compete in this USTA tournament.



AMWAY RIVER BANK RUN

Propelling forward with phenomenal arm strength and conviction, wheelchair and handcycle racers compete against elite athletes from all over the world. The Mary Free Bed Guild has proudly sponsored the 25K wheelchair race since 1989 and the handcycle race since 2005. Athletes must use a racing wheelchair or handcycle to participate. Participants include former Mary Free Bed patients, Michigan residents and athletes from across the United States and abroad. This event raises public awareness of professional athletes competing in adaptive sports.



BIKES FOR THE REST OF US

Sponsored by the Mary Free Bed Guild, Bikes for the Rest of Us is an annual event at Mary Free Bed that introduces children and adults with disabilities to the sport of adaptive bicycling. Participants are individually paired with a therapist and evaluated to determine necessary adaptations that will enable them to enjoy the freedom and fun of cycling.



JUNIOR WHEELCHAIR SPORTS CAMP

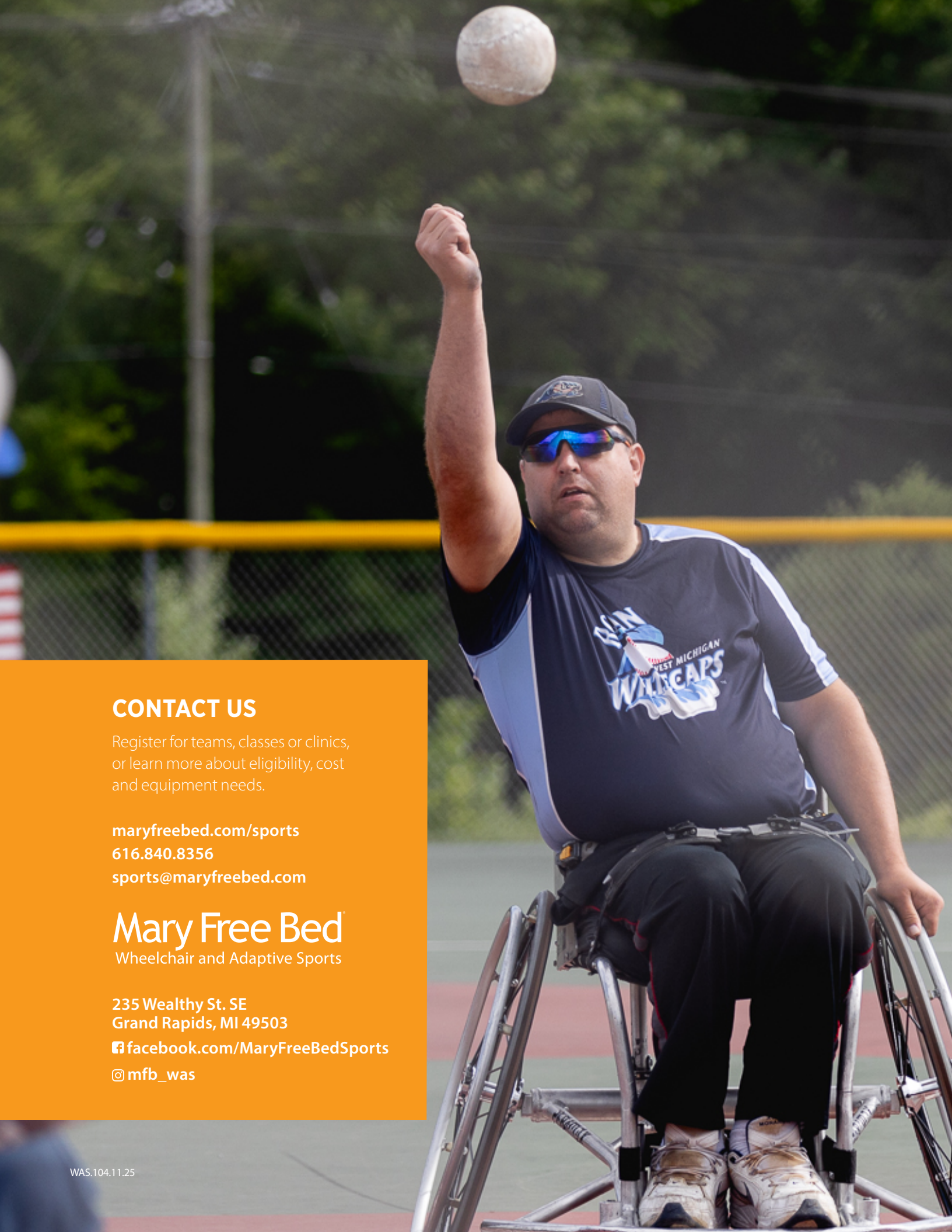
This five-day event offers kids with disabilities the chance to try out and learn a variety of sports, such as basketball, cycling, football, frisbee golf, handball, kayaking, lacrosse, sled hockey, softball, swimming and tennis. Whether a camper is interested in pursuing a higher level of competition or simply seeking a fun physical outlet, camp is a chance to spend time with peers and make lifelong friendships.



MARY FREE BED OPEN

Raise awareness and funds for Mary Free Bed Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports programs by participating in our annual golf outing. All proceeds benefit our sports programs, which provide and promote competitive and recreational adaptive sports for people with disabilities. For participation or sponsorship details, visit maryfreebed.com/foundation/events.



A man wearing a dark blue and light blue t-shirt, a dark baseball cap, and sunglasses is sitting in a wheelchair on a softball field. He is reaching up with his right arm towards a white softball that is suspended in the air above him. The background shows a chain-link fence and green trees.

CONTACT US

Register for teams, classes or clinics,
or learn more about eligibility, cost
and equipment needs.

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