



# The Connector

SPEAKING UP FOR US  
OF MAINE

## SURVIVING WINTER

If you are like me, winter isn't the easiest time. For a lot of us the cold weather isn't helpful to our disabilities. As such, we may spend more time indoors than we would any other time of the year. It also gets dark much earlier. For some of us not getting out as much and not having as much light during the day can make us feel really down. Here are some tips for keeping yourself healthier during the colder days coming.



1. Talk to people. Talk to your friends, talk to your family. Just stay involved with people. It's ok to have alone time, everybody needs that. However too much time alone can make you feel depressed.
2. Do things that you enjoy. Whether its crafts, tv, sports, puzzles or any number of things. Doing things that you enjoy can lift your spirits and make you feel better.
3. Exercise- whether you go to the gym, swim at the YMCA, lift weights in your apartment or push your wheelchair all around your house, it's important to get some kind of physical activity and don't forget, we also have the Sports Chapter here at SUFU!
4. Get enough sleep. If you are tired, not only are you cranky (or at least I am) but when people are tired they tend to make decisions that they might not have make if they had gotten more sleep.
5. Eat well. Eating healthier can help you have more energy and lift your spirits. The last few months I've been watching what I eat more, drinking a lot more water and cutting down on caffeine and chocolate. I'm not going to say it's easy because it's not, always. However, I will say that it has been helping me.
6. Make sure to go to your doctors and dentist. It's important especially during the winter months that we stay as healthy as possible. So go to your checkups, get your flu shots, make sure you brush your teeth every day (believe it or not that is something I have forgotten to do if I'm in my house for a long time).
7. Find a counselor if you need to. Sometimes when things get really stressful, having a counselor to talk to can really help. Asking for help doesn't mean that you are weak. In fact, asking for help is one of the strongest things people can do.
8. Get outside when you can. Whether it's going into town with friends to see a movie, having dinner with your parents at a restaurant, taking a walk outside, or playing hockey, it's really important to get fresh air and get out among people. You can have fun and also feel better. And you can always have hot chocolate or hot cider when you get home.

So just because it's cold, doesn't mean that you can't enjoy yourself this winter. So let's all get out there and have some fun!

### Going After His Dream: Terrence Reidy

By Avery Olmstead

Terrence Reidy is one busy man! This SUFU Member from the Presque Isle Chapter (and awesome Conference emcee) is not only active with SUFU, but he's a full-time college student and he's a runner on his school's cross country team! I talked with Terrence about this journey he's begun...

#### What are you studying in college?

I'm studying Athletic Training at the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

#### What is Athletic Training?

Athletic Training is making sure that athletes are as healthy as can be, well fed, and able to do the sport that they are trained to do.

#### What is your dream job?

My dream job would be to be an athletic trainer and coach for runners. I want to encourage and inspire runners to be the best that they can!

#### What made you want to go to college?

My parents and friends really motivated me, encouraging me that I could do it, and it was also very important to me.

#### Were you nervous going to college as a person with a disability?

At first, yes. When I first got into classes and realized all the reading that I would have to do, it did feel a little overwhelming. However, my parents and my friends helped me realize that I didn't have to do everything at once and that if I scheduled my time and did one thing at a time I'd be ok, and I have been.

#### You're also on your college's cross country running team. What has that been like?

It's been great. It feels like we're all a big family. We really do help each other. If someone is having a bad day we do our best to help our teammate. We just went to a meet in Virginia Beach, Virginia. It was a little overwhelming because it was a pretty big place but it was also a lot of fun.

#### What would you say to a SUFU Member who had a dream that he/she wanted to accomplish but they were nervous about starting it?

Follow your dreams and keep pushing forward even when people tell you that you can't do it. It's going to be hard sometimes but it's going to be worth it!

*I have no doubt that Terrence is going to make a difference in whatever he decides to do!*



## How come it's important for people with disabilities to be self-advocates?

"So they can be heard and get what they need..." *Haley Pass – SUFU Portland Chapter*

"Because if we don't advocate for ourselves, laws might be written that we don't agree with or hurts us in the short or even long term..." *Tucker Conley – SUFU Portland Chapter*

"So that we are able to do things for ourselves and not have to worry about what people say or what people think." *John Landry – SUFU Bangor Chapter*

"I think it's important to educate people with and without disabilities about us. I also think it's important to learn from each other and have empathy towards each other." *Sarah Trites – SUFU Lewiston Chapter*

### REMEMBERING THE 2016 SUFU CONFERENCE ...

I was looking at conference pictures the other day, and thinking, "that was fun!" There was something for everybody: Beautiful Scenery (Personally, everybody hanging out on the beach listening to music was my favorite part). Geocaching with Abbott's dad, Bike riding with Laurie, Crafts with Krista, learning to eat healthier and take care of our money, and of course...The Prairie Dogs!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ☺ I'm impressed every time with the moves I see everybody doing on the dance floor. Y'all have some rhythm! And from the evaluations we received, people seemed to love the conference, too. ☺

Next year's conference is going to be September 26 & 27! Fundraise, Fundraise, Fundraise, so we can have as many people as possible enjoy themselves. ☺ Here are some pictures to remind us of that great time...

[\(click to see the full-sized gallery!\)](#)



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