



ROCHESTER ACCESSIBLE ADVENTURES RECEIVES TWO-YEAR FUNDING FROM REI COOPERATIVE ACTION FUND TO SUPPORT BUILDING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE OUTDOORS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROCHESTER, NY – November 15, 2023– ROCHESTER ACCESSIBLE ADVENTURES (RAA) is proud to announce two-year funding support from the [REI Cooperative Action Fund](#) for our work in promoting and connecting people with disabilities in the outdoors.

Eighty percent of health and wellness takes place outside of medical offices -- and these are often the very spaces that have not been accessible to or inclusive of people living with a disability. Without intentional planning in outdoors spaces like municipal and county parks, campgrounds, and trails, this often results in a person with a disability being left on a dock, turning around at the end of the sidewalk, or just staying home while the rest of the family goes out.

“Rochester Accessible Adventures is intent on creating a culture of inclusion in the outdoors, and the support from the REI Cooperative Action Fund provides a significant boost to the development of our next plans,” stated Anita O’Brien, RAA Executive Director. “The benefits of participation in outdoor recreation and leisure are well-documented, and we must ensure people living with a disability have equitable access to areas and programs designed for human engagement. We are gathering regional collaborators and partners that will enable us to push our preliminary impact to a broad, dynamic level.”

Rochester Accessible Adventures has been working in the outdoor and tourism industries since its formation in 2015, providing consultative solutions to small businesses and groups like Erie Canal Boat Company, Genesee Valley Audubon Society and Genesee Land Trust, municipalities like Victor Parks and Recreation and Perinton Recreation & Parks, as well as regional and statewide entities like the Village of Brockport, NYS DEC, On the Canals, and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. By bolstering the ability of these entities to provide their services in a manner that directly and clearly EXPECTS AND INVITES people with disabilities to participate in the outdoors, RAA’s work has resulted in dramatic increase in local, regional, and statewide destination travel and outdoor recreation by people with disabilities.

We are thrilled to continue bringing much-needed attention to the outdoor arena and we are excited to invite the community to join us! Organizations, community groups, businesses, individuals, and inclusion allies who are interested in supporting and joining in RAA’s 2024 work towards equitable access in the outdoors are encouraged to contact RAA directly at RAA@RochesterAccessibleAdventures.org or through our website contact form.

The REI Cooperative Action Fund is a community-supported public charity bringing together the collective strength of the community to support organizations that are improving the well-being of all people through time outside.

About Rochester Accessible Adventures

Rochester Accessible Adventures is a non-profit with a mission to improve the health and wellness of people with disabilities by guiding communities to create a culture of physical accessibility, social inclusion and equitable open access in recreation, sport and tourism. RAA works with recreation businesses across the Greater Rochester, Finger Lakes and Western New York region, providing training and guidance to enable those businesses to operate inclusively whenever their doors are open. Their work engages entities like Midtown Athletic Club & USTA Eastern to develop inclusive tennis instruction, Perinton Recreation & Parks and Victor Recreation & Parks to develop access to inclusive recreation and mountain biking, Girls Scouts of WNY to ensure scouting is inclusive of people with disabilities, and the DEC Region 8 to enhance connections to accessible outdoor recreation. They also work with libraries, schools, after-school programs, tourism businesses, and more. This work has resulted in: tangible operational change that sustains a culture of inclusion, removal of physical barriers, and increases in participation in active recreation by over 800 individuals with a variety of intellectual/developmental and physical disabilities – alongside their family, friends and peers without disability.

For more information about Rochester Accessible Adventures , visit www.RochesterAccessibleAdventures.org

###

Contact

Anita O'Brien, Executive Director, Rochester Accessible Adventures
585-491-6011, aobrien@RochesterAccessibleAdventures.org