

# PRAIRIE GRIT

 ADAPTIVE SPORTS

JANUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

WITH **GRIT** ANYTHING  
IS POSSIBLE



## Community Rocks! Concert to Benefit PGAS Athletes

The sixth annual Community Rocks! concert and fundraiser will be February 15 at The Grand in Minot – with funds benefiting Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports. We couldn't be more excited to have been selected as the recipient of this huge community undertaking! Tickets are on sale now – with a limited number available for purchase. There is a good chance that the event will be sold out, so go online ([communityrocksnd.org](http://communityrocksnd.org)) to order your tickets or drop in to Eckroth Music (formerly Jacobsen Music) or Classic Rock Coffee.

Along with the amazing rock-n-roll music performed by a 35-piece orchestra, the non-profit event will include something uniquely Prairie Grit. In lieu of a silent auction, participants will be given opportunities to experience life as a participant of Prairie Grit's offerings. This means getting into a hockey sled for a chance at scoring a goal, experiencing an obstacle course through the eyes of a disabled youth or adult, or trying your hand at a basketball game while in a wheelchair. All funds raised for Prairie Grit will be used to purchase sport wheelchairs for athletes use in basketball, tennis and other events – with the goal of increasing frequency and types of opportunities offered in Minot!

A huge thanks to Community Rocks! founders Andy Bertsch and Erik Anderson – as well as their board, musicians and volunteers who will make this a special night for all involved.

## Twice Blessed a Huge Success

We'd like to send a HUGE thank you to Chippewa Resources for donating \$5,000 to Prairie Grit, for the Twice Blessed campaign. Under this program, the St. Joseph's Community Health Foundation will be matching the first \$5,000 to help fund supplies and equipment for our Track & Field program! In total, this matching grant opportunity raised \$12,300 for Prairie Grit.

Chippewa Resources is a one-stop service solution for the oilfield industry in North Dakota. The company provides clients with professional field services that includes inspection services, GIS/survey solutions and project management. The Twice Blessed program started in 2018, with the goal of helping to donate more than \$600,000 annually to dozens of organizations throughout 11 counties in northcentral North Dakota.

We are lucky to be a part of Twice Blessed this year and can't thank Chippewa Resources enough for being our lead donor to the program and thank you to the St. Joseph's Community Health Foundation for matching this donation!

## PGAS Leadership Attended National Adaptive Sports Conference in Arizona

Krystal Butgereit, PGAS executive director, Chad Thompson, PGAS board president and co-founder, and Angie Thompson, board member and co-founder attended the National Adaptive Sports Conference in Phoenix, Arizona on November 10-12, 2019. The conference took place at Ability 360, which inspired Prairie Grit leaders to increase accessibility and inclusion in the Minot area. The National Adaptive Sports Conference offered training, education, and networking opportunities in the field of adaptive sports. The group was able to meet thought leaders in the industry, have conversations with adaptive sports equipment vendors, and be further inspired and energized to move Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports forward!

## Background Checks

Starting January 1, 2020, PGAS will be requiring all coaches, volunteers, and participants age 16 years and older to complete a background check. PGAS is a non-profit organization that serves, in part, vulnerable populations. We are requiring the background check to be completed before participation in any of Prairie Grit's events. The background checks will assist us in protecting our participants and to ensure opportunities for continued funding.

The background checks are being completed free of charge thanks to the Minot YMCA. All participants and volunteers must stop at the YMCA and sign an authorization to complete the check. If you are already a current member of the YMCA, you do not need to complete this process again. Thank you in advance for your cooperation as we continue to grow our program! The checks can be completed at the YMCA, any weekday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. – just ask for Cody Borud while at the front desk. Let us know of any questions you might have.



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## Volunteer Spotlight – Rylin Sortland

Rylin, born and raised in Minot, ND is 22 years old. He graduated in 2016 from Minot High School, and played hockey and football growing up. Enrolled at Minot State University, set to graduate in 2020 in nursing.

**Q.** Why are you involved with Prairie Grit?

**A.** It would have been the start of my sophomore year of college, I was looking for some volunteer work. I hadn't quite gotten into the (MSU) nursing program, so I had some free time, beside working and fishing. And, my younger brother was still at the rink 24/7 and he didn't have his license yet, so my folks were bringing him back and forth and they ran in to Chad and Angie (Thompson), and that was right when they were starting up Prairie Grit. And I thought what better thing to volunteer for than hockey, and especially something that gives back to a population that doesn't quite have the advantages of going to the rink and playing hockey like my brother and I did growing up.

**Q.** So, was it pretty easy to get started on volunteering?

**A.** Well, (my) dad told me that Prairie Grit was the name of this organization that was up and coming. They already had their website up, so I went on there and I saw a contact for Drew Hanson – never heard of the guy before in my life! – but, I shot him an email and gave him a little bit about myself and said I'd be interested in helping out. That would have been about September, and the first practice was the middle of October. He (Drew) said, "I'll meet you there!" So, we did it and from there on the rest is history. He (Drew) became one of my best friends.

**Q.** What do you enjoy the most about volunteering?

**A.** I think the thing I enjoy the most is just really getting to know the kids and their families and their own unique stories. It definitely gives you a different outlook on the challenges that they face and then having that in the back of your mind. You see them show up every Saturday morning, with a smile on their face. It's kind of like all those challenges just go out the window and I think that's one of the most beautiful things about Prairie Grit.

**Q.** Talk me through a typical day as a volunteer.

**A.** I have gotten in the (hockey) sleds with them a few times, but most of the time all of the parents that come with their children are very helpful. Drew and I usually show up – and sometimes the Thompsons of course – 15 to 20 minutes early and get everything out of the storeroom. As the kids show up we get their sleds out of the backroom. I help them to get buckled in and on to the ice. For about the first hour, depending on when they show up, it's kind of full swing just getting them in and getting them out there. And then I usually have a good chunk of time to go out there and pass with them, or shoot with them, help them out. Recently we had Chris Douglas – who is on the (Team USA) Paralympics sled team – move to town. So that really helped out because growing up playing hockey on two feet is kind of hard to teach a kid how to stop and turn (in a sled) when I really don't know how myself. He's (Chris) helped out a lot as far as the coaching aspect of things, I just kind of help out with the hands-on, getting them on and off the ice, getting them ready to go.



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**Q.** So, what are you looking forward to the most with Prairie Grit in 2020?

**A.** In 2020, I am really just looking forward to broadening our horizons. We started with sled hockey, which is kind of the core of Prairie Grit, but there are so many wonderful things that have come from that, as far as adaptive swimming, basketball, track and field, gymnastics – you name it, we’ve done it. Adaptive archery, we’ve brought the kids out to the trap range to shoot shotguns, skeet. It’s really fun to just watch this grow.

**Q.** What else would you want people to know about volunteering or about being involved with Prairie Grit?

**A.** I think as the years have gone by the message has gotten out in the community and a lot of people know about it (Prairie Grit). But, I still see kids that aren’t as privileged or have a disability and I don’t know if they don’t know about it, or just don’t take interest, but I would like to see that everybody knows. And it’s not even just kids, we’ve got a couple of adults who have disabilities and they come out there right alongside the kids and age doesn’t really matter. I guess that’s kind of the big thing, that it doesn’t matter how old you are, if sports is your thing we have the tools to help you out.

**Q.** Anything else you want to add?

**A.** I would like to say thanks to all the parents and athletes – specifically the Thompsons and Drew – for all of the friendships they have given me and the memories we have made so far.

## Athlete Spotlight – Conner Marquart

Connor is 9 years old, lives in Minot, ND and goes to school in Burlington, ND. He is in to swimming with the Minot Swim Club and likes sled hockey.

**Q.** How did you first get involved with Prairie Grit?

**A.** Well, I think the first sport I did with them was sled hockey. One day, I didn’t have much to do and Palmer (Thompson) invited me. And that was my first time on the ice.

**Q.** What did you think?

**A.** I was just like, ‘How am I supposed to do this?’ Cause it’s really hard to understand what the people are saying to you when they are trying to put a helmet on you and buckle you up in the sled and then trying to send you out! I kind of stayed near the middle of the ice, so I didn’t crash into the boards.

**Q.** You also do swimming, can you tell me about your swimming experiences?

**A.** The swim meets were really fun, now I am on the (Minot Swim Club) swimming team. If it weren’t for them (Prairie Grit swim meets), I wouldn’t have wanted to swim.

**Q.** What’s the most exciting thing about Prairie Grit?

**A.** I would say, sled hockey. Because I love to play it – it has the two things that I like, scoring and not needing to run! I have also done track and field and I have gotten first place in most of the events. I have broken five national records. (60-meter, 100-meter, shot put, long jump, and discus).



**Q.** Conner, if you were talking to a friend of yours, someone who might be nervous about participating in Prairie Grit, what would you tell them?

**A.** It's going to be OK. They're very nice. It's not like they are mean or anything.

**Q.** Do you have a favorite coach?

**A.** Yvette Matthews, she's my track and field coach. (Yvette is with Dreams in Motion, out of Bismarck, and partnered with Prairie Grit for track and field in 2019.)

**Q.** What am I missing? Is there anything else you would like to tell people who would be reading this story about you?

**A.** That all kids are welcome if they have a disability, like I do. I don't get to do certain things because my balance is not that great. But through Prairie Grit I get more opportunities.

**QDOBA**  
MEXICAN EATS

## Ways to Give

Amazon.com Smile: You shop, Amazon gives. When you shop at Amazon.com they will donate a percentage of your order to Prairie Grit. Be sure to select Prairie Grit as your non-profit choice to activate.

[smile.amazon.com/ch/81-3690358](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/81-3690358)

Thrivent Financial: If you are a member of Thrivent Financial you can direct your choice of dollars to benefit Prairie Grit.

[Thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/](https://Thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/)

Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports: [www.prairiegritsports.com/donate](https://www.prairiegritsports.com/donate)



# Upcoming Events

## Sled Hockey

The following Saturday mornings from 8-10 a.m. at the MAYSA Arena - West Rink.

- Jan. 18
- Feb. 8, 15, 22, 29

Prairie Grit Sled Hockey Tournament at the MAYSA Arena - West Rink.

- Apr. 17, 18, 19

## Adult Sled Hockey

The following Wednesday evenings from 8:30-10 p.m. at the MAYSA Arena - West Rink.

- Jan. 22, 29

## Indoor Biking

1-3 p.m. at the YMCA.

- Feb. 9

## Swimming

12 p.m. at the YMCA.

- Mar. 7

## Martial Arts

The following Saturday mornings from 10-11 a.m. at Shou Shu Martial Arts. (Ages 6+)

- Apr. 4, 11, 18, 25

## Gymnastics

The following Sundays from 3-4 p.m. at Gymagic Gymnastics.

- Jan. 19, 26
- Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

## Triathlon Training

The following Sundays from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the YMCA.

- Jan. 24, 31
- Feb. 7, 14

## Triathlon

At the YCMA.

- Feb. 22

## Skiing and Tubing Day

At Bottineau Winter Park.

- Feb. 23

## Track & Field

The following Monday evenings at 6 p.m. at the Duane Carlson Stadium Track. (Ages 3-6)

- May 4, 11, 18

The following Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. at the Duane Carlson Stadium Track. (Ages 6-14)

- Jun. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

## Mark Your Calendar

### 3rd Annual Golf Tournament

Jun. 8 at Vardon Golf Club

### Triangle Y Camp

Jul. 11, 12 at Triangle Y Camp near Garrison

### Adaptive Fishing Day

Jul. 9 at Van Hook Resort

### Brady Samson Memorial Water Sports Day

Aug. 8 at Lake Metigoshe