

Abby Schaible

Flyin Ryan Adventure Scholarship Application

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Sports have been one of, if not the most, important thing in my life for nearly 20 years. I feel like the most authentic version of myself when I am outside, moving my body in and with nature. I started skiing in the second grade through an afterschool program that brought us to the local ski hill. Even though it was only 800 feet it felt like the Alps to my friends and I. I was and still am the only person in my family who skis. It wasn't easy for my family to afford the afterschool program, let alone all the equipment. I relied on rental equipment for the years I was in the program, so when I reached high school and the program ended, my skiing career looked like it was going to as well.

Since I was the only member of my family who skied, it didn't seem like skiing would be something that would continue in high school. However, my sophomore year I made a friend who loved skiing as much as I did, and his mom happened to have an old pair of skis and boots she no longer used. I'll never forget this pair of skis; K2 Sweet Luvs that were totally wrong for me, but I made work for almost ten years. Throughout high school, I only went skiing a few times a year, but those days were some of the most memorable moments of my teen years. I loved loading up Kyle's Subaru with all our ski stuff and making the trek to Whiteface, blasting the latest Warren Miller soundtrack on our way. In middle school, I'd also taken up running. It was the perfect way for me to burn the copious amounts of energy I had and I quickly fell in love with spending time on the track. After graduating high school, I went to Utica College, where I made the cross country and track teams. Skiing, or really any other sport that had a risk of injury, was frowned upon by our coaches, so I didn't ski at all my Freshman or Sophomore years. I still had those K2 Sweet Luvs, and even brought them to college with me in hopes that I would find a way to use them at least a few times.

Junior year, three friends and I decided we wanted to go on spring break. I was scrolling through Groupon, looking for travel deals when I saw the perfect deal: a trip to Tunnel Mountain Resort in Alberta, Canada. It boasted pictures of huge, rocky snow-capped mountains, something I had always dreamed of seeing. I immediately sent it to my friends and booked the trip on the spot. We drove cross-country to Canada for a 3-day mountain adventure with 2 days of driving on each end. Kyle, the same friend who helped keep my ski passion alive in high school, mentioned that there was a ski resort near our hotel, Lake Louise, so we bought lift tickets for one day.

It is an understatement to say I was not prepared to ski much of the terrain I descended that day at Lake Louise, but it will always be one of the best days of my life. I will never forget skiing my first bowl, and the feeling you get standing atop a mountain and looking out at dozens of other peaks. In that moment, I knew that spending time in the mountains would be something I would shape the rest of my life around.

Fast forward to today, and I am writing this to you from my home in Jeffersonville, Vermont, ten minutes from Smugglers Notch. I moved to Vermont after college, thinking it would be a temporary move until I saved enough money to move west, but now I have no plans to leave. The Green Mountains have shown me that mountains don't need to be massive to be fun. I find time to get out and explore my backyard year round, hunting for new ski lines or enjoying a wonderful mountain run, and I am so grateful for every one of these moments.

My partner and I are planning a trip to the Gaspesie Peninsula this February to ski the Chic Chocs for a week. It's something we have been talking about since we first met and it is finally coming to fruition after the pandemic derailed our first attempt. Spending a week on skis in big-mountain terrain while still on the east coast seems like the perfect culmination of my personal journey with the mountains.

Before I ski in the Chic Chocs, I would like to take my AIARE Level 1 course. COVID and the recent rise in inflation has hit me hard financially, which is why I am applying for the Flyin Ryan Adventure Scholarship. Unfortunately, the price tag of \$495 for the course is unrealistic for me right now, but I feel it is essential that I complete an AIARE Level 1 before venturing into avalanche terrain. I would be so grateful if you could help me cover the cost of my avalanche education course so I can continue to grow as an adventurer and skier.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application and I look forward to hearing from you.

Shred on,  
Abby