

The Intelligencer

Improvements for disabled a labor of love

By Gary Weckselblatt Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, March 30, 2014 12:00 am

When Peter Clayton needed help to update ski equipment designed for people with disabilities, he knew just where to turn — to the man who had bought his electromechanical device business.

So, Clayton, a volunteer ski instructor with the Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports, called on Kip Anthony, president and CEO of EFE Labs in Horsham.

The collaboration between the two Bucks County residents is designed to benefit skiers with disabilities by modernizing the monoski (pronounced mono-ski), which is essentially a seat bolted to a single ski that allows the user to ski independently.

“It gives the individual such confidence (to be able to ski independently),” said Clayton, who teaches people with disabilities each weekend at the Camelback Mountain Resort in the Pocono Mountains. “Their motto is ‘If I can do this, I can do anything.’ It’s absolutely true.”

The center’s four monoskis were made by Grove Technologies, which has gone out of business. Clayton said the obsolete equipment he needs to replace costs between \$4,000 and \$5,000 each — and the adapted sports center has four of them in storage because they no longer were compatible with other equipment.

When approached by Clayton, Anthony put engineer Buddy Salerno on the job to modify the monoskis to allow them to accept a user’s modern snow skis. Anthony said the Groves, which were built of titanium, which is super lightweight, are “coveted.”

“The skis, bindings, boots, have moved forward over time,” Anthony said. “They needed an apparatus that would marry that to the ski. We’re creating a new interface so we can use them (the monoskis) again.”

Clayton and Anthony met last week at the Horsham-based business to discuss upgrades to the monoski. The effort is a passion for Clayton, a Warrington resident, and a labor of love for Anthony, who lives in Hilltown.

“It’s a wonderful program,” Anthony said of the [Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports](#), which is part of Disabled Sports USA. “It’s a win-win.”

“I’ve wanted the company to have an impact in the community. We’re really fortunate to have an opportunity to support the center with our modest contribution,” he added. “To help other people overcome their challenges and drive forward to more fulfilling lives and have a sense of pride and accomplishment is a really wonderful thing.”

For the last two years, EFE Labs has been ranked in the Philadelphia 100 list of the fastest growing, privately held companies in the region.

According to its website — EFElabs.com — the company is a solutions-based contract manufacturer that collaborates with customers in diverse markets on product design, development and manufacturing.

Clayton is sold on EFE. Then again, he used to own it.

“It’s the first prototype and skiers love it,” he said of EFE’s handiwork. “People see it and say, ‘When can I get one of those?’ “

Clayton is proud that two of the center’s students — Stephanie Jallen and Tyler Carter — competed in the recent Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games. Jallen won two bronze medals.

While few reach that lofty level, Clayton said the monoski can open a door for people with disabilities.

“My hope would be they see this and say ‘Maybe I can be involved with some things,’ “ he said. “They can try rowing, swimming, sailing, bicycling. ... I’d like more people to get to know this ski technology and see how they’ll be able to benefit from it. I’m very passionate about this.”