

The Tennessean, Davidson A.M.\*/ 07/05/07

# Mother's mission evolves into Sports 4 All

## West Nashville nonprofit helps those with disabilities get sports equipment

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Sara Koppelman and Kris Salisbury show off the snowboards donated to the Sports 4 All Foundation. They have boxes of donated sports equipment stacked in their offices just off Charlotte Avenue in West Nashville. (NICOLE YOUNG / THE TENNESSEAN)

It began with a mother and her daughter, and has grown to what it is today, a nonprofit organization partnering with more than 20 other nonprofits to bring the fun of sports to those with disabilities.

Sports 4 All Foundation, a West Nashville-based, two-woman operation, became an official nonprofit organization a little over two years ago. Founder Kris Salisbury, who now serves as president and CEO, has been working on its mission for about 12 years total.

Salisbury, a Cheatham County resident, began Sports 4 All because of her daughter, Erica, 22, who has Down's syndrome.

"She's very involved with the Special Olympics," Salisbury said of Erica. "Throughout our years at the Olympics with Erica, we'd notice that some of the kids didn't have the proper equipment to compete. My husband and I would buy it for them just out of our own pockets."

Salisbury and her husband, Dennis, own a retail skiing-snowboarding-diving shop called Neptune Diving and Ski in West Nashville.

Dennis Salisbury has run the business for the past 34 years. Kris Salisbury has been involved for the past 15 years, after the couple married.

"With the business in place, we had the retail contacts we needed to get the equipment we needed," Salisbury said. "We did it because we saw the need and everyone deserves to have nice equipment that fits and works properly for sports."

## About Sports 4 All Foundation

Location: 5827 Charlotte Pike in Nashville

Phone: 354-6454

**Contacts:** Kris Salisbury, president and CEO, and Sara Koppelman, program manager.

Web site: [www.s4af.org](http://www.s4af.org)

**Mission:** To improve the quality of life of those with disabilities by providing funding and equipment to enable full participation in sporting and recreational activities.

**How to donate:** Call or visit the Web site for complete information.

All donations are tax deductible.

- One-third of the funding comes from grants.
- One-third comes from private donations and fundraising efforts.
- One-third comes from liquidating unused equipment.



Kris Salisbury, CEO and president of Sports 4 All Foundation, and Program and Development Manager Sara Koppelman go through equipment donated to the foundation by community members, stored in their offices in West Nashville. (NICOLE YOUNG / THE TENNESSEAN)

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## Koppelman joins up

In October of 2006, the foundation welcomed Salisbury's self-described right hand, Sara Koppelman, who now serves as the program manager.

Koppelman, who lives in Nashville just off West End, joined Sports 4 All after meeting Salisbury through the foundation.

"I was working in a sports camp for kids with Down's syndrome," Koppelman said. "And we didn't have the proper equipment. The kids didn't have balls, baseball bats or other equipment to have fun, and the camp couldn't afford to buy it, so I went online and found Kris and Sports 4 All."

Koppelman said the pair hit it off and began working together unofficially.

"I've been around people with disabilities my whole life. My father had a disability, multiple sclerosis, and raised me.

"When I was growing up I didn't see kids with disabilities at school. I don't know if they stayed home or what. But, having my dad raise me, I just thought everyone had someone at home with a disability. It really hit home for me every time we went out in public. It's easy to focus on what someone can't do instead of what the person is able to do."

## What they've done

Both Salisbury and Koppelman are volunteer coaches in the Special Olympics.

At last year's games they coached a 10-member track and field team.

"The kids live for the Special Olympics. It's not only about winning for them either, it's more than just competition. It's the friendships and the social aspect of it. Sure, winning medals does give them a sense of accomplishment, but it's more about the health aspect of it all," Salisbury said. "Once the kids leave school, they really no longer have an avenue of exercise. This leads to obesity and heart problems, and it's a growing problem."

In addition to the Special Olympics, Sports 4 All also has a partnership with Saddle Up, a horseback riding camp in Franklin.

Recently, the foundation presented Saddle Up with two new saddles for disabled riders. About 130 children visit Saddle Up each week and benefit from the saddles.

Through Make-A-Wish Foundation, Sports 4 All worked to grant the wish of a young man who wanted to snowboard, but didn't have the proper equipment.

"Basically what we do can be described as a collaboration between non-profit and nonprofit," Salisbury said. "Together we meet our individual goals and our mission."

Other partnerships include Able and Wounded Warriors.

Although the foundation's work is contained to Williamson and Davidson Counties for now, Salisbury hopes to expand into other areas of Tennessee.

"We're looking for community voices and volunteers," she said. "We're very grassroots right now. We're an army of two, but we're always looking for more to join the cause."



Kris Salisbury founded Sports 4 All Foundation to help bring sports equipment to those with disabilities (NICOLE YOUNG / THE TENNESSEAN)



Sports 4 All foundation volunteers : Koppelman and Kris Salisbury coach at the Special Olympic Summer Games this year. Here they are pictured with members of the track and field team following the competition. (COURT OF SARA KOPPELMAN)