

mélange

# Accessible Journeys

January 2025

Navigating  
the world with

## LIMB DIFFERENCES

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# LET'S GET *Beaching*



Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, has hundreds of attractions and things to do around its 60 miles of sunny beaches. From watching sunrises over the Atlantic to long nights listening to live music, there's never a dull moment. To sample, here are four activities anyone could (and should) do when at The Beach.



Ripley's Aquarium of Myrtle Beach



Captain Hook's Adventure Golf

## SEE CREATURES OF THE SEA

Ripley's Aquarium Myrtle Beach – located in the bustling Broadway at The Beach entertainment, dining and shopping hub – is a great way to check out marine life up close. While you're there, say hi to its two newest residents: the two-toed sloths named Rico and Cleo.

## HIT THE (MINI) COURSE

There's a reason Myrtle Beach is known as the Mini Golf Capital of the World. There are over 30 courses, including the Peter Pan-themed Captain Hook's Adventure Golf. Embark on Captain Hook's ship, save Tinkerbell and see where the Lost Boys live in a fully ADA-accessible course.

## GET THE BEST OCEAN VIEWS

Even with 60 miles of beaches, one spot stands out for the best ocean views around: the SkyWheel. It's the largest observation wheel on the East Coast, and its private climate-controlled gondolas are accessible for everyone looking for stunning views.

## CATCH A LIVE SHOW

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Ready to have some fun at The Beach?  
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VISIT  
*Myrtle Beach*  
SOUTH CAROLINA

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# Note from the Guest Editor



By Talli Osborne

**T**his world wasn't built for a girl like me, but that's not stopping me from exploring it.

As a woman without both of my arms and with shortened legs, I know firsthand both the joy and the obstacles that come with travelling. There's a unique kind of empowerment that comes with venturing into the world, exploring new places, and embracing new experiences—even when there are bumps in the road. Literally. Especially when I was travelling via my scooter over cobblestone streets in Italy, England and Quebec City. Accessibility is often seen as a luxury or a feature added on for convenience, but for people like me, it's not just about ease; it's about freedom, independence, and dignity.

In my journey as a traveller with physical challenges, I've learned that accessible travel isn't just about finding ramps and elevators—though those are essential. It's about how a place, service, or experience can be transformed to make me feel included, respected, and capable of fully enjoying what the world has to offer. I approach travel with resilience and resourcefulness. Yes, there are challenges, but there are solutions, and many of them require a bit of creativity and a ton of patience.

One of the first lessons I learned was the importance of research. With a little time spent online, you can uncover what accessible amenities a destination provides. Although what may be labeled as “accessible”, may not necessarily be accessible for me. We all have different accessibility needs, and coming from a woman with a very unique body, finding accessible amenities and destinations is always a challenge.

When I travel, I make sure to take a proactive role in communicating my needs. I reach out ahead of time to hotels, and transportation services to ensure they are ready to meet my needs. There's nothing worse than arriving at a place only to realize that there's no accessible entrance, or that the elevator is out of order. By setting clear expectations early on, I can minimize frustration and set myself up for success.

Sometimes though, things don't go as planned. Accessibility features might not work, or something might be less accessible than I anticipated.

When I traveled to Italy, it was so much harder to get around than I could've imagined, especially in Rome. Most buildings, being historical, weren't accessible to me and my mobility scooter, but even worse, the sidewalks and curbs were a nightmare. There was often no slope to get onto the sidewalk, or if there was one, there was often times a car parked across it.

I have family in Agropoli, a small town on the Amalfi coast, and I was eager to visit them. My sister and I investigated getting from Naples to Agropoli and we found an accessible train (Yay!). However, when we got to the train station with tickets we already paid for and began boarding, we realized

my scooter wasn't going to fit on the lift they had available. I tried, but my scooter was just a few inches too long and they refused to board me. We were gutted as we had family ready to meet. But instead of letting these setbacks derail my experience, I focused on solutions. We ended up hiring a private accessible van to drive us there, which cost us hundreds of dollars! When travelling with physical challenges, you need to be open to asking for help when you need it, to be flexible with your itinerary, and be ready for unexpected expenses. I don't let obstacles stop me, I find another route, another way to adapt, and keep going. And being able to hug family I had only ever heard about, made it all worthwhile.

The world is changing, and there's a growing recognition of the need for inclusive travel experiences. More businesses, attractions, and destinations are realizing that welcoming people of all abilities isn't just good for individuals; it's good for business. And the beauty of this change is that it benefits everyone. Did you know that in London, England every single taxi is wheelchair accessible? They have special “Black Cars” that were built to be taxis and they're completely accessible, for everyone. Isn't that amazing? Why can't every city do this? It would make this world so much more inclusive and easy to get around. Accessible design often results in better experiences for all travellers, disability or not.

Travelling has taught me resilience and resourcefulness, and how to find the best in every situation. It's not just about the destination; it's about the journey—and the knowledge that with the right mindset and the right resources, there's no place I can't go. ■

Talli



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**ARIZONA**

# Leading Off: Navigating the world with limb differences

## Living life on our terms

By Jan Bonville



**T**his issue celebrates our fellow adventurers, explorers and travellers who, as always, are determined not to let something like a major disability get in the way of our dreams.

We spotlight travellers with a variety of limb differences—our Guest Editor, Talli Osborne, Erin Ball, Lisa Butler, Miriam Osborne, Nadine Richards and others, fully lean into their identities, celebrating how this has challenged and strengthened them into the unique, resourceful individuals they are.

In the uplifting stories shared, they are candid about the challenges of navigating a world that is not designed for disability, yet they

meet these and countless other challenges with persistence and self-advocacy.

Other stories in our January issue include deaf and LGBTQ+ filmmaker Ladan Sahraei, who navigates a new world with all odds against her; Dave Steele, despite his progressive blindness, seeks and provides inspiration through music and poetry; Tim Mason; boundless family fun with Jennifer Allen; Liv Stone; Hülya Marquardt; Christa Couture's Postcards; and many more captivating narratives. Plus, our inspirational bloggers, vloggers, and Instagrammers share their pursuit of travel dreams around the world from Disneyworld to the Ngorongoro Crater, to exploring enchanting castles in Ireland.

Our fearless travellers live life on their own terms and reject the stereotypical labels that our society places on them. For whatever 2025 brings us, let's recall the words of Dave Steele:

“The world isn't designed for people like us, but we can redesign the way the world sees us. ■”





“Life wasn’t built for me, but I’ve built a life I love. And if I can do it, so can you.”  
Talli Osborne



Erin Ball



Nadine Richards



Lisa Butler



Miriam Osborne



Wendy Gideon



Hülya Marquardt



Christa Couture



Tim Mason



Liv Stone



Ashlee's daughter Vika



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# 10 tips for travelling with physical challenges:

## A resilient woman's guide

By Talli Osborne

Travelling with physical challenges can require a bit more planning, but the rewards are worth it. As a woman with mobility issues, I've learned to embrace the journey, adapt with creativity, and always focus on the positives. Here are my top ten tips for making your travels smoother and more enjoyable:

### 1. Do your research

Look into accessibility features before booking. Check for accessible transportation options, accessible accommodations, and attractions with accessible paths. And check if the city you're travelling to has accessible ride share options.

### 2. Contact hotels and airlines in advance

Don't assume that accessibility features will be available—confirm everything. Call ahead to your hotel, airline, and car rental service before you book anything to make sure they can accommodate your specific needs, from accessible rooms to priority boarding.

### 3. Be prepared for unexpected expenses

Make sure to have some money set aside for unexpected costs such as alternative travel, because even though you did your research, trains, hotels, etc. may not be accessible for you in the end, so you may need to make alternative plans which may cost more.

### 4. Be your own advocate and be clear about your needs

When booking services or arriving at destinations, communicate clearly about your physical challenges. This

helps ensure that the accommodations or services you need will be in place upon your arrival. Don't hesitate to ask for what you need—you deserve the best experience possible! And, in the end, only you know what's best for YOU.

### 5. Embrace technology

Download apps that make travelling easier, such as Google Maps (for wheelchair-accessible and barrier-free routes), Uber or Lyft (for accessible rideshare options), and apps like "AccessNow" that let you review and rate the accessibility of public spaces.

### 6. Plan for extra time

Allow for extra time between flights, train connections, and all pre-booked activities. Sometimes accessibility-related delays can add time, and rushing only adds to stress. A little extra cushion in your schedule can help you stay calm and enjoy your travels.

### 7. Acquire outlet converters and check voltage on mobility device chargers

If you're travelling to another country, make sure you check if an outlet converter is needed and if the voltage on your charger includes the standard voltage of the destination country. There's a good chance you may need a voltage converter to use your charger in another region. There's nothing worse than blowing a fuse and having a burnt out charger when travelling. Believe me, I'm speaking from experience! This exact scenario happened to me my first day in Rome and it definitely put a damper on things.

### 8. Be flexible and stay positive

Sometimes things don't go as planned. Elevators break, ramps get blocked, or routes turn out to be inaccessible. Stay flexible and keep a positive attitude. A setback doesn't mean the whole trip is ruined—adapt and find an alternative, whether that means taking a different route or asking for assistance.

### 9. Know your rights

Familiarize yourself with accessibility laws and regulations in your travel destination. In many places, the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or similar legislation guarantees access to public spaces and services. Knowing your rights helps you advocate for yourself if you encounter challenges.

### 10. Don't overthink things and listen to your instincts

Sometimes, the biggest obstacle to enjoying a trip is overthinking the details. I've learned that while planning is important, it's equally important to trust my instincts and not get bogged down by every potential challenge. If something doesn't feel right, I listen to that inner voice and adjust, but if things are going smoothly, I try to relax and embrace the moment. Resilience doesn't mean controlling every aspect of a journey—it's about being flexible, going with the flow, and trusting that I can handle whatever comes my way. After all, the best experiences often come when we stop overthinking and simply allow ourselves to enjoy the adventure. ■

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## A City Designed With Everyone in Mind

From barrier-free beaches, to accessible trails winding through sun-drenched valleys, this is where memories are made. Whether you're exploring our smooth pathways, hopping on our accessible transit for a downtown adventure, or settling into your inclusive accommodation—every adventure is possible.



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# On the road with Erin Ball

Blending circus arts and advocacy



My name is Erin Ball, I am a white agender double below knee amputee and I am auDHD. My pronouns are ze/zir. I strive to live and work via the Disability Justice principles created by Sins Invalid and Patty Berne. I am a circus artist, workshop facilitator and accessibility consultant.

## ENTRY INTO CIRCUS ARTS

I discovered circus arts at a busker's festival in 2008 and immediately knew it was what I wanted to do. I started training and a few years later started performing and opened a studio. In 2014, I became a double below knee amputee and re-learned circus arts. I suddenly was hyperaware of how ableism is embedded in society and as a result in circus arts. I started connecting with and working with more and more disabled folks and shifted how I teach and practice. I created a course to work with other circus coaches to strive to be more welcoming to the disability community. I also started learning more and more about accessibility and the possibilities of creative accessibility in performing arts. I work with consultants to strive to make my performances and creative as welcoming to as many people as possible.

## CHALLENGES PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION WITHIN THE CIRCUS COMMUNITY

Some people don't think disabled

people should be welcomed in circus arts or they think that disabled people should have a separate program. This is ableism as disabled people should have equitable access, especially considering the history of exploitation and disabled people in circus.

## CONSULTATIONS ON ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY

Shows, businesses, access notes, language: I work with various organizations, shows, artists, physical businesses, etc., and we determine action items which might include learning and un-learning relating to ableism and subsections of ableism, shifting language in shows, on websites, in policies, etc., addressing harmful tropes, creating access notes for spaces and shows, and more.

## COURSES OFFERED

I offer courses to try to spread seeds of how we can do better and I keep going, doing my thing, knowing that I am modelling ways



Virginia Maria Photography

that we can be more welcoming and hoping that it catches on. It's basically deconstructing circus arts and asking why do we do things the way that we do (it tends to be quite rigid thinking in terms of what a skill is and how it must be done), is it harmful towards marginalized communities and can we find a better way? There is a lot of emphasis on collaborative work with the disability community and going to the essence of things (for example, instead of a warmup being "everybody run and jump now" it could be "offering to move your body in a way that feels good, if you want, here are some options...").

In the past two years, my partner, Maxime Beauregard (they/them), also a disabled circus artist, has joined me in offering the course. We make a great team and comp-

lement each other very well. They have brought a lot to the course.

### **A MEMORABLE PERFORMANCE THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPACT OF INCLUSIVE CIRCUS ARTS**

Here is a testimonial from an audience member of a show:

*“Erin has been bringing an unparalleled care and accessibility expertise to all of the performances ze creates, and to all of zir collaborations. The performances I have had the pleasure to witness have been nothing short of revolutionary for our arts sector, as Erin meticulously crafts each part of the content and form of zir shows with accessibility and care as zir focus. Ze pushes the boundary of art-making through zir creative use of technology, and through zir playful reimagining of the spaces between performance and community dialogue, creating incredibly innovative pieces as a result. Zir latest piece, created with partner Maxime Beauregard, is absolutely ground-breaking, deeply moving, and delightfully humorous, and has been, to date, one of my favourite experiences as an audience member ever. Erin’s work is the proof that when accessibility is the focus, and not an after-thought, magic happens.”* Laura Chaignon, she/her

### **ADAPTING TRADITIONAL CIRCUS APPARATUSES AND TECHNIQUES TO ACCOMMODATE PERFORMERS WITH VARYING DISABILITIES**

I believe ability is situational and has nothing to do with disability. I think of disability as a reclaimed word connecting folks to community, history, and an acknowledgement that we live in a world that was not set up for us. If our access needs are met (which every human being has—disabled people tend to be outside of the standard so it creates more barriers), we may be able to thrive; if they are not, we may not. And there are situations that people won’t be able to thrive regardless of disability or access needs.



Chris Lagesten Photography



Jay Middaugh

For adapting apparatuses, I try to fit apparatuses to bodies, not the other way around. I work with adding loops, inventing apparatuses, starting from a place of finding positions that work for the individual rather than a standard position that does not work for all, and working with people's strengths.

## TRAVEL

### PREPARING FOR TRAVEL TO ENSURE COMFORT

This depends on the method of travel. If I am flying, I book a wheelchair with the airline, arrive early, ask to board the plane early, I bring stim items and ear plugs and these days, because I find airports so overwhelming, I travel with a support person which is easy to apply for with Air Canada. I'm not sure about other airlines.

These days I prefer driving. It's much less overwhelming and gives me more freedom. I drive with my prosthetic foot and feel very comfortable doing so. I pack a shower chair because I never know what I am going to get with accommodations. I also ask for the main floor if it's an option and try to book places with a bathtub.

I take lots of movement breaks while driving and even travel with my aerial rig so I can stop and do circus training along the way.

### CHALLENGING AIRPORT EXPERIENCES

I have had my wheelchair not arrive with me several times while flying. It has also been broken more than once. It's very frustrating and I don't have a

good answer to how I navigate this.

For me, accommodation means not having to stand in a line. It gets very painful. So, when businesses have accessible lines or let me through without having to stand for a long period, that's a great experience. Also, when businesses have access notes, I feel acknowledged.

### PROSTHETICS AND MOBILITY AIDS USED WHEN TRAVELLING

I have many pair of legs that my prosthetist at [V2Innovations](#) and foot company, [Fillauer](#), have helped me with: flippers, running legs, shower legs, etc. I also bring a wheelchair for long distances or a lightweight foldable stool.

### HELPFUL TRAVEL TOOLS, DEVICES AND APPS

This also depends on how I travel. I always have an Allen key, a shower chair and foldable stool, a vehicle whenever possible and a wheelchair. [Hip Camp](#) has been a lovely app to stay in cabins and camp. I have an access rider that states what I need and what I can be flexible on. It starts conversations and is very helpful to have all of the information in one place. When accessibility is not met, I have conversations and make recommendations for education and apologies/reparations if necessary.

### IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

I would love for access notes to be more common, to have more education around disability,



Virginia Maria Photography

fewer assumptions, and more accessibility overall. Bathtubs seem to be on their way out in accommodations and I really hope that's not the case.

### **MEMORABLE TRAVEL**

This past year I spent almost six months slow touring with my partner. We drove from Ontario to British Columbia and back, camping and using the Hip Camp app. We received a grant from Ontario Presents and from the Canada Council and we performed and taught workshops along the way.

It was an incredible experience and we learned a lot. We tried to respect our access needs, take more time to connect with people, learn about the land, and consider sustainability. We were also working with Access Art Alliance to assess public art for accessibility and to mentor other disabled folks in various cities that we travelled to. It was a great way to check out cities and make connections.

### **FUNNY “OOPS” MOMENTS**

I like to make leg jokes so if I am ever around anyone who drops something, I typically say “Ow! My toe!” And laugh.

Oops moments - my prosthetic legs breaking while travelling. It can be difficult to find a prosthetist and get in. I have had to use duct tape many times.

### **ONE MYTH ABOUT TRAVELLING WITH A LIMB DIFFERENCE**

That there is such a thing as fully accessible. There isn't—there are too many conflicting access needs and it is not possible to plan for every single possible access need and situation in one space. Instead, we can strive for the most

accessibility and use access notes to share what is and what is not available, so that people can make informed decisions.

### **THREE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO DESIGN THE IDEAL ACCESSIBLE VACATION PACKAGE**

Access notes, options, disabled people in working and leadership roles, not getting put in a check box accessible room that is not actually accessible.

### **TRAVEL ADVICE**

Check in with airlines, train lines, etc., and find out if they offer programs that support people to travel for free. Have a travel companion if possible. It's been incredibly helpful to have another human to navigate travel with.

### **UPCOMING PROJECTS**

Maxime and I are really excited to have received another grant through the Canada Council. It will allow us to slow tour between destinations and to spend three months in Vancouver and three in Tkaronto or colonial name, Toronto. While we are in each place, we will spend a week working with circus coaches sharing our approach to more accessible ways of offering circus arts and then we'll spend the rest of the time working with a group of disabled people teaching them circus. The goal is to infiltrate the circus industry with more disabled people who have a solid foundation and can later go on to teach and perform if they want.

In addition, we are adding work to our show *InterComplementary Elements* and have been working with [Future Leisure Performance Society](#) in Vancouver to develop several new acts with fun accessibility features. We'll be sharing those in the new year.

And we're currently working in collaboration with [Vibrafusion Labs](#) and consultants on creative accessibility possibilities. We are exploring things like sharing the sound or vibration of our heartbeats while we are performing in the air, sounds or vibrations that share the velocity of a spin, sensors that tell the audience when we are upside down, and much more. We are exploring fun options that work to enhance accessibility and give more options for audiences to take in the information.

### **ONE FUN THING ABOUT ERIN**

My partner and I just bought a teardrop trailer to continue slow touring. We also hope to add some pet rats to our travelling family sometime soon. ■

Interested in Erin's courses or circus arts? Reach out to her on Instagram [@erinballcircus](#)

“Some people don't think disabled people should be welcomed in circus arts or they think that disabled people should have a separate program. This is ableism . . .”





# Nadine Richards' approach to life, travel and advocacy

Nadine wears many hats—adaptive athlete, advocate, model, and wellness professional—and she wears them all effortlessly, infused with an infectious energy. Born in Alberta, Canada, she lives with a limb difference and describes her disability with openness and humor, seeing it as just another unique part of who she is rather than a limitation.

Her adaptive athlete journey began in 2018 when a Facebook ad for a Paralympic athlete search inspired her to explore her potential. While she trained with Canada's Paralympic NextGen team and embraced snowboarding as her sport, she reflects on the experience as one that fueled her passion for pushing limits and discovering new dimensions of herself.

As an advocate, Nadine focuses on representation and education. She shares her experiences openly, whether helping a parent navigate questions about their child's limb difference or demonstrating what is possible through adaptive sports and travel. Her advocacy extends into everyday interactions, where her humor and openness turn curiosity into meaningful conversations, creating spaces for greater understanding and acceptance. These roles, she says, allow her to champion inclusivity while celebrating individuality. Modeling provides opportunities to merge creativity and purpose.

Through her work with companies like [Alleles](#), she showcases prosthetic designs that challenge perceptions, blending style with functionality in ways that inspire others. For her, modeling shows the world that beauty exists in diversity and encourages others to embrace their own uniqueness.

## ADVENTURES BEYOND BORDERS

Adaptive travel is its own kind of adventure. From snowboarding in Dubai's indoor slopes to the picturesque Netherlands, where hotels are seamlessly integrated with training facilities, Nadine has seen it all. But travelling isn't without its hiccups. She recounts a chaotic moment in Amsterdam when every elevator in the airport was under construction. Navigating with snowboard gear and luggage turned into a comical yet exhausting ordeal, complete with runaway suitcases clunking down escalators. It's a memory she now laughs at—she has the ability to find humor even in frustration.

Among her travels, [Lunenburg, Nova Scotia](#), stood out as a surprising gem of accessibility. The town's colorful waterfront and thoughtful design—complete with ramps seamlessly integrated into its historic architecture—left a lasting



impression. It's places like these, where effort meets empathy, that give Nadine hope for a more inclusive world.

For Nadine, the key to enjoyable travel lies in preparation. She brings along leather stubbies to stay comfortable during flights, packs



light, and always allows extra time for security—a necessity given that prosthetics often trigger additional screening. “I’ve gotten used to it,” she says with a shrug. But she handles it all with grace and fellow travellers are always nice when she asks for help.

**THE ART OF ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL**

If Nadine could design the perfect travel experience, it would start with functional elevators (a non-negotiable) and accessible hotels that don’t just meet basic needs but anticipate them. Transparency about accommodations, thoughtful designs, and staff trained in inclusivity would make travel not

just possible but truly enjoyable. She emphasizes the importance of hotels that communicate clearly about room layouts, accessible showers and thoughtful design elements. “I’ve stayed in places where I didn’t have to think twice about accessibility,” Nadine shares. “Those experiences make all the difference.”

**MEMORABLE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES**

One of Nadine’s favorite destinations is the Netherlands, where she found the perfect blend of convenience and accessibility for her snowboarding adventures. The hotel attached to the snowboarding

facility offered climate-controlled conditions, eliminating weather worries and ensuring a smooth, predictable routine. Another standout was her trip to Dubai, where she snowboarded indoors at one of the world’s most unique ski resorts—a surreal experience she still treasures. But not all travel memories are picture-perfect. From airport delays to inaccessible infrastructure, Nadine has faced her share of challenges. Yet, she meets them head-on, adapting on the fly and finding humor even in the chaos. For her, travel is about embracing the unpredictable and finding joy in the journey.

## NADINE'S TRAVEL TIPS

Over the years, Nadine has honed her approach to travel, developing strategies that make her adventures smoother. Here are a few of her tried-and-true tips:

### 1. Pack smart

Lightweight, layered clothing and compact bags make navigating airports easier.

### 2. Communicate clearly

Inform airlines about your needs beforehand, but don't be afraid to assert yourself if something goes awry.

### 3. Stay comfortable

Leather stubbies and flexible prosthetics help during long flights.

### 4. Allow extra time

Build in time for security checks and unexpected delays.

### 5. Research accessibility

Look into destinations that prioritize inclusivity and have a plan for navigating less accessible locations.

## EMBRACING THE UNEXPECTED

For Nadine, travel invariably includes stories that come from the unexpected while at a destination.

Whether it's a kind stranger offering help or a hilarious mishap with runaway luggage, these moments add color to her journeys.

"Travelling with prosthetics isn't always easy, but it's always worth it," she says.

Her dream? To see more of the world, from tropical beaches to snow-capped peaks, and to inspire others with disabilities to do the same.

Nadine's life is proof that travel's true beauty lies in its ability to expand horizons—both physically and emotionally. ■



## NADINE'S ADVICE . . .

- Don't be afraid to explore
- Surround yourself with people who uplift you
- Advocate for yourself and embrace the adventure
- Life's too short to let barriers hold you back

For anyone wondering if they should try that thing they've been dreaming of—whether it's snowboarding, travelling to a new country, or simply striking up a conversation with a stranger—Nadine says, "Go for it." Because if there's one thing her journey proves, it's that the best stories are written when you take the leap.



## Beyond the stares, Lisa explores the world on her terms

Some people blend in seamlessly when they travel, soaking up cultures, cuisines and sunsets, unobtrusively. Others—sometimes unintentionally—travel and stand out. When Lisa Butler packs her bags, her invisible checklist isn't just about passports, snacks, or car seat logistics. It's about setting a tone. A confident posture, a ready smile, an attitude that declares *I'm*

*here* louder than the stares she's long grown used to. Travelling with a visible limb difference means you're never anonymous—not in Toronto, not in rural Uganda, not in the thick heat of a Bolivian rainforest.

But Lisa? She doesn't shrink from the spotlight—she transforms it. For her, it's a form of advocacy and a learning opportunity for others,

driven by a conscious purpose. She has prepared herself to be a bit comfortable with the uncomfortable.

Let's back up a second. Picture young Lisa: quiet, observant, her hands tucked close as if hiding them could let her blend into the crowd. "I didn't want to be noticed," she admits, speaking of grocery stores and playgrounds that were

coliseums of curiosity when she was a child. Kids stared. Adults whispered. Her brother became her fiercest defender, ready to ward off rude remarks with a scowl and a snap. And little Lisa? She kept on running—literally. Soccer, marathons, the glorious escape of putting one foot in front of the other and proving her strength. *You can watch, and I'll win.*

Those formative years—learning independence, honing creative solutions and discovering her confidence shaped the way Lisa would eventually navigate adulthood, parenting and a 20-year career in public service. It's also why the idea of sitting still, letting her world shrink around her, was never an option.

### **Travel wasn't just a luxury for Lisa—it was an education.**

"When I step into a new country," Lisa explains. "I'm often the only one like me they've ever seen." And by "like me," she doesn't just mean Canadian, or a solo traveler, or even a woman balancing independence with motherhood. She means her arms—one ending just below her elbow, the other just past her wrist—and the way she uses them seamlessly to carry her own backpack, tackle a car seat, or snap photos of curious children who look at her with innocent, wide-eyed fascination.

Her experiences across continents have been varied. In Asia, strangers rushed to help, their hands fumbling awkwardly with luggage and bus doors before Lisa could explain, *I've got this.* In Uganda, Rwanda,

Tanzania and Kenya, stares stretched long and silent, children's faces wide with wonder while adults hung back, guarded, skeptical. In the Caribbean, questions came bluntly—*What happened to your hand?*—but questions were softened with smiles



and open curiosity. And everywhere, always, there's the double-take. Lisa's response? A practiced empathy, honed over years, "If it comes from a good place then it's a point of engagement, it immediately breaks the ice," she said. "People react differently. Sometimes it's shock. Sometimes it's pity. Sometimes it's just natural curiosity wanting to be satisfied."

### **But here's the thing about Lisa: she sets the tone.**

Her approach to travel is a lesson in how we carry ourselves. Literally and figuratively. When people notice her difference, Lisa meets them with a smile. A genuine one—not to erase discomfort, but to say, *I'm here, I'm capable, and I'm living this moment fully.* In return, people soften. They stop seeing her hands as something missing and start seeing Lisa—a woman who hikes through jungles in Bolivia, who paddles dark rivers alive with sounds, who walks into rural villages and becomes, for a fleeting moment, an advocate simply by existing. And she exists boldly, exploring the world on her terms.

She recalls her experience at an indigenous lodge in Bolivia—[Chalalan Ecolodge](#). "It was the complete opposite to home but I think that's where I caught the travel bug," she shared.

“It was such a memorable, different experience that I knew I needed to see more of the world.”

The Bolivian rainforest felt both vast and intimate, every step an invitation into the unknown. She trekked through dense green corridors where the air buzzed with life—unseen creatures moving in the shadows, leaves whispering secrets on the breeze. At night, she drifted through the black waters of the quiet river on a canoe, the stars above bright enough to pierce



the canopy, while the calls of nocturnal animals reverberated like a symphony composed just for her. With every paddle stroke, every cautious step into untamed terrain, Lisa defied assumptions—not just of others, but her own.

“It was really amazing. We spent our days hiking and spotting wildlife, while also observing our hosts’ ceremonial rituals and learning how they lived off the land. The nighttime walks to see the wildlife were especially memorable—I often tried to capture the sounds on my phone. At times, I felt like I had to pinch myself—I couldn’t believe I was

there, seeing, smelling, feeling all of this.”

**Travel, Lisa believes, is a two-way education.**

“I’m learning about their culture, their norms, their day-to-day lives. And at the same time, they’re learning about me. That someone with a physical difference can be independent, confident, capable. That I’m not fragile, not broken, not limited.”

She recalls moments where that lesson should have been taught. A packed bus back at home in Toronto where someone with good intentions hollered at her,

*Come sit here!* across rows of startled commuters. Lisa, tired but smiling, reluctantly made her way to the seat—accepting kindness while cringing at the volume of unwelcome spotlight. Or an airport in Vancouver, where she juggled a squirming toddler, oversized luggage, and a car seat, only to be told, *Special assistance means a wheelchair.* She therefore could not be accommodated.

“Accessibility needs aren’t one-size-fits-all,” Lisa says firmly. “It’s not only about ramps and wheelchairs. Sometimes it’s about someone carrying the car seat while I keep my daughter safe.

Sometimes it's just listening and being open-minded!"

She offers advice to others with disabilities who might hesitate to step outside their comfort zones: *Pack light, but carry courage.* Be willing to feel uncomfortable. Be open to stares, questions, even pity. Then meet it all with quiet confidence and the knowledge that you're doing something meaningful—for yourself, for those watching and for those who will come after you.

"Travel's not about escaping," Lisa says, "it's about expanding." Expanding your world, your empathy, your tolerance for discomfort. And yes, expanding others' understanding of what's possible when someone like Lisa—someone with a limb difference, big ideas, and an even bigger spirit—steps onto their path.

From Ontario, to the vibrant colors of African villages and to the murky stillness of a Bolivian jungle, Lisa doesn't just see the world. She

teaches it. One smile, one stare, one unapologetic step at a time.

And in return, the world learns to see her—*really see her.*

Independent.  
Capable.  
Unstoppable. ■



“... they're learning about me. That someone with a physical difference can be independent, confident, capable. That I'm not fragile, not broken, not limited.”

Lisa Butler







Miriam and Talli in Italy

# Miriam Osborne invites us to see the world through the lens of difference

If you've ever seen life as a series of challenges and victories woven together, Miriam Osborne's story is the lens that would sharpen the focus and deepen the hue.

An editor at *The Toronto Star*, avid traveller and advocate at heart, what makes Miriam Osborne's story unique isn't just where she's been but how she navigates the spaces most of us take for granted.

Hers is not a tale of extraordinary feats or Herculean triumphs—it's about human grit, perspective and learning to see the world through the lens of difference.

Miriam, known to friends simply as 'Mir,' grew up in Brampton, Ontario, before making Toronto her adult home. She lives with arthrogryposis, a rare condition that restricts the mobility of her

arms leaving her with little to no use of them. Walking necessitates the use of leg braces/AFOs (ankle foot orthoses). The typing her editor job requires is done with a chopstick held between her teeth. Yet, for most of her life, she'd shied away from identifying as disabled.

She admits, "I didn't like the word 'disabled' at first. It felt limiting, like a label that overshadowed everything else I was or could be.

For a long time, I avoided it entirely, opting for phrases like ‘physically challenged’ instead. Looking back, I see that resistance as part of my own journey—learning to embrace every part of myself, even the parts society taught me to hide.”

With a note of reflection in her voice, she says, “I didn’t want it to define me. People would say things like, ‘I don’t even see you as disabled,’ or ‘You’re not like other disabled people.’ And I’d take those as compliments. It took years for me to see those as what they truly were: veiled ableism.”

Today, Mir embraces her identity. It is this lens that has shaped her experiences—from the newsroom to navigating bustling city streets across the globe.



Miriam in Cuba

### TRAVEL FOR A DISABLED WOMAN

For Mir, travelling is a paradox: exhilarating yet exhausting. Her adventures have taken her from the ancient streets of Rome with her sister Talli, to the vibrant chaos of Morocco and beyond, yet each destination comes with its own set of challenges. Unlike the carefree traveller armed with little more than a map, Mir’s toolkit includes extensive research and a healthy dose of patience.

“I’ll spend hours on Google Street View, virtually walking the streets I plan to explore,” she explains. “Because asking someone if a place is accessible doesn’t work. Accessibility is so subjective.”

She recalls one instance in Cuba where a tour guide assured her the terrain would be manageable. Reality? A steep, uneven hike that pushed her to her physical limits. “It’s a constant negotiation with yourself: How far can I push, and when do I turn back?”

Yet, it’s the serendipity of travel that keeps her going. The thrill of a new city’s pulse, the first sip of local coffee, or simply soaking in the architecture of a place steeped in history.

“That moment when you drop your bags in a hotel room and take your first walk—nothing beats that feeling.”

### THE ECONOMICS OF DISABLED TRAVEL

For disabled travellers, the cost of spontaneity is often steep—financially and emotionally. Mir’s trips frequently involve last-minute, unexpected expenses like private taxis or upgraded accommodations when accessible options fall short. In Italy, she recalls a day when a slight technicality with her sister Talli’s scooter resulted in being barred from a train. Although they had done extensive research, Talli’s scooter did not meet its size requirements. The alternative? A private taxi that cost a small fortune.

“Being disabled isn’t cheap,” Mir quips, though her voice carries more frustration than humor. “It’s a privilege to travel, but it comes with the understanding that nothing will go exactly as planned. You should budget for the unexpected because it’s inevitable.”

### BREAKING STEREOTYPES, BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Travel, for Mir, is also about representation. In many places, her presence as a visibly disabled woman is a novelty. “I’ve been to cities where people openly stare or mimic me. Adults, not just children,” she says. While these moments sting, she believes they’re opportunities to shift perspectives.

“In some places, disability isn’t seen in public life,” she notes. “So just by existing, by being out and about, I’m part of changing that.”

Despite the occasional hurdles, Mir emphasizes the joy of connection—with locals, with cultures and with herself. It’s in these moments of connection that she finds the greatest rewards of travelling. “Travel humbles you,” she says. “It

shows you how vast the world is, how much you have to learn and how much you can give back just by being yourself.”

### **NAVIGATING THE FUTURE**

Mir doesn't see herself stopping anytime soon. Her bucket list includes more of Europe, the Middle East, and hopefully, more solo ventures. The idea of navigating an unfamiliar city alone excites and terrifies her. But she's ready.

### **HER ADVICE TO DISABLED TRAVELLERS?**

“Go for it. Accept that there will be difficulties, but don't let fear dictate your decisions. If you can make it work, do it. The world's too big and beautiful to sit still.”

### **A MIRROR FOR CHANGE**

Through her work in media and her experiences as a traveller, Mir is quietly advocating for inclusivity. Whether it's in newsroom discussions about disability coverage or her candid conversations about personal support worker systems, she's not one to shy away from calling out inequities.

“There's a lot of work to be done,”

she admits. “But if my story can inspire someone to ask a question, push a boundary, or even just reconsider their assumptions, then it's worth sharing.”

Miriam Osborne's life is deeply rooted in a sense of purpose. She

is not concerned about overcoming disability. Instead, she embraces it, living a rich and fulfilling life within its framework. And in a world often obsessed with labels, maybe that's the kind of inspiration we need most. ■







# Talli Osborne says: “Embrace your differences and let them sparkle.”

Canadian, Talli Osborne, is vivacious with an unrelenting zest for life. With her unapologetic individuality, she confidently turns personal hurdles into platforms of empowerment.

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With a dynamic career that spans motivational speaking, singing with punk rock bands and acting, Talli’s electric personality shines the moment you meet her. Rocking a bold look which includes an eye-catching hairstyle—one side of her head shaved and the other streaked with bold magenta through jet-black hair, she radiates fearless, edgy authenticity. Her unique stature—standing under four feet tall without arms, femurs, or knees is just another part of the incredible package that makes her unforgettable. But it’s never about what’s missing, it’s about what she

brings to the world: her infectious energy, love for hula hooping, genuine spirit, confidence, positivity and the undeniable spark that lights up every space she enters.

For Talli, labels like “disabled” don’t resonate. “It’s not that I reject the disability community—I’m a proud part of it. But I don’t like being called ‘disabled’ because it implies, I’m not able. I am more able than most people I know.” This perspective challenges the narrative that equates physical differences with incapability, urging society to reconsider how

it defines ability and value. Talli doesn’t stop at rejecting limiting labels. She actively advocates for embracing differences and letting them “sparkle.” Her [TED Talk](#), among other public engagements, champions this belief, inspiring countless individuals to celebrate their uniqueness instead of hiding it.

One of Talli’s proudest achievements is learning to drive and owning her own car. From occupational therapist assessments to custom vehicle modifications, this process was daunting. “It was a dream I had since I was 16, but the financial



and logistical barriers were immense,” she shared. The financial cost alone—over \$100,000 for her specially modified vehicle—was enough to dissuade most. Yet, she persisted, with tears, frustration and moments of wondering if it was worth it, but she persisted nonetheless and today, driving her magenta Mini Cooper is a powerful symbol of independence and her refusal to let obstacles define her limits.

Her car is a metaphorical chariot of liberation, equipped with an \$80,000 custom-built computer, extended pedals and a custom seatbelt. But this journey was definitely not easy. The pandemic brought its own set of delays and financial strain, leaving her car sitting idle, a poignant reminder of her dream deferred. Family and

friends questioned her resolve, urging her to sell the car and move on. But to Talli, letting go of the car was surrendering her dream. And surrender isn't in her vocabulary. When the War Amps CHAMP Program, an organization she'd volunteered for in the past, unexpectedly called offering financial assistance, Talli was in disbelief. “I screamed when they told me this life-changing news,” she recalls with laughter. It wasn't just about the financial relief but about validation. Her persistence had paid off in the most spectacular way!

Seven arduous years passed between car purchase and full modification, but when she finally gripped the steering wheel and drove off, Talli was doing much more than driving! She was boldly

claiming her space in a world unprepared for people like her. This car is her mobile manifesto—a hot pink display of defiance and independence. Driving herself to events, parties and errands is convenient but also transformative. It's the difference between being tethered to others' schedules and the euphoric freedom of self-reliance. Her car became a symbol of her tenacity and an emblem of what's possible when you refuse to give up.

### **PUNK ROCK**

Confidence wasn't always a natural part of Talli's repertoire. Like many, she struggled with fitting in during her teenage years, yearning for a sense of normalcy that society often associates with conformity. "I used to want to blend in, to look like everyone else," she admits. But that desire shifted when she realized the futility of trying to fit

into molds she was never meant for. Talli gravitated to punk rock and that genre's embrace of individuality and defiance of norms. Here, she found a community that welcomed her for who she was. "Punk rock is for the misfits, for those who don't fit anywhere else," she explained. So, she embraced it and with that, her bold individuality emerged.

Instead of fitting into societal expectations, Talli embraced her differences. "Why try to blend in when I can stand out?" she said. This pivot in mindset led her to embrace bold fashion, vibrant colors and her indomitable spirit which, until then, lay hidden.

As a singer, she's fronted several punk rock bands, bringing her raw energy and undeniable talent to the stage. Though her latest band recently disbanded, her love for music remains. It's another outlet for

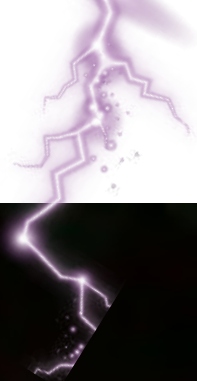
her creativity and a way to connect with audiences on an emotional level.

From her love of punk rock to her statement-making style, Talli exemplifies the belief that individuality is power, but even with her infectious optimism, she acknowledges life's challenges. Life has never been easy, but Talli's ability to find positivity amidst difficulty is her superpower. When asked how she copes with bad days, Talli's answer is rooted in gratitude. "I focus on what I have rather than what I lack. There's always something to look forward to—a dinner, a conversation, or even a spa day. That keeps me going."

### **ADVOCACY**

Beyond music and acting, Talli is a fierce advocate for change. Her public speaking engagements tackle issues from body positivity to





overcoming challenges. Whether addressing a room of teenagers or a corporate boardroom, her message is clear: “Embrace who you are and let your differences sparkle. If you truly want to achieve something, you can do it.” Her impact goes beyond words. Stories of individuals whose lives have been transformed by her talks are plentiful. From teens finding courage in their uniqueness to a stranger in a corporate office moved to tears by her proud independence, Talli’s influence is profound and personal. For those struggling with their circumstances or grappling with their differences, Talli offers a straightforward yet powerful piece of advice:

“Focus on what you can do, not what you can’t. Every person has something to be grateful for—start there. It’s not always easy, but it’s worth it.” She also emphasizes the importance of persistence.

**Achieving a fulfilling life doesn’t happen overnight. It’s about taking small, consistent steps toward embracing who you are and finding joy in the journey.”**

Talli’s journey is far from over. Whether she’s acting in



Talli and Sir Richard Branson

commercials, performing on stage, or penning her first book, she’s committed to breaking barriers and inspiring others to do the same. In Talli’s words: “Life wasn’t built for me, but I’ve built a life I love. And if I can do it, so can you.” This is a life about breaking the unspoken rules, turning heads and unapologetically living your truth.

**TRAVEL**

Talli’s life is peppered with stories that seem plucked from the pages of a whimsical novel. Take her encounter with Sir Richard Branson, for instance. Invited to London for a Virgin Stars of the Year award, Talli didn’t just meet the billionaire mogul—she fed him chocolate cake. Using the method she employs for eating (utensil tucked into the shoulder strap of her clothing, deftly guided with her chin), Talli

shared her dessert with Branson in a moment of pure, unfiltered hilarity and humanity. “It was surreal,” she recalls. “We were talking about punk rock, and suddenly, I’m feeding him cake. It’s just one of those moments you never forget, then he invited my friend and I to spend a week on his private island in the Caribbean. It was amazing especially too because he is someone, I find so inspiring.” Travelling, however, isn’t always a glamorous adventure.

**NAVIGATING ACCESSIBILITY IN ITALY**


Talli’s jaunt to Italy, for instance, was a paradox of joy and frustration. While the culture, food, and history enchanted her, the accessibility—or lack thereof—proved nearly insurmountable and Italy turned out to be one of her most challenging destinations. Despite warnings about





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the country's lack of accessibility, she was determined to visit, "But Rome was tough! Sloped sidewalks that ended abruptly, cars blocking ramps and crossing streets without stoplights. Once, I even had to jump a curb into oncoming traffic. It was dangerous, but I pushed through," she recalled.

Despite these obstacles, Talli cherishes the experience. "It was one of the most rewarding trips of my life. I did everything I set out to do, even though it wasn't easy."

### JAMAICA'S WARM EMBRACE

In stark contrast, Talli recalls the warmth and exuberance of Jamaica, where locals celebrated her individuality instead of recoiling from it. Their energy was welcoming and uplifting! "Jamaicans radiate positivity and confidence. Everywhere I went, people celebrated me. The men were charming, the women admired my confidence—it was amazing," she said with a smile.

Her trips to Jamaica prove how inclusivity and cultural warmth can make all the difference in travel experiences.

### LONDON'S ACCESSIBILITY GOLD STANDARD

For Talli, London's accessibility was top notch. "The black cabs in London are phenomenal. Every single one is accessible and that changes everything," she explained. Unlike cities like Las Vegas or Los Angeles, where accessible transportation is scarce and often

involves long waits, London's infrastructure allowed her to travel freely. "You never feel like an inconvenience there," Talli added.

## AIRPORT CHALLENGES

Air travel continues to be one of Talli's biggest hurdles and it continues to be a mixed bag for her.

"Airports can be incredibly frustrating. I often have to wait until everyone else deplanes before I can get my scooter. Sometimes, staff insist on putting me in a wheelchair, taking away my independence," she explained.

Talli advocates for better training for airport staff. "I've been travelling for years. Trust me when I say I know my equipment better than you do," she laughs "I know what I'm doing, and I wish they'd trust that," she said.

Travelling with her mobility scooter ensures independence but comes with its own set of hurdles. Miscommunication among staff about the scooter's dry-cell battery, waiting endlessly for her scooter to be brought to her, and the constant underestimation of her expertise can be grating. Yet, for all the challenges, Talli's adventures brim with positivity.

Recently, she became the primary face of a commercial—an opportunity that celebrated her mobility scooter not as a symbol of limitation but as a part of her vibrant persona. As she described, "They didn't just include my scooter—they made it the star. They put horns and fur on it, made it sparkle. It wasn't just about representation. It was about celebration." This shift in how disability is portrayed in media reflects Talli's larger mission:

changing perceptions, one story at a time. Through her roles, whether on-screen or on stage, she challenges stereotypes and redefines what inclusion can look like.

Talli continues to advocate as a motivational speaker, musician and actor. Her recent online store rebrand as "Retalliate" speaks volumes about her evolving narrative. It's a name that encapsulates her refusal to be confined by others' expectations. Her social media presence, with over 100,000 followers, is a vibrant collage of humor, advocacy and raw honesty, encouraging others to live boldly.

Her advice to anyone feeling stuck? "[Retalliate!](#) Against the odds, against the expectations, against the voice in your head that says you can't. Turn your challenges into your power."

Talli's story speaks directly to overcoming obstacles but more profoundly, it shows that transforming these obstacles into stepping stones is possible. As she looks to the future, Talli dreams of exploring Thailand and Morocco, two destinations that promise both adventure and challenges. Now living in the US, she's diving deeper into acting, adding new dimensions to her already eclectic career. But whether she's on a stage, a set, or behind the wheel of her magenta Mini Cooper, one thing remains clear: Talli Osborne isn't just living life, she's making it sparkle. ■

 @xretalliatex



# Adaptive Adventures

Thrilling adventures  
for all abilities



# Born different, living strong:

My journey in my own words

By Wendy Gideon

## MY LIMB DIFFERENCES FROM BIRTH

I was born missing my right leg above the knee (born with about 1 cm of femur). This is known as congenital amputation. In addition, I also have limb differences in my left hand and arm. I was born with syndactyly of the fingers of my left hand and with fewer fingers (oligodactyly). A few weeks after birth, the fingers in my left hand were surgically separated into the three usable fingers I have today. The thumb bends, but the other two fingers do not. My left arm is shorter than my right arm and has a fused elbow joint that prevents me from fully extending or rotating my left arm. My left leg is also shortened and my left foot was complete clubfoot at birth. This means the foot was rotated inwards at 90 degrees. My foot was surgically corrected to face forwards a few weeks after birth, but the ankle is still fused from the procedure. Although my limb differences were a surprise at birth, the suspected cause is most likely Amniotic Band Syndrome. Amniotic Band Syndrome (ABS) occurs when fibrous bands from the amniotic sac entangle parts of a developing fetus, restricting blood flow and causing congenital abnormalities. These bands can

wrap around limbs, fingers, toes, or other body parts, leading to limb deformities and limb amputations.

## LIMB LENGTHENING

At age 10 (in 1992) I had a medical procedure called limb lengthening to lengthen the 1 cm of femur I was born with to 10 cm of femur. The purpose of this procedure was to create a longer limb (stump) for prosthetic leg use. My surgeries were done at Shriners' Hospital in Los Angeles. I was told that I was the 8th person in the world to have the procedure done at that time. Limb lengthening occurs via distraction osteogenesis, where the bone is broken in a controlled manner and slowly stretched to stimulate new bone growth. My surgery involved cutting the femur into two halves that were then surgically attached to an external device called the Ilizarov apparatus, which involved drilling pins into the femur. A total of four surgical pins were used for the procedure. Each day, we rotated the apparatus to pull the bone apart 1mm. This procedure lasted about two years for me, mostly due to several complications I experienced from the procedure including infection of the pin sites and hip dislocation. At the point of hip dislocation, we had to pause the lengthening for



six months while I recovered in a half body cast. Several times the surgeons asked if I wanted to call it quits. However, I was determined to get the full length of the bone as possible. At age 12, we ended the procedure with a total femur length of 10 cm. Overall, the procedure was a success because it allows me to use a prosthetic leg for daily life activities such as walking around the house, at the grocery store, at work, etc. For short distance walking, the prosthetic leg is a useful mobility tool for me when I need to stand or walk and need the use of my hands.



## MY CAREER

I am currently a biology professor at a community college in San Diego County, where I have worked for 11 years. I have taught college level biology and microbiology courses for over 17 years. I have a Master of Science in microbiology and a Doctorate in Higher Education Leadership. I love my job! I learned in graduate school that my passion is teaching and inspiring people to enjoy learning about biology. My interest in biology was sparked at a young age when I was fascinated by my body's ability to regenerate the femur bone during limb lengthening.



## MY FAMILY

I am married and have two small children, ages 6 and 8. My children are a source of motivation for me to be strong and continue to challenge myself to keep up with them physically. At age 35, my husband taught me how to ride a bike. As a kid growing up with one leg, I struggled to learn to ride a bike with one leg as it is difficult to rotate the pedals without a leg on both sides. However, I was determined to learn to ride a bike when my daughter was a baby because one day I wanted to be able to ride with her. I didn't want her to think that Mom's disability prevented me from biking with her. Learning to ride a bike as an adult was humbling and difficult. My husband was very patient in teaching me to ride. We'd go to an open parking lot to practice. First, I worked on balancing the bike on a slight slope downhill. Then, I learned to clip my foot to the bike pedal using a locking mechanism that allows me to rotate the pedal on one side to propel the bike. I fell over 100 times learning to ride a bike! Luckily, I never had any serious injuries from my falls other than scrapes and bruises. However, I just kept with it and eventually it clicked for me. However, the next challenge was learning to mountain bike. Mountain biking involves biking over rough terrain such as gravel, dirt, rocks, or tree roots. It often involves making tight or switchback turns and climbing up steep hills on the bike. Able-bodied mountain bikers overcome these obstacles by standing up to pedal their bike. However, for me, I cannot stand to pedal my bike without pedal strikes on the missing leg side. To compensate for my physical challenges, I eventually got an electric full-suspension mountain bike. The ebike gives me the power I need to tackle steep climbs and navigate obstacles on the trail.



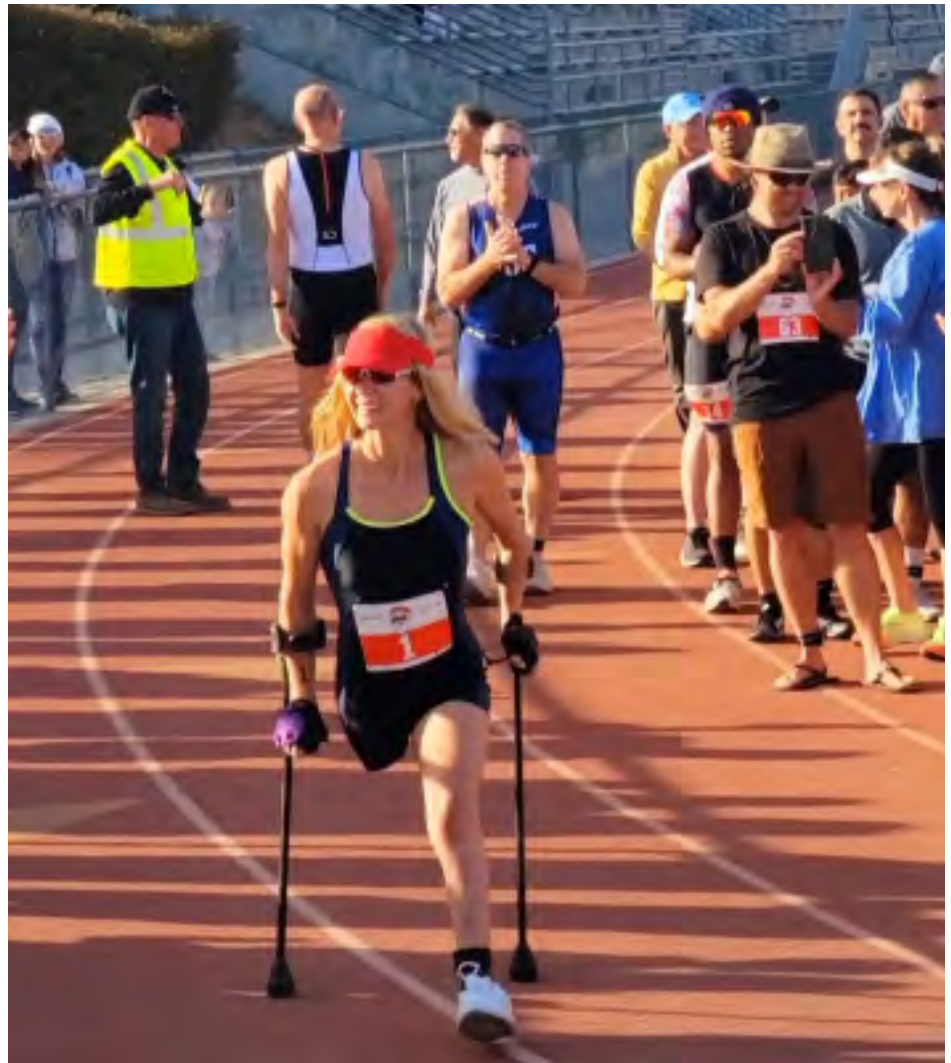
**YOU'VE PARTICIPATED IN A VARIETY OF OUTDOOR SPORTS LIKE TRIATHLONS, HIKING, AND KAYAKING. WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE FOR ADAPTIVE ATHLETES?**

A big part of what drives me is simply knowing that the human body is capable of amazing things. I believe that with the right mindset, determination, and a positive attitude, anyone can push the limits of what's considered possible.

For people who are limb different, it's hard to know what our boundaries are because our bodies have unusual or rare differences. There aren't the same expectations that exist for able bodied athletes. I'm constantly experimenting with new strategies or adaptive equipment to fit my needs such as different crutch types or adaptive. I am curious to find out what my body is capable of in terms of adaptive sports. Only in the past few years have the pieces of the puzzle come together for me to develop the skills to run and bike successfully to compete in a strenuous sporting event such as a triathlon.

**HOW HAVE YOUR LIMB DIFFERENCES SHAPED YOUR ABILITY TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES DURING YOUR ADVENTURES?**

One of my most memorable adventures was a 20.2-mile round-trip trek to Tolovana Hot Springs





near Fairbanks, Alaska. To my knowledge, I'm the first leg amputee to complete this trail entirely on crutches. This strenuous hike tested both my physical and mental stamina. This hike involved steep uphill and downhill, endless mud and swampy bogs (my crutch tips kept getting stuck in the muck, even with snowshoe adaptors!), and waves of mosquitoes. We also got an unpredictable mix of Alaskan weather—sunshine, rain, and high winds—while summiting two mountain peaks. About halfway in, my family and I stayed in a remote

cabin only accessible by bush plane or this hike in the summertime.

My limb differences have always forced me to improvise and adapt, and this was no exception. I had to carefully navigate each muddy step and adjust my crutches constantly to keep from sinking. When we finally reached the cabin, I was exhausted, but my kids, then ages 5 and 8, rose to the occasion by cooking meals, fetching spring water, and setting up our supplies so I could rest and recover. Their willingness to pitch in reminded me

why I push myself: to show them that even the toughest obstacles can be overcome with teamwork and grit.

On the hike back, every mile felt longer than the last, but I just kept taking one step at a time. Finally, close to midnight, after 13 hours of intense hiking, we made it back to our van. I've learned to continue to move forward even when it seems difficult. That's exactly what keeps me going: the knowledge that with the right mindset and support, we can chart our own path and



conquer challenges that once seemed impossible. At the end of the 20 miles, I was very sore in my arms and shoulders from using the crutches. However, after just a few days of recovery, I was nearly back to normal. This showed me that my body can handle such a hike and recover.

### **WHAT WAS THE MOST REWARDING—AND THE MOST CHALLENGING—PART OF YOUR RECENT 20-MILE HIKE IN ALASKA?**

Watching my family, especially my kids, rise to the occasion. Seeing them carry their own packs, help cook meals, gather water, and handle the rugged Alaskan wilderness with such enthusiasm really warmed my heart. It reminded me why I push myself in the first place: to show them that no matter our differences, we can accomplish incredible things when we work together. Plus, the scenery was absolutely breathtaking. Summiting those peaks and taking in the views was like stepping into a postcard, and then arriving at the remote cabin felt like traveling back a century in time.

The most challenging aspect was definitely the endless mud and bogs, compounded by mosquito swarms and unpredictable weather. My crutches kept sinking into the muck—even with adaptors—and every step had to be carefully planned. Mentally, there were moments when the trail felt never-ending, especially as we neared midnight on our final push. But I kept reminding myself of the resilience I've developed my entire life. Each obstacle—be it a muddy patch or a steep incline—was another chance to adapt and push forward. The satisfaction of finally reaching the van after 13 hours made every challenging step worth it.

### **THE ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT TREK IS AN AMBITIOUS GOAL. HOW ARE YOU PREPARING PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, AND LOGISTICALLY TO TACKLE SUCH AN EXTREME ADVENTURE?**

I'm focusing on strength and endurance training that specifically targets the muscles I rely on most while hiking on crutches, such as my arms, shoulders, and core. I've upped my weekly mileage on local trails and added more challenging terrain to mimic the ups and downs I'll encounter in the Himalayas.

My mental preparation involves breaking big objectives into smaller milestones, for example, focusing on reaching a certain goal each day instead of feeling overwhelmed by the entire trek at once. Visualization and mindfulness exercises also help me remember that each new challenge, no matter how daunting, is an opportunity to adapt and grow.

The Annapurna and Manaslu Circuits involve high elevations, so I'm researching and planning for altitude acclimatization. I've watched a considerable amount of YouTube documentaries about the trek I plan to do, and this also helps me with my planning of gear and equipment.

### **WHAT ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT AND GEAR WILL BE CRITICAL FOR YOU TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT, AND HOW DO YOU ENSURE IT'S TAILORED TO YOUR SPECIFIC NEEDS?**

Thomas Fetterman crutches are building me their high-performance titanium forearm crutches for the journey. Once I receive these custom-made crutches (they are

currently in production), I will need to hike extensively with these as well to prepare for the journey. The titanium crutches will be more durable but also heavier than my current carbon fiber crutches. I will also have to bring with me several types of interchangeable crutch tips for the journey to navigate between snow, ice, dirt, mud, etc.

Additional gear I will need to purchase include a specialized hiking boot that provides extra ankle stability and fits securely. I look for boots with solid ankle support and a stiff sole for rocky or uneven ground. I'm also needing to purchase clothing and backpacking equipment. Clothing is all about layering, especially at high altitudes where the temperature swings wildly. I need to be sure it's breathable, lightweight, and easy to adjust since I'm often stopping to take care of my gear. I will be carrying my own backpack that will include my clothing, down blankets, and personal items. Before heading to the Himalayas, I will put every piece of gear through a "dress rehearsal" on local trails. I test my crutch tips in mud, gravel, and rocky terrain to see how they hold up. ■

[\*\*CLICK HERE TO READ THE REST OF WENDY'S STORY\*\*](#)

**Support Wendy's GoFundMe for her Annapurna Trek**  
[CLICK HERE](#)

## Creating accessible short-term rentals for all people with disabilities

By Lorraine Woodward, [Becoming rentABLE](#)

When most people think about accessibility, they often think in terms of wheelchair access. Unfortunately, by doing this you exclude a huge population of people with disabilities. At Becoming rentABLE, we advocate for expanding accessibility for all types of disabilities including all mobility (wheelchair, walker, canes and crutches), cognitive (autism, dementia, brain injury), hearing, sight and aging access.

As the accessible short-term rental experts, Becoming rentABLE has created a listing platform with 63 different accessible filters so renters with any type of disability can choose specific filters and find properties that match their needs. It's matchmaking at its best!

### UNDERSTANDING LIMB DIFFERENCES

Disabilities come in all shapes and sizes and each disability

comes with its own unique set of accessibility needs. Let's consider the needs of individuals with limb differences. Regardless of whether the individuals have congenital limb differences (born without a limb or part of a limb) or acquired limb differences (lost a limb due to injury or illness), their personal needs will all vary.

According to the Amputee Coalition, there are over 5.6 million people currently living with either limb loss or limb differences. This is a significant part of the population that you can create a more accessible travel experience for by considering some key elements in your short-term rental. Following are some ways you can increase accessibility in your property.

General Accessibility Tips (these are actually beneficial to everyone!)

- Maintain clear pathways throughout the rental to ensure easy navigation for all guests.
- Implement smart home devices to control lights, temperature,



and other features, providing greater convenience and independence.

- Add night lights to dark hallways and bathrooms to help reduce the risk of accidents.

## EXTERIOR ACCESSIBILITY

- Provide ramps with sturdy handrails for extra support
- Ensure walkways are level and free of obstacles.
- Add adequate outdoor lighting, especially motion-activated lights, to enhance safety.

## KITCHEN

- Consider lowering cabinets or putting essential items on lowest shelves to reach easier.
- Install lever-style faucets which are more user-friendly for people with limited hand function.

## BATHROOM

- Install grab bars near the toilet and shower for added stability.
- Include non-slip mats in your bathroom to reduce risk of slips and falls, especially for those with limited balance.
- Provide a comfortable and safe shower chair as a seating option for bathing.
- Swap out traditional shower heads for a handheld version that offers flexibility and ease of use.
- Help renters keep toiletries within easy reach by having easy to reach, open shelving.
- If you supply soap, shampoo and conditioner, consider using small refillable bottles that make it easier for your renters to handle.

## BEDROOM

- A height-adjustable bed can make it easier for individuals with lower limb differences to get in and out of bed.

- Consider adding bedside controls for lights and other devices within easy reach.
- Ensure there's enough space to maneuver around the bed and other furniture.

By incorporating these design elements, you can create short-term rentals that are welcoming and accessible to people with limb differences. Let's work together to make travel a more inclusive experience for everyone.

*Becoming rentABLE* is an online directory of accessible short-term rental properties and resources. Think of us as an accessibility friendly Vrbo or Airbnb. Our goal is to build our inventory by certifying properties for accessibility beyond just a wheelchair to include all mobility, cognitive, hearing, sight and the fast-growing aging population because we know accessibility is a part of life for everyone.

For *Becoming rentABLE* accessibility isn't an afterthought—it's the priority.

For more information:

[www.BecomingRentABLE.com](http://www.BecomingRentABLE.com). ■





Hülya Marquardt is a vibrant 41-year-old mother, wife and business owner living a fulfilling life in southern Germany. Born with a physical difference in her hands, Hülya's life took an extraordinary turn at 18 when she underwent the life-changing experience of losing her legs above the knees due to sepsis. Rather than seeing these moments as setbacks, Hülya has embraced her journey, building a beautiful life full of love, purpose, and success.



# Q & A with Hülya Marquardt

## What do you love most about exploring the outdoors?

I simply love the outdoors. Whether it's hiking in the forests or exploring old towns and their history. We enjoy this as a family.



## Accessibility can vary widely. What has been your experience?

Wheelchair accessibility is a real issue in the countryside. Most old towns with their beautiful timber framed houses, old cafes and their cobblestone streets are not accessible. It is not an issue in the bigger cities though.

## What's your process for planning a trip? Are there any specific items you must have that help make your journeys more comfortable?

My husband plans all our trips and since having a child, we look out for wheelchair accessibility in hotels, but before, we didn't really. There are also places which just aren't accessible but I still visit them like Kenya for example or my parents birth country, Turkey, which we visit once a year. In general, we do like



the Mediterranean but places like Turkey, Greece or southern Italy just aren't very accessible. If you visit these beautiful places, you will need help if you want to see all of it.

I take a lot of gadgets to make me as independent as possible like a wheelchair, stubbies (protectors for my stumps so I can walk directly on them), a skateboard and push up bars which I use for crawling. I simply use what's the most practical. I don't care about what it looks like. Having only short, withered stumps left, I am quite good and comfortable walking on

my hands, as I call it. I do so at the beach, to climb stairs or simply when the terrain is uneven like on a forest hike for example.

### **Which destinations have you found to be the most accessible, and what made it exceptional?**

Mostly the big cities. I have found New York very accessible and the people to be very friendly and helpful. The same goes for places like Berlin or London. However, people often make up for it when accessibility isn't perfect. In Kenya for example people were helpful and kind wherever we went.

### **What's one destination you've been to that you think everyone should visit at least once in their life?**

I don't look at places from a disabled perspective but from an intrigued travellers perspective only.

There are so many beautiful places on this wonderful planet of ours. My husband has lived in New Zealand for seven years and travelled the world. Since we have been together for the past 10 years, we have continued to do so and had the most wonderful experiences in Africa, Asia and America but we have always held Europe dearly in our hearts. It is simply a melting pot of different cultures and languages you won't find anywhere else on this planet. From our house you can drive within two to three hours to four different countries and within six to eight hours, to 10 different countries.

### **Do you prefer exploring bustling cities, unwinding by the beach, or immersing yourself in nature when you travel?**

A holiday always needs to be a mix of all of them.

### **Can you share any amusing stories from your travels?**

In southern Italy they advertised a hotel as wheelchair accessible. We booked. However, once we arrived there, we discovered that the lift started only on the first floor. So, there was a whole flight of stairs you had to climb to get to the lift. The stairs actually started in the middle of the hotel restaurant.

The hotel owners were incredibly apologetic and quickly arranged for a strong man to assist me whenever I needed to navigate the stairs, ensuring I could be carried down safely each time. I know some would hate the attention but it was all very cute in this Italian family-run hotel and I found it hilarious to be carried down into the restaurant in my evening dress every evening. Kind of fairytale style.

### **What role does travel and being outdoors play in your overall happiness and sense of freedom?**

It is simply a big and important part of our lives and we are rediscovering travelling at the moment with a very lively 4-year-old at our side. :)

### **How do you turn a simple day trip or weekend getaway into a memorable adventure?**

Always explore something new and it will become an adventure. My husband takes all our videos and pictures. He is creative and can capture the essence of a location.

### **If someone had just one weekend to visit your region, what would you**

### **suggest they do to make the most of their time?**

It depends on the time of the year. In winter visit a Christmas Market, in September/October visit one of the big beer festivals and in spring and summer hang around the city of Stuttgart on the Schlossplatz and enjoy some of the concerts, visit one of the museums of the great companies here like the Mercedes Benz Museum or the Porsche Museum, have a day trip to the Black Forest, role a dice in the Baden Baden Casino, visit one of the many old castles or churches and fairy tale little half-timbered house villages or go hiking on the Swabian alp.

### **As a boutique owner, how do you balance fashion and practicality when packing for a trip?**

I simply always take too much and then promise myself I will take less next time but I just repeat the whole thing all over again :) I take too many nice clothes and evening dresses but as a mum without legs who crawls on the floor most of the time on holiday, I only end up wearing practical clothes like shorts and T shirts.

### **Where are some of your favorite hidden gems?**

Places in the Mediterranean like Olympos in Turkey, Alaçatı in Turkey, Polignano a Mare in Italy are very special but there are also beautiful places in Germany like Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Heidelberg or Schwäbisch Hall. ■



**Follow**

Hülya on Instagram



# POSTCARDS

STARRING  
CHRISTA COUTURE



AMI



# Christa Couture's inclusive travel adventures

A musician, writer, filmmaker and broadcaster, Christa Couture wears her creativity with flair, highlighted by her prosthetic leg decorated with bold, colorful flowers—a visible symbol of her approach to the world. As a mixed Cree and Scandinavian woman, a mother, queer artist, and someone who has lived with a disability since childhood, Christa has embraced life's challenges and joys. Whether navigating the streets of Canada for her travel series [Postcards From](#) or crafting her [How to Lose Everything: A Memoir](#) she brings with it a unique openness that makes everyday experiences truly remarkable.

Travel has been a central thread in Christa's life, though not always by choice. For years, she crisscrossed the country as a touring musician, her schedule dictated by venues and tour buses. Her performances brought her to countless Canadian cities, from the hustle of Toronto to the windswept prairies of the west, but this wasn't the kind

of travel that allowed for lingering or exploration. It was a routine of sound checks, late-night drives and fleeting glimpses of unfamiliar places. Now, in a different stage of her life and career, Christa has turned her focus to traveling for joy and discovery, with a specific lens on accessibility.

Her hosting role on [Postcards From](#) offers a unique perspective on travel, shaped not only by her disability but also by her relentless curiosity about how people interact with their environments. Christa's left leg was amputated above the knee after a childhood cancer diagnosis and navigating the world with a prosthetic leg has made her hyper-aware of the barriers many don't even notice. Uneven sidewalks, stairs with no handrails, or long distances between airport gates are challenges that require careful planning and ingenuity. Yet for Christa, these obstacles are not



Drumheller



Drumheller



Drumheller



Drumheller



Drumheller



Fredericton



Fredericton

deterrents but invitations to adapt and engage differently with the world.

Traveling with a disability requires a different kind of preparation. Christa relies on a set of tools to make her trips smoother, from lightweight collapsible crutches to wheeled luggage that minimizes strain. Even her prosthetic leg demands careful attention; equipped with a microprocessor knee, it requires nightly charging, an ironic twist on the typical travel checklist. “I’d rather forget my phone charger than my leg charger,” she jokes, but the sentiment underscores the precision and care that go into her explorations.

Through Postcards From, Christa has visited destinations across Canada, each offering a new lens through which to experience

travel. Niagara Falls stood out for its thoughtful infrastructure, where decades of tourism have led to accommodations that welcome a wide range of visitors. Edmonton, her childhood hometown, surprised her with a new funicular that bridges the steep river valley, making once-inaccessible trails open to everyone. Dawson City in the Yukon presented a stark contrast—a town where boardwalks replace paved sidewalks and streets turn to mud with the rain. At first glance, it seemed like the least accessible destination, but what Dawson lacked in infrastructure, it made up for in community spirit. The locals’ creativity and willingness to help each other made Christa feel more welcome than in cities with polished accommodations.

The show itself takes a sensory approach, with each episode

focusing on one of the five senses—touch, taste, smell, sound or sight. This structure broadens the scope of inclusion, offering experiences that resonate differently depending on the viewer’s abilities. Christa adapts activities to her abilities while skillfully exploring how others with different disabilities might engage with the same experiences. This dual focus enriches the show, transforming it into an exploration of how everyone, regardless of ability, can connect to a place.

One of Christa’s most memorable experiences on Postcards From involved food. In Drumheller, Alberta, she was introduced to prairie oysters which is calf testicles, battered and fried, a delicacy deeply rooted in local ranching culture. The experience was as much about the story behind it as it was about the



Fredericton



Dawson City



Dawson City



Fredericton

taste, offering her a glimpse into the resourcefulness of rural communities. Food, for Christa, is often a way to access the heart of a place, a tangible link to its history and people.

One of the most surprising moments in her travels came when she tried Nordic sit skiing in [Whistler](#). As someone who doesn't consider herself particularly athletic or outdoorsy, Christa didn't expect to fall in love with the sport. But the physicality of skiing, powered by her arms and shoulders, tapped into a strength she hadn't fully appreciated in herself. For someone who spends much of her time adapting to physical limitations, finding an activity that aligned perfectly with her capabilities felt empowering and invigorating. Adaptive adventures are about discovering what works for you, rather than

trying to fit into a pre-determined mold.

Christa's approach to travel—and life—is deeply shaped by her experiences with grief. Her memoir *How to Lose Everything: A Memoir* chronicles the losses that have defined her: the amputation of her leg, the deaths of her two sons, and the slow rebuilding of her life after heartbreak. Those experiences taught her to live in the present, to find joy where she can and to approach each day with an openness to whatever it might bring. She now has a seven-year-old daughter who has brought immense joy to her life. Balancing the pain of grief with the light her daughter brings has allowed Christa to find new ways to engage with the world. Over time, her life has expanded around her grief, making room for fresh experiences, meaningful work and a deep sense

of purpose. Travel, for her, is an extension of that philosophy, a way to keep growing, learning, and connecting.

As Christa looks to the future, her bucket list is ever-expanding. She dreams of exploring the Grand Canyon, the cobblestone streets of Prague, the rolling hills of Italy, Chicago and other American cities. Sure, visiting these destinations will allow her to cross them off her bucket list, but she sees these as opportunities to engage with the world in new and meaningful ways.

She travels confidently, embracing her prosthetic leg as being an integral part of her identity, showcasing it with pride through her fashion choices. Often opting for outfits that leave her floral-adorned prosthetic visible, she transforms it into a striking

accessory rather than something to hide. Whether she's rolling up a pant leg or pairing bold patterns with the vibrant design of her leg, her style exudes confidence and invites curiosity. This openness also sparks conversations, allowing her to connect with people in meaningful ways while breaking down stereotypes about disability.

Through her travels and storytelling, Christa Couture reminds us that the world is full of possibilities, even when the path seems uncertain. She shows us that you can navigate challenges and even embrace them. With every step—whether on her prosthetic leg or on crutches—she invites us to see the world not as it is, but as it could be, if we all worked to make it a little more open and accessible.



Salt Spring Island



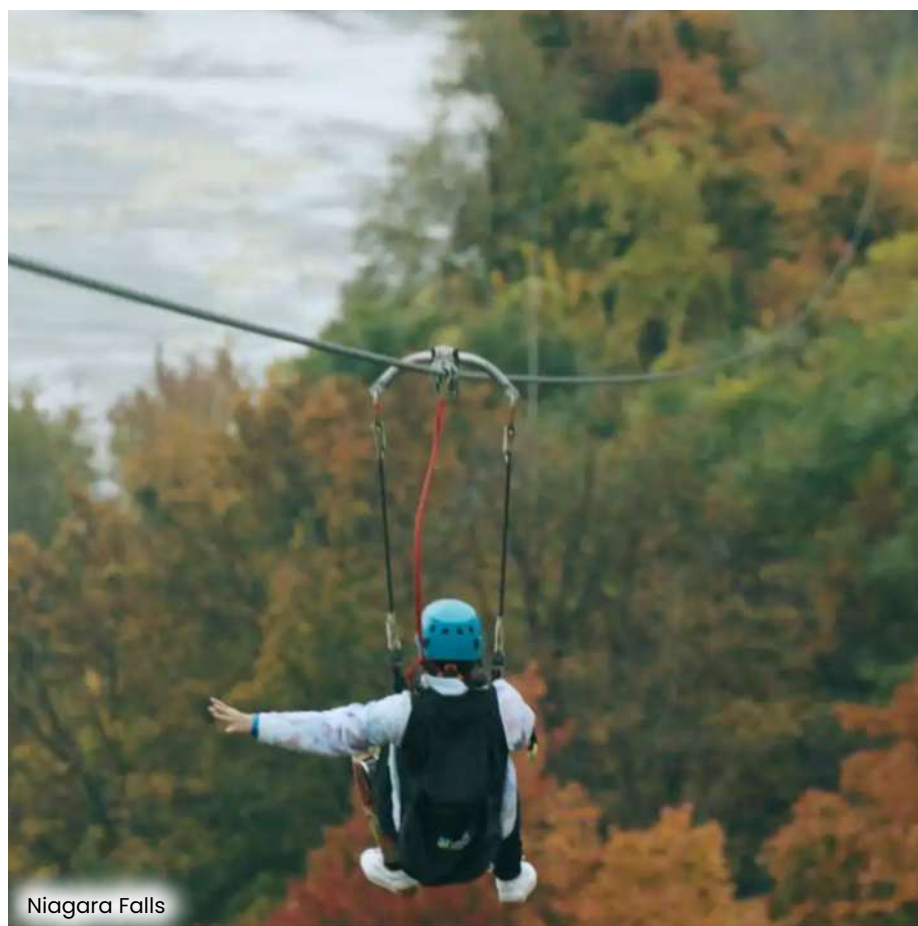
Salt Spring Island



Salt Spring Island



Salt Spring Island



Niagara Falls



Salt Spring Island



Niagara Falls



Niagara Falls



Niagara Falls



Niagara Falls

FEATURES



Edmonton



Whistler



Whistler



Whistler



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Whistler

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**Postcards from . . .**  
*A travel series for the senses*





# With one limb, Tim Mason is unapologetically living and seeing the world his way

With one limb, Tim Mason is unapologetically living and seeing the world his way

Tim Mason doesn't merely exist—he radiates, bursting into a space like fireworks against a midnight sky. He is a kaleidoscope of infectious energy: one moment, he's spinning on a treadmill in the gym, defying the odds with his dancing; the next, he's candidly sharing the complexities of his lived experiences with whoever expresses an interest. A man of many talents and one limb, Tim proves again and again that limits are more about perception than reality.

Born in Moscow, Tim's life began in circumstances that could have easily confined him to the margins. Diagnosed with birth defects attributed to the Chernobyl disaster, he was placed in an orphanage until the age of three. His earliest years were silent—mute, withdrawn—but fate had plans that were anything but. A moment of serendipity and his photograph on a website changed everything.



His adoptive mother flew to Russia and brought him home to the U.S. “When I was born, my biological mother relinquished her parental rights to me,” Tim shared.

“On the note, she said ‘this child is a monster and I don’t want to raise him.’ But his adoptive mother saw something in him. As his life progressed with his new family, his mom pushed him to excel, be independent and not afraid to have goals and big dreams. “When it comes to positivity and who I am, it is because of her,” Tim said with a pensive smile. “She taught me to love and believe in myself.” He continued, “I was not treated any differently from my siblings. I had to make my bed, clean and do chores around the house like everyone else did.”

Sadly, she passed away a few years ago, but “It’s like she’s still here. She lives through me every day. Every success and push forward that I make as an independent disabled person is for her. And that’s something that I carry with me every day.” Tim’s adoptive mom’s determination to raise him as both loved and independent ignited a spark that has since become an inferno.



Chicago, where Tim now resides, was the stage for his independence. The city’s accessibility affords him the convenience he needs but it’s also empowerment. In his words, “Rolling out for groceries, hopping on a bus to meet friends, or walking my dog isn’t just living; it’s thriving.” His daily life is a combination of small victories stitched together with grit, gratitude and a healthy dose of humor.

Tim’s humor is a cornerstone of his being. His wit disarms, diffuses and connects. He once quipped, “I’m half-baked but still delicious,” a line that captures his ability to own his narrative and laugh with it. That humor is sometimes meant to entertain, but it is also armor and a conversation starter when people are uncomfortable and unsure how to connect with him. Tim doesn’t wait for them to figure it out; he makes it easy for them, usually with a joke.

He also loves to dance! To Tim, dancing is rebellion, joy and liberation. Whether he’s twirling on a treadmill or breaking out moves in



unexpected places, dance is his declaration of freedom. “Dancing is whatever you need it to be—sad, exuberant, messy. It’s your moment to just be.” His unapologetic passion for life through motion is a reminder that every body—every being—has its rhythm.

But let’s not sugarcoat things. Tim’s life is not all smooth sidewalks and sunny strolls. Like anyone, he has his share of hard days—days when self-doubt creeps in, whispering that he’s not enough. Yet, where some might linger, Tim chooses a different route. He counts his blessings and keeps moving forward. “I tell people to get up and live their best lives, so I need to live by my own words,” he says. He does just that and a handwritten note left on his wheelchair while working out at his local gym is proof of his impact. “I don’t know you, but you uplifted me today,” the note read. That scrap of paper encapsulated what Tim is all about—not just surviving but inspiring by showing up, being real and choosing to live loudly.

His vibrant life involves travel which he believes provides life-changing lessons by allowing individuals to step outside their comfort zones and discover the beauty of diverse cultures. “If you have the means to travel, do it. The world has so much to offer,” he says.

Tim has visited destinations like Mexico, Switzerland, Nice, Monaco, and his personal favorite, Paris. This

city holds a special place in his heart for its beauty, accessibility and the kindness of locals. A memorable trip was an 11-day European adventure with his best friend, exploring Paris, Nice and Monaco. While cobblestone streets presented challenges, the support of his friend—pushing him through the stunning Versailles Gardens—made the experience unforgettable. Another highlight was traveling to Paris for the Paralympics, where Tim combined his love for adventure with meaningful advocacy, celebrating the strength and success of disabled athletes.

Practical and prepared, Tim approaches travel with careful planning, ensuring his essentials, like wheelchair chargers, are within reach. He also emphasizes advocating for proper wheelchair handling during flights, as careless treatment remains a widespread issue. His advice to fellow travelers with disabilities is to prioritize their goals and not let fear of judgment hold them back. “It’s your journey,” he says, “focus on yourself, not what others might think.”

Tim also finds joy in connecting with locals. Through his humor and lighthearted personality, whether he’s dancing in front of the Louvre or meeting friendly Uber drivers, he cherishes the human connections that make travel meaningful. Tim envisions continuing to explore the world while advocating for more inclusive, accessible tourism. Perhaps his next trip will be to Jamaica which holds family significance as his adoptive mom lived there for a few years and his adopted sister is Jamaican.

As he lives his best life, his engagement on [social media](#) continues to thrill his audience. Tim’s social media success came



almost accidentally. What began as a video of him dancing to a tune on the treadmill spiraled into viral fame, garnering millions of views. The comments? A mix of curiosity, genuine admiration and negativity. Instead of retreating, Tim leaned in, answering questions, educating and turning his platform into a lighthouse for inclusivity and understanding.

But he's far from done. A book is on the horizon, not just to chronicle his life but to offer a blueprint for others navigating their own struggles. "It's not about saying, 'Look at me and what I've overcome,'" he explains. "It's about saying, 'Look at you. You've got this.'" Public speaking is also on his radar—a natural progression for someone who moves audiences even from a screen.

"The way I maintain my positivity is just to count my blessings, count the good things in life. It's so easy to focus on the negative things and let them tear you down. I've had a lot of moments where I've told myself, no one's going to love you because you're disabled. I've had moments where I really beat myself down. And every time I do that, it doesn't make me feel better or put me in a place where I can thrive. It only makes me want to burrow under my sheets and not do anything. And that's not life or living. So, what I would say to myself and other people is, yes, life is hard for everyone whether you have one limb or four, but you have to be able to push through. What defines you is not your struggles but how you overcome them. I say keep going. Every day is a new day. Even if you had a hard, give yourself

patience, love, credit and then wake up and start another brand new day!"

Tim's doesn't want pity or pedestalization; he wants connection, understanding and shared joy. He aims to motivate rather than merely inspire, emphasizing that his impact isn't about overcoming disabilities but about celebrating possibilities.

As Tim flips the script with every laugh, every dance and a steadfast refusal to be underestimated, he shares this message: life is messy and beautiful but fleeting. So, you might as well get up, dance to your own tune and own your freedom—even if it's with "just a butt, a hand, and a dream." ■



**Follow**

Tim on Instagram





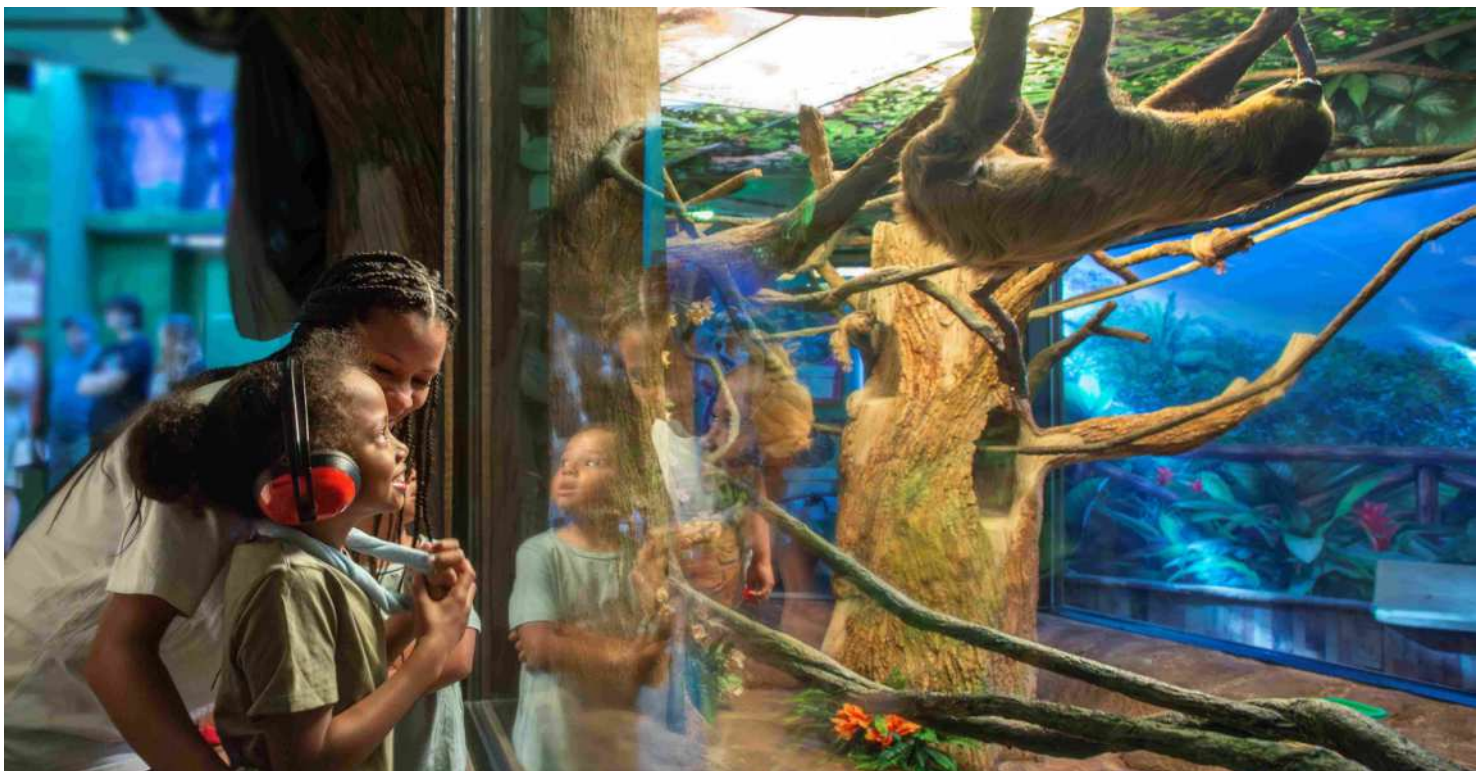
# Traveling the Spectrum

*Traveling the Spectrum* is a heartwarming docuseries that embarks on an extraordinary journey with families navigating the world of autism through the lens of travel. Across six captivating episodes, the series invites viewers to share in the stories of three families as they explore, bond, and discover the magic of adventure. Each episode breaks down barriers, showcasing how travel can be both transformative and accessible for all, while inspiring a fresh perspective on inclusivity.

The series was filmed in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, recognized as an autism-friendly destination since 2016. The area features numerous sensory-friendly accommodations and initiatives, making it an ideal location for the families' journeys

Premiered on December 12, 2024, and available on Peacock, *Traveling the Spectrum* offers a heartfelt look at the power of understanding, acceptance, and creating unforgettable memories.

For more details, visit the official website at [travelingthespectrumshow.com](https://travelingthespectrumshow.com).



Accessible

# DESTINATION

VISIT

*Myrtle Beach*

SOUTH CAROLINA

# Spotlight



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Accessible  
Hotels

Popular Accessible  
Things to See + Do

Accessible  
Food + Drink

5 Reasons Families with  
Autism Should Go To  
Myrtle Beach

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# ABOUT MYRTLE BEACH

Situated along the Atlantic Coast in South Carolina, Myrtle Beach is 60 miles made for you. It's been a go-to beach destination for decades and has long strived to become a place where everybody belongs. "The Beach," as travelers prefer to call it, is a certified sensory-friendly destination, and they're able to provide extra service and assistance to anyone who might need extra support on their vacation. In the Myrtle Beach area, there are hundreds of attractions, more than 2,000 restaurants, live music performances every day and night, and accommodation options for every budget. These pages cover just some of the accessible places in the destination – go to [VisitMyrtleBeach.com](http://VisitMyrtleBeach.com) for even more.



Savannah's Playground Autism Cafe

\*Champion Autism Network Certified (CAN)



Autism Travel Card Family Members Eating Outside



Myrtle Beach International Airport Quiet Room

## Accessible Hotels

### CAROLINA GRANDE RESORT\*

2505 North Ocean Boulevard,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[bluegreenvacations.com](http://bluegreenvacations.com)

### LANDMARK OCEANFRONT RESORT\*

1501 South Ocean Boulevard,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[landmarkresort.com](http://landmarkresort.com)

### CROWN REEF BEACH RESORT & WATERPARK\*

2913 South Ocean Boulevard,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[crownreef.com](http://crownreef.com)

### THE PALACE RESORT\*

1605 South Ocean Boulevard,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[palaceresort.com](http://palaceresort.com)

### THE CARAVELLE RESORT\*

6900 North Ocean Boulevard,  
Myrtle Beach SC 29572  
[thecaravelle.com](http://thecaravelle.com)

### BEACH COVE RESORT\*

4800 S Ocean Blvd,  
North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582  
[beachcove.com](http://beachcove.com)

### OCEAN CREEK RESORT\*

10600 N Kings Hwy,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
[oceancreek.com](http://oceancreek.com)

### HARBOUR LIGHTS\*

2690 Harbour Lights Dr,  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
[bluegreenvacations.com](http://bluegreenvacations.com)

### SEA WATCH RESORT\*

161 Seawatch Dr,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
[seawatchresort.com](http://seawatchresort.com)

### HORIZON RENTALS\*

215 77th Ave N,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
[horizonmyrtlebeach.com](http://horizonmyrtlebeach.com)



"Our trip to Myrtle Beach is anticipated all year long. We have visited annually for the past 20+ years and have been able to create a sensory-friendly trip that brings our son, and our entire family, all the joys and laughter of a great vacation." - Lynda Farrington Wilson



## Popular Accessible Things to See + Do

### MYRTLE BEACH PELICANS\*

1251 21st Ave N,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[milb.com](http://milb.com)

### CAPTAIN HOOK'S ADVENTURE GOLF

2205 N Kings Hwy  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com](http://myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com)

### MYRTLE BEACH SKYWHEEL\*

1110 North Ocean Blvd  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[skywheelmb.com](http://skywheelmb.com)

### SPRINGMAID PIER

3200 S Ocean Blvd,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[springmaidpier.com](http://springmaidpier.com)

### BROOKGREEN GARDENS\*

1931 Brookgreen Garden Dr,  
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576  
[brookgreen.org](http://brookgreen.org)

### WONDERWORKS\*

1313 Celebrity Circle, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[wonderworksonline.com](http://wonderworksonline.com)

### MYRTLE WAVES\*

3000 Mr. Joe White Ave,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[myrtlewaves.com](http://myrtlewaves.com)

### FUNWAREHOUSE

2349 Dick Pond Rd Myrtle Beach, SC 29575  
[funwarehousemb.com](http://funwarehousemb.com)

### BROADWAY GRAND PRIX\*

1820 21st Ave N,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[broadwaygrandprix.com](http://broadwaygrandprix.com)

### RIPLEY'S AQUARIUM\*

1110 Celebrity Cir,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

### THE ALABAMA THEATRE

Highway 17 South 4750 North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582  
[alabama-theatre.com](http://alabama-theatre.com)

### CHERRY GROVE PIER

3500 North Ocean Boulevard, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582  
[cherrygrovepier.com](http://cherrygrovepier.com)

### MEDIEVAL TIMES DINNER & TOURNAMENT

2904 Fantasy Way  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29579  
[www.medievaltimes.com/myrtle-beach](http://www.medievaltimes.com/myrtle-beach)

### HOLLYWOOD WAX MUSEUM ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

1808 21st Ave. N.  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[hollywoodwaxentertainment.com](http://hollywoodwaxentertainment.com)

### GRAND 14 MOVIE THEATER AT THE MARKET COMMON

4002 Deville St,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[stonetheatres.com/grand14cinemas](http://stonetheatres.com/grand14cinemas)



Family on the Myrtle Beach Boardwalk

### THE CAROLINA OPRY THEATER

8901 N. Kings Hwy. Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
[thecarolinaopry.com](http://thecarolinaopry.com)

### LEGENDS IN CONCERT

2925 Hollywood Dr,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[legendsinconcert.com](http://legendsinconcert.com)

### MYRTLE BEACH STATE PARK

4401 South Kings Hwy Myrtle Beach, SC 29575  
[southcarolinaparks.com](http://southcarolinaparks.com)

## Accessible Food + Drink

### BENJAMIN'S BAKERY\*

415 US-17 BUS, Surfside Beach, SC 29575  
[benjaminsbakery.com](http://benjaminsbakery.com)

### ANGELO'S STEAK AND PASTA\*

2311 S Kings Hwy,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[angelosteakandpasta.com](http://angelosteakandpasta.com)

### CAROLINA SEAFOOD AND STEAK\*

29911 N Kings Hwy,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
[carolinasteakhouse.com](http://carolinasteakhouse.com)

### LULU'S FUN FOOD MUSIC

4954 Hwy 17 S, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582  
[lulusfunfoodmusic.com](http://lulusfunfoodmusic.com)

### SEA CAPTAIN'S HOUSE

3002 N Ocean Blvd,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[seacaptains.com](http://seacaptains.com)

### HOOK & BARREL

8014 N Kings Hwy B, Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
[hookandbarrelrestaurant.com](http://hookandbarrelrestaurant.com)

### HAMBURGER JOES\*

712 48th Ave S, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582  
[hamburgerjoes.com](http://hamburgerjoes.com)

### CRABBY GEORGE'S SEAFOOD BUFFET

7904 N Kings Hwy,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
[crabbygeorges.com](http://crabbygeorges.com)

### JOHNNY D'S WAFFLES AND BAKERY\*

3301 N Kings Hwy,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
[johnnydswaffles.com](http://johnnydswaffles.com)

### OLE FASHION ICE CREAM PARLOR\*

665 US-17 BUS,  
Surfside Beach, SC 29575  
[mysurfsidesc.com](http://mysurfsidesc.com)

### GOLDEN EGG\*

810 3rd Avenue S,  
Surfside Beach, SC 29575  
[mysurfsidesc.com](http://mysurfsidesc.com)

### NY PIZZA KITCHEN\*

Several locations  
[nypizzakitchenbargrill.com](http://nypizzakitchenbargrill.com)

### SURF DINER\*

11 S Ocean Blvd,  
Surfside Beach, SC 29575

### FAMOUS TOASTERY\*

2005 Oak Heart Rd., Suite 5,  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29579

# 5 Reasons Families With Autism Should Go To Myrtle Beach



Myrtle Beach International Airport

## 1 Autism-Friendly

In 2016, the Champion Autism Network designated Surfside Beach, South Carolina – one of Myrtle Beach’s 14 communities – as the first autism-friendly beach destination. Since then, all 60 miles of The Beach have been committed to making Myrtle Beach a place where people with autism and their families can vacation in peace. The destination even has a pledge called “The Beach is for everyBODY,” which declares that the businesses that participate will “provide an inclusive space for visitors of all abilities, practice patience and problem-solving in all situations, and cultivate a space of acceptance and helpfulness.”

## 2 Helpful Resources

Myrtle Beach and participating businesses in the area use the Autism Traveler Mobile App so people can find autism-ready hotels, restaurants and attractions. The staff at these locations are prepared to help anyone with autism that may need extra assistance or patience during their visit, and they might also provide special offers and discounts to registered club members. Another initiative called, Project Lifesaver, can provide a GPS tracking band for children who are prone to wandering off or who are at risk of becoming lost. The band allows them to be quickly located by search teams and returned to their families.

## 3 Great Airport

Myrtle Beach International Airport has made strides to make flying easier for families. As part of the national TSA Cares program, travelers can contact TSA 72 hours before traveling so that a Passenger Support Specialist can provide them on-the-spot assistance. If your family might need some time to decompress after a flight, there is a quiet room near the baggage area open to anyone who needs it. Lastly, the Myrtle Beach Airport participates in the Sunflower Lanyard Program, which helps anyone with a hidden disability. The lanyard is a discreet way to signal to airport staff that you or a family member may require extra assistance or patience during your travels.

## 4 Accessible and Sensory-Friendly

Many attractions in the area are accessible and sensory-friendly or offer special assistance to anyone who requires it. The beach, Brookgreen Gardens, Myrtle Beach State Park and Huntington Beach State Park, and many more outdoor attractions are great for anyone with sensory needs. Attractions like the SkyWheel, Ripley’s Aquarium and Broadway at The Beach offers services like expedited access and noise-canceling headphones to help enhance the experience for people with sensory needs. Savannah’s Playground is great for families with children on the spectrum as well. The free, multi-acre park was designed to accommodate children with disabilities and who have additional sensory needs.

## 5 A Beach Experience for Everyone

There’s simply nothing like seeing the ocean and being able to experience a beach vacation. Myrtle Beach believes that The Beach is a place where everybody can belong—every body, every ability, everyone. They strive each day to create a more welcoming and inclusive place for families to vacation, relax, and enjoy everything there is to do in the 60 miles and 14 communities of The Beach.



Snack Stand at Broadway at The Beach



# What Does it Mean to Be a Destination A11y?



## Being an A11y means:

- Your destination is welcoming to visitors with disabilities
- Your destination cares about being inclusive
- Your destination is working to improve your accessibility
- Your destination sees the future of travel
- Your destination is actively engaging with stakeholders to raise awareness about the needs of the disability community

Thank you to the following destinations who have committed to accelerating accessibility:



THE DESTINATION A11Y CLUB IS A PROJECT OF



# Germany embraces 'Tourism for All'

Germany's [Tourism for All](#) initiative, supported by the German government, certifies accessible travel options across Germany. It covers various accommodations, attractions, dining facilities, and more, each independently verified to meet the needs of different disability groups. Whether you're a wheelchair user, visually impaired, hard of hearing, or have cognitive disabilities, Germany's travel options are tailored to support a wide array of needs.

## EXPLORE WITH CONFIDENCE

Visitors can use the *Tourism for All* database to search for travel options specific to their needs, including wheelchair accessibility, hearing aids, Braille signage, and step-free

pathways. The database makes planning easy by providing clear information on hotels, museums, outdoor spaces, and public transportation options that cater to mobility, hearing, and visual needs. For example:

**Wheelchair users:** Hotels, restaurants, and cultural sites with ramps, elevators, and spacious passageways.

**Hearing impairments:** Audio induction loops, visual guides, and flashing signals in various attractions.

**Visual impairments:** Braille information, tactile exhibits, and high-contrast signage to support navigation.

**Cognitive disabilities:** Easy language information, pictorial signage, and straightforward layouts in several venues.

## PLAN YOUR ACCESSIBLE GERMAN ADVENTURE

Germany's accessible travel infrastructure continues to expand, ensuring that every traveller can explore and enjoy its cities, historic sites and natural beauty. Whether you're captivated by history, art, or nature, Germany offers barrier-free experiences that make this destination truly inclusive for all.

For more information about accessible Germany, visit [Germany.travel](https://Germany.travel).



Young couple chatting in the palace garden of Schönhausen Palace



St. Wendel: Woman with a Cochlear Implant on a City Tour

©DZT/Jens Wegener



Dresden: Scanning of a castle model in the residential palace

©DZT/Jens Wegener



A group of disabled and able-bodied people picnicking in front of the Berlin Historical Museum

©DZT/Jens Wegener



Wheelchair user in the park

©DZT/Jens Wegener

# A taste of accessible experiences in Germany

*with much more to discover!*



Germany has emerged as a leader in accessible travel, making it an ideal destination for visitors with disabilities. From modern cities to medieval towns, here are some of the best accessible spots to explore across the country.

## **MUSEUM ISLAND, BERLIN**

A UNESCO World Heritage site in the heart of Berlin, Museum Island hosts some of the city's most renowned museums, including the Pergamon Museum and the Bode Museum. Visitors can enjoy step-free access, ramps, and elevators, ensuring that all can appreciate the art, history, and cultural exhibits with ease.

## **THE UNIVERSUM SCIENCE CENTER, BREMEN**

Explore the wonders of science at Bremen's Universum Science Center, designed for visitors of all abilities. This interactive museum is wheelchair-accessible, offering tactile exhibits and sensory experiences that engage all visitors. With accessible paths, elevators, and hands-on displays, Universum provides an enriching experience for anyone eager to dive into the world of science.

## **RHINE PROMENADE, DÜSSELDORF**

Stroll along Düsseldorf's Rhine

Promenade, a scenic and accessible pathway where the Rhine River's beauty is within reach. The promenade is smooth and barrier-free, ideal for wheelchair users and those with mobility challenges. Enjoy river views, local eateries, and accessible benches along this vibrant riverside route.

## **MINIATUR WUNDERLAND, HAMBURG**

For an experience that's truly unique, visit Miniatur Wunderland, the world's largest model railway exhibit. Located in Hamburg, this attraction is fully accessible, featuring elevators, wide aisles and spaces designed for ease

of movement. This interactive attraction is perfect for travellers of all ages and abilities.

### **DOCUMENTATION CENTER NAZI PARTY RALLY GROUNDS, NUREMBERG**

Take an accessible journey through Germany's history, featuring informative exhibits on the Nazi era, in a historic site with modern visitor accommodations. Renovations are underway to enhance the visitor experience, including accessibility. During this temporary phase, entry has been relocated to a container structure adjacent to the courtyard of the Congress Hall, where accessible routes ensure comfortable access for all. The main exhibition is reached via ramps and elevators, and accessible restrooms are conveniently located outside the exhibit. For visitors using public transport, the "Doku-Zentrum" stop is just a 500-meter walk away, and accessible parking

is available near the entrance. With wheelchair-friendly paths, German Sign Language tours, and resources for guests with sensory or cognitive needs, the Documentation Center remains dedicated to making history accessible to everyone despite current renovations.

### **NYMPHENBURG PALACE, MUNICH**

The baroque beauty of Nymphenburg Palace is accessible to everyone, with ramps and elevators available throughout the main areas. Known for its opulent architecture and landscaped gardens, this palace offers accessible tours so that all can enjoy its historical splendor.

### **COLOGNE CATHEDRAL, COLOGNE**

Cologne's Gothic masterpiece, the Cologne Cathedral, is equipped with step-free access to its main

areas, making it easy for all visitors to experience the breathtaking architecture and impressive stained-glass windows of this landmark.

### **ZWINGER PALACE GARDENS, DRESDEN**

For a tranquil yet accessible escape, Dresden's Zwinger Palace Gardens welcome all with barrier-free access and guided tours tailored for visitors with visual impairments. With smooth paths and guided tours, the gardens provide an inclusive way to explore this historical gem's lush landscapes and Baroque architecture.

### **STÄDEL MUSEUM, FRANKFURT**

Art lovers will appreciate the Städel Museum's commitment to accessibility. With ramps, elevators, and audio guides for visually impaired visitors, the museum offers an inclusive way to explore art from the Renaissance to the present.

### **MERCEDES-BENZ MUSEUM, STUTTGART**

This museum is a must for car enthusiasts and is fully accessible, allowing visitors to learn about the history of the automobile. Elevators and wide paths make it easy for everyone to navigate the exhibits, which trace the evolution of the Mercedes-Benz brand.

### **MONUMENT TO THE BATTLE OF THE NATIONS, LEIPZIG**

Leipzig's iconic Monument to the Battle of the Nations is a must-visit, with accessibility modifications for those with limited mobility. Elevators and accessible paths make it possible to reach panoramic views from this monumental structure, allowing all visitors to connect with Leipzig's storied past. ■



Nuremberg: Nazi Party Rally Grounds documentation centre

©DZT/ Florian Trykowski

# Immersive Nature Experiences

with Jan Bonville

Explore, connect, rejuvenate  
... in nature

## Safari with a disability

Embrace the unknown

By Jan Bonville



Is there any feeling like waking up at dawn, a hot coffee to dispel the early morning chill, and going out into the savannah's pearly morning light in an open-air jeep, looking out for the predators that only venture forth in the cool of early morning or dusk, the gentle-eyed gazelle,

statuesque giraffes, majestic elephant herds, and hearing the calls of the brightly colored birds perched on the acacia and thorn trees? For as far as the eye can see, there is nothing other than open grassland and brush, speckled occasionally with lakes and thorn

and acacia trees. In the quiet, the scent of the earth and fragrance of the trees blend, bringing a profound sense of peace and connection to the wild. If you love nature, wildlife, and the outdoors, there is little that matches the feeling of an East African safari.



Dining tent at camp in Ngorongoro Crater, surrounded by acacias



For those of us with disabilities, bucket-list items like an African safari are all too often an early casualty of the paring down of dreams that happens as we struggle with strength, energy, movement and logistics overall. A family safari was always on my bucket list. I myself grew up in East Africa as a third culture kid. Raising my own family in California, with children who loved the outdoors and nature and were always sensitive to the awe and beauty of animals, I had always wanted to expose them to this experience. Yet, at the same time as my children were getting to an age where we could travel internationally, my own physical abilities were surely and steadily declining. I was getting more tired, had trouble with spasticity, fatigue and pain and most importantly could no longer walk unassisted. Yet, time was running out to go to these areas. We all have a limited window of time with our young adult and teen children, and I wanted to fulfill this dream.

I love planning trips almost as much as going on them. Yet, for a person with MS and a mobility disability like mine, the planning and travel process for a complicated, faraway destination, always includes stress and anxiety. These are not wealthy countries and there is nothing as formal as the ADA in place. As in every trip I take- in any country including here in the US- I was concerned about my wheelchair. I wasn't sure how I would get up and down the narrow stairs of the small bush planes, manage the rough grounds of the lodges, deal with the jeeps, and in general, have a good experience. If you are able-bodied, do you ever pause to think about things like, getting into and out of a plane? Getting into and out of cars? Going up and down stairs? Probably not,



Jan and family outside a small bush plane

but why would you? But I need to think about and plan every moment of every day: from the time I get up in the morning, getting out of bed safely with the spasticity that comes with MS, transferring safely

to the toilet, making sure I empty my bladder before going out on a drive, getting into and out of a Jeep safely. Every day is like an obstacle course and requires energy and concentration.



Jan and family in an open air jeep

It's easy to understand why many of us with disabilities hardly leave home, let alone venture into something like a safari on a faraway continent. Sometimes the anxiety, the fear and the unpredictability, take over and can seriously spoil if not outright ruin, the enjoyment.

Yet the reward at the end of the obstacle course is immense: the opportunity to experience the true East African safari, be out in the wild, smell the fresh air and revel in the endless horizon, see the majestic herds grazing peacefully, and, most of all, build memories with family. Was it worth all the trouble, hassle, and the potential risk – because there is that, too? This cost-benefit calculation will differ for everybody, but for me, the answer is a resounding yes.

Safari is not without its challenges. Landing at Kilimanjaro International Airport, a small airport, there was no gangway from the airplane to the airport. I waited until everybody disembarked as I always do. Tanzania is not a wealthy country in term of GDP but is one of the

friendliest and certainly one of the most beautiful. The airport staff brought a very comfortable platform lift for me to descend in my wheelchair. In the customs line, a complete stranger solicitously approached me and offered to show me where the accessible restroom was. That's right- in this small airport, in a remote area, there was an accessible restroom in the airport. Perhaps not accessible in the purest sense of the word but it had a ramp, a bar that could be constituted as a grab, but most importantly, somebody had thought about it and took the time to tell me! I found the same thoughtfulness wherever I went. Our driver had provided a step for me to enter the Jeep and allowed me to sit up front with him, something that is not usually done as it was easier for me than sitting in the back. The country is bordered by multiple others including Rwanda which suffered from a war in the 1990s. There are a significant number of people with injuries and amputations. While this does not necessarily translate into perfect infrastructure for people

with disabilities, it does mean an attitude of acceptance and welcome.

One of the most memorable experiences we had was the Ngorongoro Crater. The drive to the Ngorongoro Crater feels like a transport to a different time, with lush, misty forests, and birds hidden in the foliage. After a significantly long drive through the otherworldly landscape, one comes to the viewpoint overlooking the huge, intact volcanic crater, with grassy plains and teeming with wildlife, forest and lakes. The Crater is one of the natural Wonders of the World and for good reason. It is truly awe inspiring to see the dramatic drop of the walls and the plains below. After a winding drive, we ended at our camp on the rim: a small, unpretentious scattering of 10-12 tents throughout the acacia trees, blending into the surreal landscape of beige, gold, green and brown.

I'd been allotted the tent closest to the dining room to prevent me from having to move too far. Inside the tent - a canvas tent - they had placed, very thoughtfully, a plastic chair for me to hold on to- good enough for me with my level of ability. As with most tented camps though, the dining tent had a step up to enter. I could do it but with difficulty. The next day, when we woke up for our early morning game drive the camp had placed a homemade wooden ramp – just for me, put together with nails and roughhewn wood. Not exactly an ADA standard ramp for a building in San Francisco but, they were trying to help me and were thinking about me and my needs. In this camp, in a very remote part of the world with subpar infrastructure I felt more welcome and included than I have felt at times in state-of-the-art high-



View of the Ngorongoro Crater, a Natural Wonder of the World

tech buildings in my hometown in San Francisco.

A trip to Africa is not for everyone. You need to be ready to face the unexpected: for example, the time it takes to get places, the lack of infrastructure, rough roads, being out in the elements, the uncertainty. You will need to communicate very carefully with your travel agent and/ or the hotel what your needs are. I had to be very clear about communicating that I was not bound to the wheelchair and was able to go up and down steps albeit very slowly and with difficulty; and that I did need assistance almost everywhere: going into and out of the planes, being able to use the shower and bathroom safely, needing help to enter and exit a jeep. There were times when the drives took a lot longer than expected and it was hard to hold my bladder. There were times when it was hard to take a shower. I am nervous about restrooms and had to take every opportunity I could to

use a clean, semi-accessible one. And it's annoying, and it's unfair, that what is so easy and does not require a second thought from most people, for me, involves so much mental and physical effort and energy. There were times I dearly missed my comfortable and accessible bedroom and bathroom.

But I had not crossed half the world to end up in something resembling my own house. My goal was to experience safari with my children and show them this fabulous world. That involved going out of my comfort zone- and with a disability on top of that- fully embracing the unknown and taking a risk. Descending into the Crater for the early morning drive, listening to the birds, seeing the elephants lumbering quietly, the big cats sleeping contentedly after their night of hunting, and the flamingos scattered along the lake. Returning to the camp to have a drink in front of the acacias, illuminated in an otherworldly light from the setting sun. All this and more, creates

lifelong memories.

To those of us who are disabled and dream of going on an African safari: don't give up on your travel dreams. Any of them. Accept that it will be more difficult, that you must do more research, put in more work and that you may not be able to do everything that you've dreamed of. But I would venture that there is nobody, anywhere, disabled or not, who has never had to give up on some of their dreams, because life happens. Life changes, the world changes and therefore our plans need to adjust. You may be the first person with a disability to show up at a remote camp in the middle of the savannah—I'm pretty sure I was, at least at one of these lodges. That's scary but also cool! Someone has to be the first! Why not you?!

So long as you keep an open mind and realize that things may not go exactly according to plan in a new, unknown location, why not? If you don't try, you will never know what could have been. ■



Elephant crossing

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## JAN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

[Lemala Ngorongoro Camp](#)

[Lemala Camps and Lodges](#)

[Asilia Camps and Lodges](#)

“As the saying goes: A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.

Jan Bonville

***Stay Home or Go Out? With MS, the Balance Is Tricky.***  
[CLICK HERE](#) to read this article written by Jan Bonville for the National MS Society.

# Beyond Sight

Sharing the unleashed power  
of the other senses during travel



# Dave Steele, the blind poet:

From vision to verse

Picture a world fading from view—a once vibrant landscape slipping into the shadows. For most, the loss of sight would feel like an insurmountable barrier, a darkness too overwhelming to navigate. But Dave Steele, a poet from Manchester, UK, has turned that very darkness into hope. Through the power of his words, he invites us into his world—not as a lament for what is lost, but as a celebration of what can still be discovered.

In 2014, Dave was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a progressive condition that slowly steals sight. As a professional singer and sales manager the diagnosis dismantled his stability and identity. Yet, in what could have been an ending, Dave found a profound new beginning.

One pivotal evening, as he prepared to perform at a support group for the visually impaired, inspiration struck. Instead of delivering a familiar tune,

he rewrote the lyrics of Ben E. King's *Stand By Me* to reflect his journey with blindness. The response from the audience was electric. As his words, Dave felt a spark of purpose ignite. That moment planted the seed for a creative mission that would touch lives around the world.

From that point forward, Dave began writing poetry daily, channeling his fears, triumphs and revelations into verse. His words became a mirror for others experiencing vision loss, reflecting their struggles and hopes with uncanny clarity. Through the boundless reach of social media, his poems traveled far beyond his local community, uniting people across the globe.

One of his most celebrated works, *A Cane's Perspective*, is written from the point of view of a mobility cane. It reimagines the cane not as a symbol of limitation but as an emblem of empowerment.



*“... I'm not a sign of weakness; I'm a reason to be proud, alleviate anxiety when you are in a crowd. Sometimes I'm left behind or folded up inside your hand, But I'll be ready for you, I won't judge, I understand...”* he writes, transforming a tool often associated with stigma into a sign of strength.

But his impact doesn't stop at the written word. Collaborating with tech leaders like Meta and Apple, he has amplified his voice and brought critical attention to accessibility and inclusivity. In a standout project with Meta, his poetry took center stage in a short film narrating his journey—a powerful reminder of social media's potential to amplify marginalized voices.

His advocacy extends further still. As the author of *Austin's Amazing Adventures*, a children's book

series featuring a young visually impaired hero, Dave is shaping the narratives future generations will inherit. Designed to be accessible to all, with [PenFriend](#) compatibility and braille integration, these books weave lessons of courage and creativity into every page.

Through all of this, Dave's journey isn't without its hardships. He openly shares the challenges of navigating crowded spaces, the isolation that often accompanies his condition, and the mental toll of adapting to a world designed

for sighted people. Yet even in his darkest moments, he finds a way to turn struggle into something luminous. "It's about taking your darkest moments and turning them into something that can help someone else," he explains.

You're  
transforming pain  
into purpose.



A devoted father, Dave's greatest legacy may lie in the future he envisions—not just for his children but for everyone living with disability.

“The world isn't designed for people like us, but we can redesign the way the world sees us.”

## TRAVEL

Dave's approach to travel is a mix of careful preparation and leveraging technology to make trips as seamless as possible. And there are many trips!

As part of his travel routine, he relies on a combination of cutting-edge technology and apps to navigate the world more independently. He uses the [Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses](#), which now integrate with the [Be My Eyes app](#), providing real-time navigation assistance and object identification. Additionally, he uses the [HapticNav app](#) for tactile navigation feedback and his [OrCam MyEye](#) device, which helps with reading text and identifying objects. These tools, along with his mobility cane, are key to making travel as seamless as possible.

He highlights how Meta's smart glasses enhance his independence and accessibility during travel. These cutting-edge glasses allow him to capture images or live video of his surroundings and receive real-time descriptions. From identifying objects to reading signs, they provide vital information

that makes navigating new environments more accessible and engaging. The glasses represent a powerful blend of technology and empowerment, enabling him to connect with the world around him in ways that feel liberating and inclusive. They've become an indispensable part of his travel routine.

Dave lights up as he recalls his visit to New York City. The electric energy of the city captivated his senses despite his visual impairment. But he is candid about the challenges of navigating such a bustling metropolis as someone with vision loss. He highlights the importance of accessibility and the ways technology, like Meta's smart glasses, has helped him move confidently through its iconic streets. For Dave, New York embodies both the excitement of possibility and the need for continued progress in creating inclusive spaces.

He points to Edinburgh, Scotland, as a must-visit destination. The city's rich history, combined with its accessible infrastructure and warm, welcoming atmosphere, makes it an ideal spot for travelers with disabilities. The tactile nature of the cobblestone streets, the resonance of bagpipe music and the vibrant storytelling culture make Edinburgh a feast for the senses, proving that a place's magic isn't limited to what can be seen—it's what can be felt and experienced in its fullest.

Dave has experienced countless memorable encounters during travel, but one that stands out involved meeting a young boy in the United States who had recently been diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. Sharing his poetry with the boy and his family, Dave saw firsthand the profound impact

his words could have, offering hope and a sense of community in a challenging time. Moments like these, where his journey and creativity tangibly inspire others, reaffirm his purpose and highlight the power of connection forged through shared stories.

“Disability isn't an excuse to do less, but a reason to be more,” Dave says.

And through his poetry, he's proving that the darkest moments can give rise to the brightest lights. ■

# THE BLIND POET

## Follow Dave Steele



# Silent Adventures

The world through the eyes of Deaf travellers



## Deaf filmmaker, Ladan Sahraei, travels boldly through silence

Imagine stepping into an airport, a bustling, chaotic hub of activity, where multiple announcements crackle over speakers, a plethora of information flying around that space as fast as planes. Sadly, for those in the Deaf community, these vital updates dissolve into a wall of silence. Welcome to the world of Ladan Sahraei, a Canadian/Persian filmmaker, advocate and dreamer who defies the odds not with whispers, but with bold actions and a heart that resonates louder than words. Imagine this: a world where silence isn't just the absence of sound, but a stage upon which creativity bursts forth like a kaleidoscope of motion and emotion. This is the narrative of Ladan Sahraei.



Born in Iran and proudly identifying herself as Persian, Ladan grew up in a society where the odds were stacked heavily against her. As a Deaf individual and part of the LGBTQ+ community, her existence was an act of defiance in a country where such identities were met with systemic oppression and

risk. Despite the constraints of an environment that marginalized her, Ladan nurtured a fiery passion for filmmaking, envisioning stories that reflected the nuanced beauty and struggles of human existence. Yet, without interpreters, accessible education, or a platform for her voice, she

Ladan Sahraei and Troy Kotsur, Oscar winner for Best Supporting Actor for CODA





faced a torrent of “you can’t.” Iran sought to silence her, but Ladan’s determination became a roaring declaration: her story was hers to tell and it will be told! Her move to Canada in 2014 as an LGBTQ+ refugee was a physical escape and leap toward freedom and self-expression, aided by the fuel of her audacity to dream bigger than her previous circumstances allowed.

But arriving in Canada brought its own challenges such as learning a new language, including American Sign Language (ASL). It quickly became evident to her that although she now had the freedom to reclaim her identity—to be herself and live without fear, the reality of travelling as a Deaf person wasn’t just about getting from point A to B. It was still a complex journey of navigating barriers and finding ways to communicate in a world that isn’t always built to include everyone. Nevertheless, Ladan was now in a country where she could safely pursue

a future where her storytelling could be used to shatter barriers, amplify her artistry and inspire change—an opportunity she has enthusiastically embraced.

Ladan’s travel experiences reflect the duality of her world: a blend of challenges and moments of human connection that highlight the best and worst of accessibility in modern travel. For instance, she recalls the anxiety of being at an airport where a flight’s gate change was announced—only to be left out of the loop. While fellow passengers scrambled to the new location, she was left relying on the kindness of a stranger to explain what had happened. “What’s going on?” she typed on her phone, holding it up to a nearby traveler.

Moments like this are a huge inconvenience but also a stark reminder of how critical accessibility is for Deaf travelers. Despite these challenges, Ladan continues to explore new places.

Her top tips for accessible travel are rooted in preparation and adaptability. “Plan ahead,” she advises. Research the services available at your destination. Some airlines and airports now offer systems where travelers can request assistance, flagging their tickets with a note that they are Deaf. This ensures staff come to notify them personally of any changes or updates. But even then, the reliability of such services varies. Ladan emphasizes the importance of carrying a notebook and pen, a simple yet effective backup for when technology fails.

Technology, of course, has been a game-changer. Ladan uses the 24/7 sign language interpreter Video Relay Service (VRS) which allows individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate easily via phone and is accessible to everyone. She also makes use of voice-to-text apps and messaging to bridge communication gaps but she points out, these tools are not

perfect. Apps don't always update in real time, and battery life can betray even the most prepared traveler. That's where human interaction often comes into play.

"There are moments when people go above and beyond," Ladan shares, recalling times when fellow passengers or airline staff used her phone to type out messages or simply wrote notes to ensure she understood. "It's those small gestures that stay with you," she says.

One unforgettable travel memory involved a workshop in Banff, Alberta. Excited to attend, Ladan arrived at the airport, only to accidentally swap her suitcase with another traveler—someone who had an identical bag. By the time

she realized her mistake, she was already in Banff, left without her belongings for an entire week. The mishap turned into an unexpected lesson in adaptability and humor. "I'll never forget it," she laughs. "It was a disaster at the time, but now it's one of my favorite stories to tell."

Travelling as a Deaf person also means constantly advocating for accessibility. Ladan speaks passionately about the need for better systems at airports and other transit hubs. She highlights the lack of visual displays for announcements and the inconsistency in services like video relay interpreting (VRI), which allows Deaf individuals to communicate with staff through an interpreter on a screen. While such services are becoming more

common, they're not yet ubiquitous. "In some places, it's like they've never even considered that Deaf travelers exist," Ladan says.

Museums and cultural sites, on the other hand, have given her some of her most positive experiences. [The Canadian Museum for Human Rights](#) in Winnipeg, for example, is very accessible. With features like QR codes that connect to signed video content, Ladan's visit was immersive and inclusive. "It was incredible," she recalls. "Everything was ready and accessible—I didn't have to ask or advocate for anything. It just worked." She wishes more places would adopt such proactive measures.

Her encouragement to other Deaf travelers—"Be prepared,





but don't let fear stop you." Travelling, she acknowledges, can be intimidating for anyone, but the rewards of stepping out of your comfort zone are worth it. "Every trip teaches you something," she says, "whether it's about the world or your own capabilities."

For Ladan, travel is a profound statement of independence and it shows the world that Deaf individuals deserve the same opportunities as the abled-bodied, to explore, connect and experience life to its fullest. Her journey as a Deaf individual—from Iran to Canada, navigating airports, working in and around her community and advocating for representation in media—speaks directly about the power of persistence and the beauty of human connection.

"Never give up," she says, her words resonating like a mantra for travelers everywhere. Although the world is imperfect, it is still worth exploring—and sometimes, the silence of a moment speaks louder than words. ■

“Be prepared,  
but don't let  
fear stop you.”  
Ladan Sahraei

# Vlogger Spotlight

## Inside Liv Stone's world:

Surfing, cooking, breaking stereotypes and living life fully



PHOTO CREDIT:  
@harmonyleah



Liv Stone, a vlogger and three-time Para Surfing World Champion, shares her passions for surfing, cooking, travel and adventure on her [YouTube channel](#). Whether riding waves or experimenting in the kitchen, Liv's vibrant energy inspires viewers to embrace life fully.

When Liv talks about surfing, you can hear the ocean in her voice. Not the gentle lapping at the shore but the crashing, bold, untamed waves that are fiercely alive. Liv surfs those waves with a kind of audacity that makes you pause—not because she's a surfing champion, but because she seems to embody the rhythm of life itself: unpredictable, fierce and wildly beautiful.

Liv is not a textbook motivator. She's not here to tell you life is perfect, but if you watch her take on the swell with nothing but determination and a pair of custom-made aquatic prosthetics, it's like she's whispering to the universe, "Let's see what else we can do."

## MAKING WAVES

Liv was born a congenital bilateral above-the-elbow amputee with two fingers on each hand, a condition she describes with casual grace. “I didn’t lose anything,” she says. “This is just the way I am.” Growing up in Pennsylvania, far from the sun-drenched beaches of California, Liv’s life didn’t scream “future surf star.” But the thing about Liv is that she doesn’t listen to what life screams. She listens to what it whispers. And somewhere in those whispers, surfing called her name.

At 14, she caught her first wave in California. It wasn’t love at first splash, it was more like an electrifying jolt that rearranged her world. “I didn’t even know surfing could be my thing,” she admits. But that one moment on the board changed everything. The ocean became her canvas, her workout partner and her greatest teacher.

## LEARNING TO DANCE WITH THE OCEAN

Liv’s surfing is unique. She doesn’t “pop up” on the board like most surfers. Instead, she flows from her knees to her feet, a movement that’s become her signature style. “I’ve had to adapt,” she explains. “And honestly, it’s not about making it easy—it’s about making it work.”

Her adaptive aquatic prosthetics—customized paddles—are a game-changer that transformed her surfing. They allow her to paddle more efficiently, catch waves with greater ease and navigate the water safely, empowering her to tackle challenges in the ocean with confidence. The waves? They don’t wait for anyone.

“Surfing’s taught me that you can’t fight the ocean,” she says. “You have to flow with it.”

The ocean is a paradox. It’s tranquil and terrifying, chaotic and calming. Liv’s relationship with it mirrors the complexity of life itself.

There are days when she battles towering waves that leave her breathless and bruised, days when the ocean holds her down longer than she’d like. But every single time, she gets back up.



PHOTO CREDIT: @harmony Leah



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PHOTO CREDIT: @ChrisGrant

## MORE THAN MEDALS

You'd think someone with three world championships under her belt would consider gold medals the pinnacle of her career. But Liv's biggest wins aren't made of metal, they're made of moments.

Like the time three little girls, sun-kissed and wide-eyed, ran up to her on the beach asking for a photo. "They didn't care about my disability," she recalls. "They just thought I was cool." Then there are the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) clinics, where Liv, as an ambassador, helps kids with disabilities ride their first waves. "Watching them light up, it's better than winning any competition." Beyond surfing, Liv stays active through running and other activities, always encouraging others to move, explore and embrace their potential.

Surfing and being active is about shredding stereotypes and showing the world what's possible. "People see me and think, 'If she's out here doing this, I have no excuses.' That's powerful."

## BEYOND THE SURFBOARD

When Liv isn't dominating the surf, she's studying environmental science, cooking up a storm in her kitchen, or losing herself in the pages of her Kindle—she's an avid reader. Her love for nature runs deep, fueled by unforgettable experiences like going on safari in South Africa, where elephants and lions roam free. "It's humbling to be so close to something so wild," she says.

Fun fact: Liv is also a poet. Yes, this remarkable surfer writes poetry. "It's just another way to process the world," she says with a shy laugh. "Sometimes, words feel like waves—they crash in when you least expect it."

## REDEFINING INSPIRATION

Liv doesn't like being labeled an inspiration for doing everyday things. "I'm just living my life," she says. But when she's out on the water, pushing her limits, carving lines into waves that seem impossible to conquer, as a first-class athlete, there's no other word for it. However, being an athlete always comes first, her disability second. She emphasizes that adaptive athletes are competitors who train, perform and push boundaries just like anyone else!

She also doesn't want people to idolize her, instead, she wants them to embrace themselves. "Don't try to be me," she insists. "Be you. Be the best version of you."

## BEST TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Liv's favorite adventures take her to places where nature feels alive. She treasures the winding California coastline, from the iconic cliffs of Big Sur to hidden beaches up north, and the serenity of camping under star-filled skies in the Sierra Nevada. She's surfed the warm waves of Costa Rica and South Africa and also explored South Africa's breathtaking landscapes, where safaris offered unforgettable encounters with wildlife. Whether

it's a cozy van trip through Oregon or watching a sunset over endless ocean waves, Liv loves the simplicity of being outdoors, where every moment feels meaningful and real.

## MOST MEMORABLE ACCOMMODATION

Her stay at [Marataba](#) in South Africa was nothing short of incredible. The luxury safari tents offered a perfect balance of comfort and immersion in nature. Surrounded by stunning landscapes and wildlife, every detail—from guided safaris to delicious meals—made it a truly magical experience she highly recommends to fellow adventurers. It was a dream adventure come to life!

## WORST CAMPING EXPERIENCE

Liv recalls her worst camping experience as a lesson in preparation. A chilly night with inadequate blankets and a thin sleeping bag left her and her friends shivering in 40-degree September weather. They cut the trip short, but it taught her an important rule: always pack the right gear for outdoor adventures!





PHOTO CREDIT: @ChrisGrant

### PARENTS ARE AWESOME!

“Parents are awesome,” Liv says with a smile, reflecting on the love and support that have defined her journey. From uprooting their lives, moving from Pennsylvania to California so she could chase her surfing dreams, to sharing cramped spaces on family road trips filled with laughter and occasional challenges, they’ve always been her greatest cheerleaders. Their sacrifices and endless encouragement have shaped her into the person she is today. They are the foundation of her courage, strength and accomplishments!

### A MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Liv Stone’s story isn’t a neatly tied package with a “look at me” bow. It’s a reminder that even when life hands you a board with challenges, you can ride the waves and carve your path. And maybe you’ll motivate others to do the same.

Find what makes you feel alive and chase it. Don’t worry about how hard it is. Hard is what makes it worth it. ■



Liv in South Africa



Liv and her mom

“Find what makes you feel alive and chase it. Don’t worry about how hard it is. Hard is what makes it worth it.”

Liv Stone



**Follow**  
Liv on Social Media

# Blogs

These bloggers put the accessible into Accessible Journeys. They have blazed trails for people of all abilities and fill in critical gaps of the accessibility puzzle.

Amplifying the voices of bloggers with disabilities as they share their unique travel perspectives



**Blogger:** Eleanor

**Home country:** U.K.

**Blog:** [Ambitious About Autism](#)

**What and where:** [Preparing to go on Holiday When Autistic](#)

23-year-old Eleanor, a member of Ambitious about Autism's Youth Program, shares personal tips for enjoying herself on holiday despite being away from her norms and routine. She is candid about the challenges, yet appreciates the benefit of travel and change of scene. Read her concise but wise counsel for others [here](#).



Blind adventurer Dean shares an impressive array of outdoors and sports adventures on his blog. This September, he [participated in the Standup Paddleboard World Championships](#) in Copenhagen, Denmark. Never one to shy away from challenge, he shares his journey with a team over the 7-day event including the memorable para-SUP event.

**Blogger:** Dean Dunbar

**Home country:** U.K.

**Blog:** [Extreme Dreams](#)

**What and where:** [Standup Paddleboard World Championships while Blind](#)



**Blogger:** Stephanie Gish

**Home country:** U.S.

**Blog:** [Crohn's Fitness Food](#)

**What and where:** [It is now safe to move about the cabin... tips for air travel with an ice chest full of food](#)

Stephanie blogs about her journey with IBD and Crohn's disease, determined not to let this stop her. With her symptoms, it's important that she can eat what and how she needs to. Translation: she often needs to travel with LOTS of special food! Check out this entertaining post on [transporting a 45lb cooler full of food on her flight home](#).





**Blogger:** Elizabeth Candela  
**Home country:** U.S.  
**Blog:** [Half-Crazed Runner](#)  
**What and where:** [State 45: Missouri](#)

Elizabeth, living with ulcerative colitis, has found peace and inspiration through running. She's set herself a goal of running throughout the US, and recently ran [a new half marathon trail in Missouri](#). Not only did she run a terrific race, but got to enjoy St. Louis parks, history, and – most important!- its unparalleled barbeque scene!



Sharing his experiences with autism helps Jamie find happiness in his journey. While he is, rightly, often skeptical of many experiences described as “inclusive” which all too often just check a compliance box, he recently had a wonderful experience at the Story Museum in Oxford, a [paragon of sincere, well-informed, respectful and creative, inclusion](#).

**Blogger:** Jamie Knight  
**Home country:** U.K.  
**Blog:** [Spaced Out and Smiling](#)  
**What and where:** [Story Museum](#)  
[Access Day: Inclusive Events Done Right](#)



**Blogger:** Selina Wing  
**Home country:** Malaysia  
**Blog:** [Selina Wing–1st Deaf Blogger in Malaysia](#)  
**What and where:** [A visit to Port Dickson, Malaysia](#)

Selina, who is the first deaf blogger in Malaysia, shares [her experience of peaceful, picturesque Port Dickson, only an hour from Kuala Lumpur, shortly after COVID](#). Her disability does not prevent her from having an uplifting experience: clean, soft sands, the fresh sea breeze, the fun double decker buses and mostly, the splendid sunsets.

# Vlogs

Spotlighting inspiring vloggers with disabilities, this section showcases their unique perspectives, empowering voices, and creative journeys.

The impactful voices of vloggers with disabilities



**Vlogger:** Jessica McCabe  
**Home country:** U.S.  
**Vlog:** [How To ADHD](#)  
**Experience:** [Trip to Italy Story](#)



Jessica, who has ADHD, shares a [funny, heartwarming story](#) from her recent trip to Italy where a combination of language challenges and an unfamiliar metric system led her to get a LOT more cheese than she intended to buy! Not to worry-- she enjoyed the delicious cheese and had a laugh on top!

Amanda, who has autism, ADHD, Aphantasia and SDAM [Severely Deficient Autobiographical Memory], shares [how her concept of "fun" is personal and may differ from that of others](#). For example, going to the beach can be stressful and overstimulating. She shares how she redefines fun, which includes slowing down and reducing activities, while still having a wonderful time.



**Vlogger:** Amanda  
**Home country:** U.S.  
**Vlog:** [I am MindBlind](#)  
**Experience:** [What Fun Means to Me](#)



**Vlogger:** Caitlin McConnell  
**Home country:** U.S.  
**Vlog:** [Caitlin McConnell](#)  
**Experience:** [The Good and the Bad from Ireland](#)



Caitlin, who has cerebral palsy, shares highlights from her family's trip to Ireland. [She's honest about the challenges, while sharing the positives](#). Caitlin shares lovely images including museums, castles, pubs, and classic Irish dance performances. But she's transparent about the poor wheelchair accessible facilities such toilets and bathrooms and ends on a plea for change. We agree, Caitlyn!

Leilani shares top “travel hacks” for family travel with differing abilities. Her daughter Naomi has Down Syndrome while her other children are able bodied and this requires adaptation. Recently the whole family went on a [group cave tour, involving some adjustments from all](#). Leilani’s wisdom on “attitude adjustment” is something that we all could learn from.



**Vlogger:** Leilani Melendez

**Home country:** U.S.

**Vlog:** [Living with Eve](#)

**Experience:** [A Mixed Abilities Cave Tour](#)



**Vlogger:** Carly

**Home country:** Canada

**Vlog:** [Ticcing Together](#)

**Experience:** [Banff with Tourette's](#)



Carly and her fiancé, both of whom have Tourette's, share Part 2 of [their recent road trip to Banff, Canada](#), which looks absolutely gorgeous. They spent time by Lake Louise taking pictures and revelling in the breathtaking scenery, after which they went shopping in downtown Banff. Join them for this picturesque and lovely trip!



This family which includes a deaf member, Neo, recently rented a Sprinter to go on a [camping adventure](#). Good intentions aside, camping and the outdoors were not quite what they were expecting and preparations fell short. Yet this trip is a great example of how much fun you can have regardless! Congratulations to the Cans on a great attitude!

**Vlogger:** The Can Family

**Home country:** U.S.

**Vlog:** [The CAN Family](#)

**Experience:** [Camping with the Cans](#)



**Vlogger:** Pathan Salik Khan

**Home country:** India

**Vlog:** [Pathan Salik Khan \(deaf\)](#)

**Experience:** [Mumbai Travel Team Deaf Enjoy](#)



Meet Salik Khan, who takes us on a [journey through Mumbai](#): the chaos, the smells, the beauty, the wonder: experiencing this magnificent city full of history without sound is a unique experience.

# Instagrammers

These Instagrammers capture a moment in time of an accessible journey. Like our bloggers and vloggers, they are pushing the boundaries of travel without limits.

Disability on the 'gram: captivating Instagrammers you need to follow



**Instagrammer:** Jessica Saykada

**Instagram account:** [@saykada](#)

Visit to Disney Springs >>>

Jessica is sharing a burst of Disney magic from [last year's unforgettable trip!](#) Rediscovering Disney Springs after its transformation was pure joy, a dream come true. Her favorite spot? The Coca-Cola rooftop bar! With wheelchair-friendly ramps and low tables, every view was accessible. Thanks to Disney and Coca-Cola for this inclusive experience!



The St. Clairs are all about doing things as a family, and building memories together. With specialized equipment supporting mobility and balance, adaptive golf turned out to be a [fun and memorable activity](#) that they could enjoy as a family. Thanks [@carolinaadaptivegolf](#) at Carmel Country Club in Charlotte, NC for making this special experience possible.

**Instagrammer:** St. Clair Family

**Instagram account:** [@learnersandmakers](#)

<<< Adaptive Golfing

**Instagrammer:** Kayla Kosmalski

**Instagram account:** [@kaylakosmalski](#)

Promoting Financial Independence >>>



Pageant winner, advocate and disability rights activist Kayla, who has Down's Syndrome, is proud to be part of a campaign to [promote direct selling](#), a great way for anyone- and in particular, those of us with disabilities- to make an income and be independent.



**Instagrammer:** The Haffields

**Instagram account:** [@rollingwiththehaffields](#)

A clean, safe space >>>

This family who shares their journey with Isla, their daughter with cerebral palsy and epilepsy, was thrilled to discover an [accessible, clean, restroom, shower and changing area](#) in Gloucester City Center. This was a welcoming and safe space which made all the difference. What a great model for cities and public spaces everywhere!



Joe, who lives with muscular dystrophy, recently travelled to Italy for a wedding. Despite the airline misplacing his luggage which had his breathing mask!! . . . he kept up his spirit of positivity and resilience found a replacement visiting multiple hospitals, and [still had a great time in Pisa and Siena](#). Go Joe!

**Instagrammer:** Joe Akmakjian

**Instagram account:** [@joeakmakjian](#)

<<< Can-Do Spirit in Italy



**Instagrammer:** Michelle

**Instagram account:** [@adventurewithjohnny](#)

Visiting London >>>

Jonny and Michelle's lives changed after his accident and TBI. Michelle shares how they have adapted to their new journey on her Instagram with grace and resilience. Recently Jonny had a chance to [visit London](#) which they found largely accessible including the Underground and Uber boats on the Thames. They'll be back!



Disability advocate and adventurer Catherine really enjoyed her visit to London in her wheelchair. Her lovely post shares a [series of picturesque London sites](#). She highly recommends a sunset roll/stroll across London Bridge in particular!

**Instagrammer:** Catherine Sokol

**Instagram account:** [@cathsokol](#)

<<< London Bridge at Sunset

# Family Fun No Limits

With Jennifer Allen

Read her blog, [Wonders within Reach](#)

Families with disabilities  
exploring the world together

## Driving to Europe

Or finding an accessible European destination near home



**Europe: Everyone's dream.**

**Flying with a disability: Everyone's nightmare.**

While some places, like Spain and Greece, are constantly being lauded for their improvements in accessibility and inclusion, Europe is not generally known as an easy destination for wheelchair users. Cobblestone streets, historic buildings, bus steps and Metro systems with no design to include wheelchair users suck the joy out

of travel planning. While I would still encourage you to keep [Europe](#) on your bucket list - there are more accessible options than you might realize - I have a little something to hold you over.

Across the U.S. European settlers have recreated home. Lucky for us, they did that in a nation with ADA

requirements. The following are U.S. destinations that look, feel, and taste like Europe - with improved accessibility. The added bonus is that you may be able to skip flying. Take your own accessible vehicle, pack all the snacks and drive yourself to accessible Europe.

### **SPAIN**

[St. Augustine, Florida](#) is known as the nation's oldest city, but that doesn't mean it's as inaccessible as the sixteenth century. Castillo de San Marcos guards the coast as a tribute to Spanish architecture and ingenuity.

Throughout the old city you'll find remnants of colonial Spain. With its cobblestone streets (usually lined with paved sidewalks), colorful streets filled with Spanish-inspired art, food, and music, and centuries-old architecture the city brings Spanish culture to life in a way that's both accessible and family-friendly. While many of the



historic buildings have steps to enter, almost all of them have an alternate, accessible entrance around back.

Enjoy the Spanish ambiance while enjoying the best Spanish food I've ever found outside of Spain at [Columbia Restaurant](#). Enjoy an accessible tour highlighting Spanish influence and architecture on board the [Old Town Trolley](#), or take a more personalized route with [L.B. Cruisers](#). Don't miss the [Fountain of Youth](#) for a link to both Spanish and U.S. history.

[San Antonio's Spanish missions](#) offer a smaller taste of Spain, but the lure of [Morgan's Wonderland](#), the world's only ultra accessible theme park, makes it worth it! The Alamo is wheelchair accessible.

## GERMANY



[Fredericksburg, Texas](#) may be the most fully immersive European destination in the U.S.. The history, architecture, cultural events and

dining options all contribute to a complete German getaway. Wander through [Marktplatz](#) (especially perfect at Christmas time with the daily light show), tour a [living farm](#), explore the Bavarian village, dine in a biergarten, and snack on Bavarian pretzels and other [authentic treats](#) all along the way. Not only are most shops in the small town zero entry, but many of them also offer wine tastings. Don't miss [Friedhelm's](#), known for having the best German food in Texas, served in genuine "Gasthaus" dining rooms for a full experience.

[Frankenmuth, Michigan](#) is also known for its strong German vibes.

## HOLLAND



[Holland, Michigan](#) is an obvious choice if you're looking for a Dutch destination. True to its namesake, it boasts watermills, tulips, wooden shoes, and Dutch towers. Plan your visit around [Tulip Time](#) and you can really up the ante on the Dutch experience with authentic Dutch dancers, shoe making demonstrations, and millions of beautiful tulips.

Accessible parking is easy to find, curb cuts abound and most shops and restaurants are zero entry, making it an easy city to navigate on wheels.

Enjoy [Neli's Dutch Village](#) anytime

of year for a family experience of Dutch culture in a theme park environment with a living farm. All rides require a transfer and the playground is not accessible, but the village and farm are easy to navigate on wheels and well worth the admission for the experience.

## ITALY



[Castello di Amorosa](#) in Napa Valley, California may not be a full Italian town, but this authentic 14th century Tuscan castle nestled in rolling vineyards will definitely make you feel like you're under the Tuscan sun.

Even better than an actual medieval castle, this replica was designed with accessibility and inclusion in mind. Wander the cellars or enjoy the rooftop breeze - everything except for the tallest turret is fully wheelchair accessible. The [website](#) says that well-behaved and well-supervised children of all ages are welcome, and they're given coloring pages along with their crackers and grape juice during your tasting. My kids loved the



castle experience and I ended up bringing home more grape juice than wine!

## FRANCE

If you've been to the top of the Eiffel Tower, you may have noticed that the view is not so different than the view from the Washington Monument in [Washington](#),

[D.C.](#) The French architect and engineer Pierre L'Enfant planned the layout of D.C., and his French influence is clear. The Capitol, White House, and Supreme Court may be American icons, but the neoclassical design is undeniable. Even the National Cathedral is strikingly reminiscent of Notre Dame.

Built around green spaces and beautiful architecture, a stroll through D.C. gives off all of the vibes of Paris, without any of the barriers. In D.C. you'll find a fully accessible Metro system and historic buildings that all have alternate accessible entrances. Thanks to the diversity of the city, [authentic French food options](#) abound.

## UNITED KINGDOM

It's almost ironic how the city known for breaking free from Britain most resembles its roots. [Boston, Massachusetts](#) features brick buildings, vintage lamp posts, public gardens, colonial era architecture and cobblestone streets in a beautiful collision of historic charm and hip downtown. The blend of old and new matches London's pace with a cultural diversity that has expanded the beauty of the city in bursts of flavor and architecture. The history museums may have a different focus on this end, but we were pleased with the easy accessibility in the [USS Constitution Museum](#) and even on board one of the [tea party ships](#).

While you can keep it a British experience with an [English Pub](#), I cannot over-recommend crossing over into Little Italy for the best [pasta](#) and [cannoli](#) this side of the Atlantic.

London and Boston both lead the way as cities with all-abilities play options, but [Boston has them in every area of the city](#). The Shipyard Playground, right across from the tea party ships, was our favorite. ■



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**EQUAL**  
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# Accessible Destination Round up

By Jennifer Allen



Bloomington, Minnesota

As a travel writer for families with disabilities, I'm often asked to bring my family to different destinations to highlight accessible options and give feedback on any improvement needed. Along the way, we discover a lot of hidden gems with exceptional attention to disability inclusion.



Adirondacks, New York

Here are our most recent favorites:

## **BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA**

Have you ever heard of [Bloomington, Minnesota](#)? I hadn't, but it completely blew me away with its diversity of activities and endless fun for people of all abilities.

- [Mall of America](#), the nation's largest mall, known for its [indoor theme park](#) - with a ride accessibility program and lifts to all rides.
- Track chair to get off the beaten path and into nature at [Fort Snelling State Park](#).
- Shows and spaces designed to include all people at the

## [Children's Theatre Company.](#)

- Unparalleled accessibility and convenience at [Radisson Blu](#), providing accommodations right inside the Mall of America.
- Roll under and through the sharks at SEA LIFE, an accessible aquarium inside Mall of America.

## **ADIRONDACKS, NEW YORK**

[The Adirondacks](#) is one of the few places that we keep returning to, because it's the easiest place for us to be able to enjoy the outdoors.

In addition to the following favorites, you can find endless accessible trails and unique accessible dining options.

- Fully accessible lean-to camping, fishing, boating, hiking, and picnicking at [John Dillon Park](#).

- Boardwalk paths right through the marsh, a butterfly house, and an indoor nature center at [Paul Smith's VIC](#).
- Boardwalk path over the treetops, an accessible ball run through the forest, animal encounters, and fun experiences for learning about nature at the [Wild Center](#)
- All of the things that make the Adirondacks a premier getaway destination, but condensed and shared in an accessible way at the [Adirondack Experience](#).
- Accessible boutique accommodations in historic luxury at the [Hotel Saranac](#).

## VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA

[Vancouver Island](#) is hailed as one of the most beautiful places on the planet, and the vacation destination of their own Prime Minister. They also have a clear dedication to accessibility across the island.



Vancouver Island, British Columbia



Yellowstone National Park

- Slowly inclined boardwalk ramp to 360 views from over the trees at the inclusively designed [Malahat Skywalk](#).
- Boardwalk paths through ancient cedars and Wookiee filming sites at [Cathedral Grove](#).
- Accessible boats for whale watching through [Whale Safaris](#).
- Mobi-mat and accessible restrooms for a wheelchair friendly beach day at [Mackenzie Beach](#).
- Goat love and farm animal experiences at accessible [Beacon Hill Children's Farm](#).

## YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Yellowstone is not only the most inclusive national park we've visited, but it's also the most fun for kids. These bullet points will seem less detailed than the rest, but only because of the inclusivity of the full experience. Very little planning is needed!

- Accessibility guide that details facilities and amenities in each area of the park available upon arrival.
- [Paved or boardwalk viewing points](#) at almost every pull-off, trail, and vista.
- Free access to beach wheelchairs.
- Accessible dining in and around the park.
- Accessible accommodations in and [around](#) the park. ■

# Exploring the world with a limb difference:

Practical tips from real mom life

By Jennifer Allen

I first connected with [Ashlee Homer](#) on social media a few years ago when she was searching for resources for her daughter, Vika, who has a limb difference. Since then, I've been fortunate enough to have her as a local mom friend. Whether it's bringing me coffee during hospital stays, checking in during major life events, or offering encouragement through quick Instagram messages, Ashlee has been a constant source of kindness and support.



Over the past few years, I've been able to watch with open jaw as she has grown in boldness, not only in what she's able to do with Vika but also in her advocacy for her daughter and others. She shared the following on a quick phone call between feeding our kids dinner and getting them ready for bed.

## ASHLEE'S STORY

"We decided to adopt a child who had some sort of medical need since my background was pediatric nursing," Ashlee said. "We got pictures and videos, and it was just kind of an instant connection. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia reviewed her file and photos to help us understand her diagnosis and what we'd need to have ready. By the time she came home, we already had a pediatrician appointment lined up, along with hematology and other specialists."

Similar to most medical mom stories, "Vika's needs were much more profound than what we were prepared for" Ashlee shared. "You don't want to see your child struggle or in pain. We immediately focused on getting her the services she needed—physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialists—so she could have the best possible start." In addition to



a limb difference, Vika has TAR - a rare bleeding disease. She's also had medical needs that haven't been obviously linked to any of her diagnosis.

## ADAPTING TO A NEW NORMAL

Vika joined the Homer family at 23 months old. In addition to learning how to parent a toddler, Ashlee had to figure out how to support her daughter's unique needs. "We went from no children to having a two-year-old with disabilities who didn't speak or understand our language. It was definitely hard to figure out how to help her," she shared. "We knew that every three months in a less-than-ideal situation put her one month behind developmentally, so we had to prioritize catching her up with therapies and services." Four months in, Ashlee's journey took another turn when she became a single mom. Her husband's departure added another layer of complexity to an already constantly evolving landscape.

**MOVING BEYOND THE CHALLENGES** Amid the medical appointments and therapies, Ashlee worked hard to create moments of joy and fun for her family. Adjusting to staying home

full-time was a big shift, but she found accessible, low-cost ways to explore with Vika. “We started looking for free ways to get out of the house.” Playgrounds and libraries were the perfect starting point. Music groups and other library programs offered inclusive spaces for interacting with other kids.

As Vika grew older, Ashlee began to find structured activities that suited her needs. “She wanted to join Girl Scouts with a friend from another school, and it was perfect because it wasn’t super physical,” Ashlee explained. “One time, we went on a hike, and while the trail wasn’t very accessible, there was a boardwalk area she could explore. That kind of creative planning has always been part of how we approach activities.”

It doesn’t have to be complicated. The more I interact with disability moms, the more I see this life example - start small and build from there. Get out and find things that bring you joy - then you can work to adapt those things as you go. Having a community working alongside you, like Vika’s girl scout troop, makes the journey that much better. Last year was little adventures for Ashlee and Vika, but Ashlee says “We’re making 2025 the year of fun things, since we missed out on ten months of traveling due to surgeries. Disney for the first time, hand camp, and Yogi Jellystone cabin camping.”

### **SIMPLE ADAPTATIONS WITH A BIG IMPACT**

Ashlee has become resourceful in adapting their home and daily life to meet Vika’s needs. “We’ve used light switch extenders, faucet extenders, and step stools to make things more accessible,” she said. “For school, I cut a pool noodle to fit in the back of her desk so her things wouldn’t get stuck beyond

her reach. It was a simple, 99-cent solution.”

Online communities and resources have been a vital source of ideas and support for Ashlee. She mentioned groups like the [Lucky Fin Project](#) and the [TAR Syndrome Facebook group](#) as invaluable spaces for finding guidance and adaptive tools. “As Vika gets older, she’s able to tell me what would be helpful,” Ashlee said, sharing how her daughter’s input has shaped creative solutions, like using bottles of soap instead of wall-mounted dispensers at school. She also highlighted Hand Camp in Florida, a transformative experience for kids with upper limb differences, where they discovered adaptive instruments and other tools to foster independence.

### **TRAVEL TIPS FOR FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES**

When it comes to traveling, Ashlee focuses on preparation and flexibility. “I try to plan ahead and figure out what we can do rather than focusing on the barriers,” she said. “It’s important to look at the destination and think, ‘Can she do this? Will this be a good experience for her?’”

One memorable moment for Ashlee came during a hay tractor ride at a local farm. The ride wasn’t designed with accessibility in mind, but Ashlee’s resourcefulness and kind people willing to help made it possible. “I asked the people at the farm, ‘If I hold the wheelchair up, can you stick it on the tractor, and I’ll handle her?’ and that’s what we did,” she recalled. “Last year, I got good at accepting help—something I don’t think we always do as moms. We think, ‘We’ve got this,’ but sometimes you can’t do it all, and that’s okay.”

Social media is a great place for disability travel tips and inspiration. Ashlee follows [Wonders Within Reach](#) for accessible destinations that may be easier to visit because of their focus on inclusion. [The Rolling Explorer](#) is an advocate and influencer with a limb difference who has shared a lot of helpful insight.

Through it all, Ashlee’s goal remains clear: to help Vika experience as much of life as possible. “She just wants to be like every other kid, and I want her to feel like she can participate and belong wherever we go.” ■



# Better Together

## Disability Parent Q & A

Q

What type of preparation do you do before a trip, in addition to the usual vacation planning?

A

I'm going to split this into three categories of planning, packing, and preparing. It sounds like a lot, because it is. Like most things in the world of disability parenting, relearning how to travel may seem overwhelming at first. It becomes another part of the routine as you get used to it.

**Planning.** When booking hotels, transportation, and attractions there's an extra level of research to determine what will be accessible for your family. Disability requires different things for all of us, so take a moment to identify what you need and to make sure you'll have it. I make sure our hotel has a shower chair and that attractions are wheelchair accessible. I also come up with a transportation plan that can get our wheelchair everywhere we want to be. This is where disability travel blogs come in handy. The best way to find the information you need is by searching "accessible \_\_\_\_\_ (destination name)". That will bring up disability travel content relative to your destination.

You may even find that your destination has a web page designed to make accessible travel planning a breeze!

**Packing.** Bring everything you need, and then some. Extra diapers, extra formula, extra catheters, extra foley bags. If it's something that you can't pick up at a regular store, make sure you have extra. I usually start by packing all of the medical necessities, including medications, and then end up forgetting basic life necessities - like pants.

It's worth noting that all of these things fly free. If it's medically necessary, you can bring it on board at no cost - even if you're not allowed a carry-on. If you have anything that could be questioned on its necessity, bring a signed note from your doctor stating that it's needed. This goes for big things like wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, CPAPs, oxygen, and IV poles, too. It's also wise to bring a small tool kit for any minor repairs needed on mobility equipment or orthotics while you're gone. Don't forget your handicap placard for your rental car!

**Preparing.** Before leaving, refill any prescriptions that may run out before you're home. If it's easier, you may also be able to have the script transferred temporarily to your domestic travel destination. If you have a power chair, charge it. If you have anything else that needs to run on battery for a long travel day, charge it. Plan for an easy day before travel day. If your child walks with a mobility device, you don't want them to be tired before the fun even begins. Talk to your child about what to expect during travel, and go over any routines that may be shifted. Read books about the destination to build excitement and to help them prepare.

If you need assistance in the airport, or have questions about navigating your travel day, call TSA Cares in advance at (855) 787-2227.

Special thanks to the @ [wonders\\_within\\_reach](#) instagram community for contributing towards these responses! ■



**NEXT ISSUE:**

**Do you find that most areas can handle a wheelchair, or is a stroller better?**

Do you have any expertise to share on next issue's question?

Please submit your input, or any questions of your own for future issues, to [jennifer@wonderswithinreach.com](mailto:jennifer@wonderswithinreach.com)

# Innovative tools for inclusive travel



## GENERAL

1. [AccessNow](#): A user-powered app that maps and reviews the accessibility of locations worldwide, helping users find accessible places with ease.
2. [AccessAble](#): A detailed resource offering in-depth accessibility guides for venues, tailored to specific needs for individuals with disabilities.
3. [RoadTrippers](#): A trip-planning app that helps travelers discover points of interest, attractions, and accommodations along their road trip routes.
4. [BSafe](#): A personal safety app with features like live GPS tracking, SOS alerts, and voice-activated alarms to ensure secure travel and peace of mind.



## AUTISM ADVENTURES

1. [Triplt](#): A travel organization app that consolidates travel plans into a single itinerary, making it easy to stay organized while on the go.
2. [Sunflower Lanyards](#): A discreet indicator for individuals with hidden disabilities, helping staff and others recognize the need for additional support or patience.
3. [Autism.Traveler app](#): A travel companion app offering sensory-friendly travel tips, customizable schedules, and calming tools tailored for individuals on the autism spectrum.
4. [Aubin app](#): A sensory guidance app providing detailed information about environments, helping users with sensory sensitivities prepare for and navigate public spaces.







## BEYOND SIGHT

1. **Be My Eye:** A support app connecting blind or visually impaired users with volunteers via live video for assistance with everyday tasks.
2. **Aira:** A real-time assistance app that pairs users with trained agents who provide visual interpretation through a live video connection.
3. **Lazarillo:** A GPS navigation app designed for blind and visually impaired users, providing detailed audio guidance for walking and transit routes.
4. **Glidance:** An app offering guided navigation and route assistance specifically tailored for individuals with visual impairments.
5. **RightHear:** An orientation app that provides audio descriptions of nearby facilities, helping users navigate unfamiliar indoor and outdoor spaces.
6. **BlindSquare:** A GPS-based app that delivers detailed audio descriptions of the user's surroundings, helping blind or visually impaired travelers explore with confidence.

## WHEELCHAIR USERS

1. **WheelMap:** A crowd-sourced app that helps users find and rate wheelchair-accessible locations worldwide
2. **iACCESSlife:** A lifestyle app that allows users to rate, review, and discover the accessibility of public spaces, empowering individuals with disabilities to navigate their world with confidence.
3. **Google Maps:** A comprehensive navigation app that includes accessibility features like wheelchair-friendly routes, detailed public transport options, and voice guidance.

## SILENT ADVENTURES

1. **RogerVoice:** A communication app providing real-time transcription of phone calls, enabling individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate effectively.
2. **Translate:** A language translation app offering text, voice, and camera translations to help travelers communicate across languages.
3. **Moovit:** A transit app that provides real-time navigation and accessibility information for public transportation systems globally.
4. **Purple VRS:** A video relay service app enabling communication between individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and hearing individuals via sign language interpreters.
5. **GalaPro:** A theater accessibility app offering real-time subtitles, audio descriptions, and other assistive services for live performances.

# TravelAbility's One-Stop Destination Accessibility Page DIRECTORY

Finding information about a destination's accessibility can often be a daunting task. We understand the importance of having information at your fingertips that's why TravelAbility has meticulously aggregated over 200 destination accessibility pages into a single, user-friendly directory organized by country with direct links to their destination accessibility pages.

Simply click on the links below to discover what's accessible in each destination to ensure that your travel experience is as enjoyable and seamless as possible.



## **UNITED STATES**

[Alabama](#)

[Albuquerque, NM](#)

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[Amelia Island, FL](#)

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[Astoria & Warrenton, OR](#)

[Atlantic City, NJ](#)

[Austin, TX](#)

[Black Hills / Mt. Rushmore](#)

[California](#)

[Cape May, NJ](#)

[Cayman Islands](#)

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[Colorado](#)

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[Punta Gorda Englewood Beach, FL](#)

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Savannah, GA  
Seattle, WA  
South Carolina  
South Carolina Lowcountry  
South Dakota  
Springfield, IL  
St. Augustine  
St. Louis, MO  
St. Tammany Parish, LA  
Tampa Bay, FL  
Tennessee  
Texas  
The Palm Beaches, FL  
Tucson, AZ  
Utah  
Valley Forge, PA  
Vermont

Virginia  
Visalia, CA  
Waldport, OR  
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Wyoming

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Barbados

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Victoria, BC  
Manitoba

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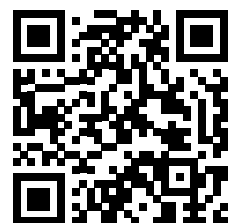


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