



## CROTCHED MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

### Meet Geoff Garfinkle, CTRS/L

Director of Recreation Therapy, Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center



#### How do you begin working with a new student?

Through team work. The therapeutic recreation team consists of highly competent, caring and compassionate people who have made a very positive impact on hundreds of individuals' lives. Each of us has our own interest area and we work together to come up with a solution that works. We ask ourselves: How can we best do cycling with this person? Do we have the right equipment? Does this person have the functional skills necessary to get to a level where they can be successful? We ask the tough questions and make sure we have the answers before we begin. We want recreation to be enjoyable and a diversion to stress, but it's more than that. Our primary goal is to help improve the functional skills of the person we are working with. It might be improving fine or gross motor skills, sequencing or motor memory – all skills that will help this person continue to improve and participate in the activity in the years ahead.

### What type of equipment do you use?

When I first started my career at Crotched Mountain, we were known for being state-of-the-art in lots of areas, including technology. At the time, that meant we used switch-activated devices for recreational purposes. Fast forward to now, and we are using universal design, which is a best practice in producing products that anyone can use. Most of our equipment is not specialized; it is used by the general public but it works for a lot of our needs and is more readily available at a lower cost. For our cycling program, we are using European-designed tandem delta or recumbent tricycles that are intended for the general population. This way, an individual with safety awareness issues, for example, can still be biking, but with a partner in a supportive position. Another example of universal design is a tandem two-seat kayak where adaptations can be made for one of the seats as necessary.

### Why did you choose this profession?

Sports and recreation are very important to me in my personal life and I want people of all abilities to have the opportunity to participate fully in recreation and other leisure activities of their choosing. Helping people with disabilities identify their leisure interests, and showing them ways to participate through skill development and adaptations - and overcoming the challenges of accomplishing that - is inspiring to me.

### What do you enjoy most about your job at Crotched Mountain?

After almost 30 years of doing this, I continue to be motivated by trying to understand the unique abilities and challenges of each person and finding a solution that works for every individual. Nothing is better than feeling a sense of accomplishment - for both you and your student. It's inspiring to see their whole demeanor change as they enjoy the freedom of participating in a sport or activity. Recreation has a way of leveling the playing field so to speak, and instead of being a person with a disability, the person becomes a skier, a cyclist, a hiker - just as anyone would describe themselves. That is a very gratifying part of my job.



#### Certifications & Licenses

Licensed and certified therapeutic recreation specialist, CTRS/L

#### Education

- Master of business administration from Plymouth State University
- Bachelor of science from Franklin Pierce University

#### Specialty Areas

- Therapeutic Recreation K-12
- Adaptive Sports and Recreation

#### Affiliations

Board of Directors for Peterborough Chamber of Commerce; Advisory Board Department of Recreation Management and Policy at University of New Hampshire

#### Experience

28+ years working in the field. Joined Crotched Mountain School in January of 1988. Provides direction and leadership for therapeutic recreational programming across all services lines at Crotched Mountain including CMARS, Crotched Mountain's community-based accessible recreation and sports program.

#### Hobbies

Hockey, skiing, biking, golfing and kayaking

Contact us to learn how our services can help children to learn and thrive.



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