



### **HELPING YOUNG ATHLETES REACH THE SUMMIT**

*DICK'S teamed up with Envision Blind Sports to support a ski program for youth athletes who are blind and visually impaired*

Alyssa Paolicelli's first time down a ski slope began with a burst of excitement and ended in tears.

Not to worry. Those were tears of joy by those who witnessed her incredible accomplishment.

Alyssa, who was born blind, has wanted to try skiing for years. Alyssa's mother, Carol was supportive, but unsure of the next step. In February, she heard about a program that helps athletes who are blind and visually impaired achieve their athletic goals. Carol signed-up her daughter right away.

The program saw DICK'S Sporting Goods team up with [Envision Blind Sports](#). DICK'S provided helmets and goggles for the athletes so they could learn to ski while properly geared up.

"I cannot thank DICK'S Sporting Goods enough for providing my daughter with the ski helmet and goggles so that she was safe while learning to do a very expensive sport," said Carol.



*Alyssa is ready to hit the slopes in her new helmet and goggles from DICK'S*

Two weekends in February were spent at Peek'n Peak ski resort in Clymer, NY and one weekend in March was spent at WISP Ski Resort in McHenry, MD for full days of guided skiing. The athletes were paired with an appropriate Envision ski guide by ability level. Lessons started with the basics and then encouraged the athletes, who had never skied before, to ski down the mountain by the end of the day.

Alyssa was a natural. She quickly caught on and by the afternoon of her very first day, she was ready to head downhill.

"I saw her zig-zag down the hill and when she got to the bottom, I could not stop the tears from coming," said Carol. "She actually did it! She really is the bravest person I know. I was so very proud of her. She wants to do everything that everyone else does and she does not let anything stop her."

As she reached the bottom, Alyssa also felt a swell of emotion as she reveled in the experience she had been waiting for.

"I was really proud of myself," said Alyssa. "I almost cried because I was so proud and my mom and the ski guides were also crying. I was so happy that I could actually learn to ski."



*Alyssa and her guides made a successful descent on their very first try.*

During her next session a few weeks later, Alyssa took a spill and bumped her elbow and head on a rough patch exposed by melted snow. She shook it off and was determined to keep going. The new gear kept her safe from a serious injury and, after lunch with mom, Alyssa was right back at it.

"Thank goodness for the helmet she was wearing," Carol said.

With the support of DICK'S and Envision to learn the sport while properly equipped, Alyssa developed confidence in her ability and pride in herself -- and she's not done yet. Next, she wants to take on snowboarding and water skiing.

We couldn't be more proud to support and equip Alyssa and all of her fellow athletes as they blaze new trails and achieve their dreams along the way.