

Newsletter

North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity



President's Message

Dr. Justin A. Haegele | Old Dominion University

It is a pleasure to be able to send a quick message to our NAFAPA membership, and hope that each of you enjoyed some time off over the holiday break. Time has flown since our time together at Brock University last October, and I would like to once again thank Maureen

Connelly and her team for hosting us and putting together an enjoyable collection of fun experiences for us. We now turn our attention to the next meeting in 2024 where John Foley, Cathy Macdonald, and their team will try to match Maureen's efforts.

Moving forward, I am excited to work with our new board, including our new members-at-large (MAL), who are tasked with completing our NAFAPA newsletter (Kate Rozendaal from the University of Alberta & Ueli Albert from Acadia University), managing our NAFAPA website (Myeongjin Bae from the University of Vermont), and working with our NAFAPA social media accounts (Nancy Huynh from the University of Toronto). Please feel free to reach out to our MALs with any questions regarding these public-facing tasks. We also have a new secretary (Nancy Spencer from the University of Alberta), a representative to affiliate organizations (Andy Pitchford from Oregon State University), and a treasurer (Laurie Malone from UAB) whom I am excited to be working with closely to move NAFAPA forward as the leading North American organization focused on APA. Finally, JK Yun (past president) and I are happy to welcome Meghann Lloyd as our president-elect who will take our organization forward in years to come.

With that, I hope you enjoy this newsletter, packed with important information constructed by two of our excellent MALs. Thank you, and take care!

Researcher Highlight



Emily Bremer
(PhD)

Community Spotlight



Sierra Roth

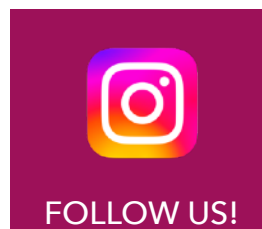
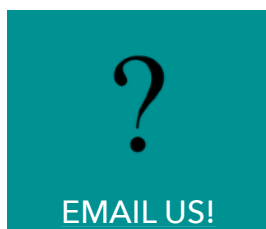
Student Highlight



Myeongjin Bae

Announcements

About the Editors





Researcher Highlight

Dr. Emily Bremer | Acadia University | Wolfville, N.S.

Dr. Emily Bremer (she/her/hers) is an Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology at Acadia University and Tier II Canada Research Chair in Healthy Inclusive Communities. Dr. Bremer received her Ph.D. in Kinesiology from McMaster University in 2019 prior to completing a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto. Her research seeks to improve the health and well-being of children and youth with disabilities through increased participation in physical activity. Dr. Bremer's interdisciplinary and community-engaged program of research is guided by the study of motor development, physical literacy, and adapted physical activity. Her research includes lab- and community-based studies, with a strong emphasis on intervention design, program evaluation, and measurement. Dr. Bremer's research is currently funded by the Canada Research Chairs Program, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and Research Nova Scotia.

Dr. Bremer currently has two major research projects underway: The first project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and is using an iterative research approach to explore the acceptability, feasibility, and preliminary efficacy of virtual adapted physical activity programming among children and youth with disabilities (10-18 years of age). Phase one of the project included the completion of 13 interviews with children and youth with disabilities and their caregivers to determine their preferences and needs for virtual programming. The interview data is currently being analyzed and these results will inform phase two of the project. Phase two is to develop and pilot test a virtual adapted physical activity program that will meet the needs identified by families. The primary aim is to examine the acceptability and feasibility of the program among children and youth with disabilities and their family through measures of program attendance, adherence, and program enjoyment. A secondary aim is to examine the impact of the program on participation in physical activity. We anticipate phase two to launch in Fall 2023.

The second project is funded by Research Nova Scotia and is examining trajectories of physical activity, physical literacy, and health outcomes among children, youth, and young adults with disabilities participating in Acadia University's Sensory Motor Instructional Leadership Experience (S.M.I.L.E.) program. S.M.I.L.E. provides physical literacy-based programming to individuals (3 years of age and older) with disabilities from across Nova Scotia, ranging in age, type of disability, and ability level. Each participant in the program is paired up with a 'buddy' or pair of 'buddies,' who are student volunteers, to create a fun and enthusiastic environment as well as provide social, cognitive, and/or physical support through the weekly programming. Using Acadia's facilities including the gymnasium, pool, Snoezelen room, arena, and other areas of the Athletics Complex, as well as the university's sporting equipment, this program provides individuals with disabilities access to a high-quality physical activity program tailored to the specific needs of each individual.

The objective of this research project is to track the physical activity, physical literacy, and health of S.M.I.L.E. participants (4-24 years of age) over a 2-year period to determine: 1) the effect of participating in physical literacy-based programming on physical literacy, physical activity, and health outcomes among children and youth with disabilities; and 2) the strength and directionality of the relationships between physical literacy, physical activity, and health among children and youth with disabilities.

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Community Spotlight

For the Ladies of the World (FLOW) Retreats | Kootenay Adaptive Sports Association | Sierra Roth

The following section is written by Sierra Roth and edited by Kate Rozendaal.

Sierra Roth, BScKin, CSEP-CPT, BCIP Level 2 Mountain Bike Instructor, Instructor with Kootenay Adaptive Sports Association.

“As the head coach of For the Ladies of the World (FLOW) Retreats, I have the privilege of talking about FLOW, an adaptive mountain biking retreat for self-identifying women who experience disability”. But before we hear more about that, we have the privilege of listening to Sierra’s story, and how she came to mountain biking and being involved with Kootenay Adaptive.



“After a motocross accident at sixteen years old that left me with a spinal cord injury, it was unclear to me if I would ever be able to play and explore outside like I used to. I struggled to be active as I was living in a small rural town in Alberta with limited resources. Instead of physical education, I was doing physical therapy because the school didn’t know how to include me in activities with everyone else. It wasn’t until I moved to the city and attended the University of Alberta, where The Steadward Centre is located, that I was exposed to adaptive physical activity. After completing my Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology degree in 2020, I moved out west to Victoria, British Columbia to continue pursuing rowing, something I really started to enjoy during the last couple of years of my degree”.

“In 2021, I was fortunate to receive some support from grants to purchase my first adaptive mountain bike, something I hadn’t dabbled in enough because of the cost. I knew the [Bowhead Reach](#) would bring me the freedom to explore the outdoors on terrain my wheelchair just couldn’t provide. Not long after I purchased the bike, someone in the adaptive space who also rode mountain bikes encouraged me to sign up for the first adaptive mountain bike series being included in the Dunbar Summer Series (three downhill mountain bike races in British Columbia). I was the only woman that attended and everyone, including [Kootenay Adaptive Sports Association](#), started asking how we can include more women in mountain biking”.

“During this time, I was really struggling in the high-performance space of rowing. High-performance sport in Canada is in rough shape and honestly, not something I could be proud of representing at that time. After seeing how the mountain bike community welcomed us adaptive riders, I knew I needed to start shifting my energy to mountain biking. So that is when FLOW was born”... “I wanted to create a space where women could come and ride, build community, and explore the outdoors”.



“FLOW (For The Ladies of The World) is an adaptive mountain biking retreat for women hosted entirely by women. It is designed for women with disabilities to try adaptive mountain biking in a safe, inclusive, and all-female environment. As disabilities vary greatly, the baseline requirement is that a person is independent or requires minimal assistance. Beyond that, all skill levels of biking are welcome. Having your own bike to bring is a bonus, but not required. All that’s required is a desire to get out on the mountain”.

“I first partnered with Kootenay Adaptive to obtain my certifications in coaching. Kootenay Adaptive partners with [BICP](#) and athletes to ensure the certification process is based on lived experience and is centred around each of our unique bikes. We then received support from Canadian Women and Sport (and a few other sponsors) to run [our inaugural event](#) in March of 2022 in Squamish, BC and it sold out in 24 hours! It provided an opportunity for 11 women with varying levels of disability to immerse themselves in the outdoors. Soon after, [Rocky Mountain Adaptive](#) called us and asked how we could replicate the event in Canmore, AB. Within a couple of hours of opening registration, we had a waitlist and before I knew it, I was leading a group of 21 riders in [Canmore](#), 14 of us on adaptive bikes and the rest were volunteers and assistant coaches. Since then, we have started conversations with many organizations looking to do the same type of events and who are looking for ways to share resources and knowledge to be able to host these events all over the world. The next stop is Phoenix, Arizona with [Ability360](#) and another event in Squamish, BC where we will be partnering and integrating with an able-bodied women’s [bike fest](#). More locations are currently in the works internationally”.



“I often go out and bike with all my able-bodied friends, so it is important to me that women learn how to be independent rather than rely on FLOW to participate in the sport. I hope the women are empowered by being involved with FLOW and then seek other opportunities to feel a sense of belonging in the biking community with able-bodied riders. The Dunbar Series was my first experience with creating a sense of community and while I don’t expect every woman involved to go out and race, I do hope this is a stepping stone in that direction. What’s clear to me is that women just want to be outside and be able to explore in a safe and supportive space. Unintentionally, FLOW has also opened the door to many intersectionalities within the disability community to come together. Moms, newcomers, those identifying within the LGBTQIA2S+ community, and people of colour are all welcome and as a result, it has created an even stronger sense of community than I could have imagined”.

“I could write about FLOW forever and say many more great things about the retreats, but I will leave you with some photos that speak louder than my words”.

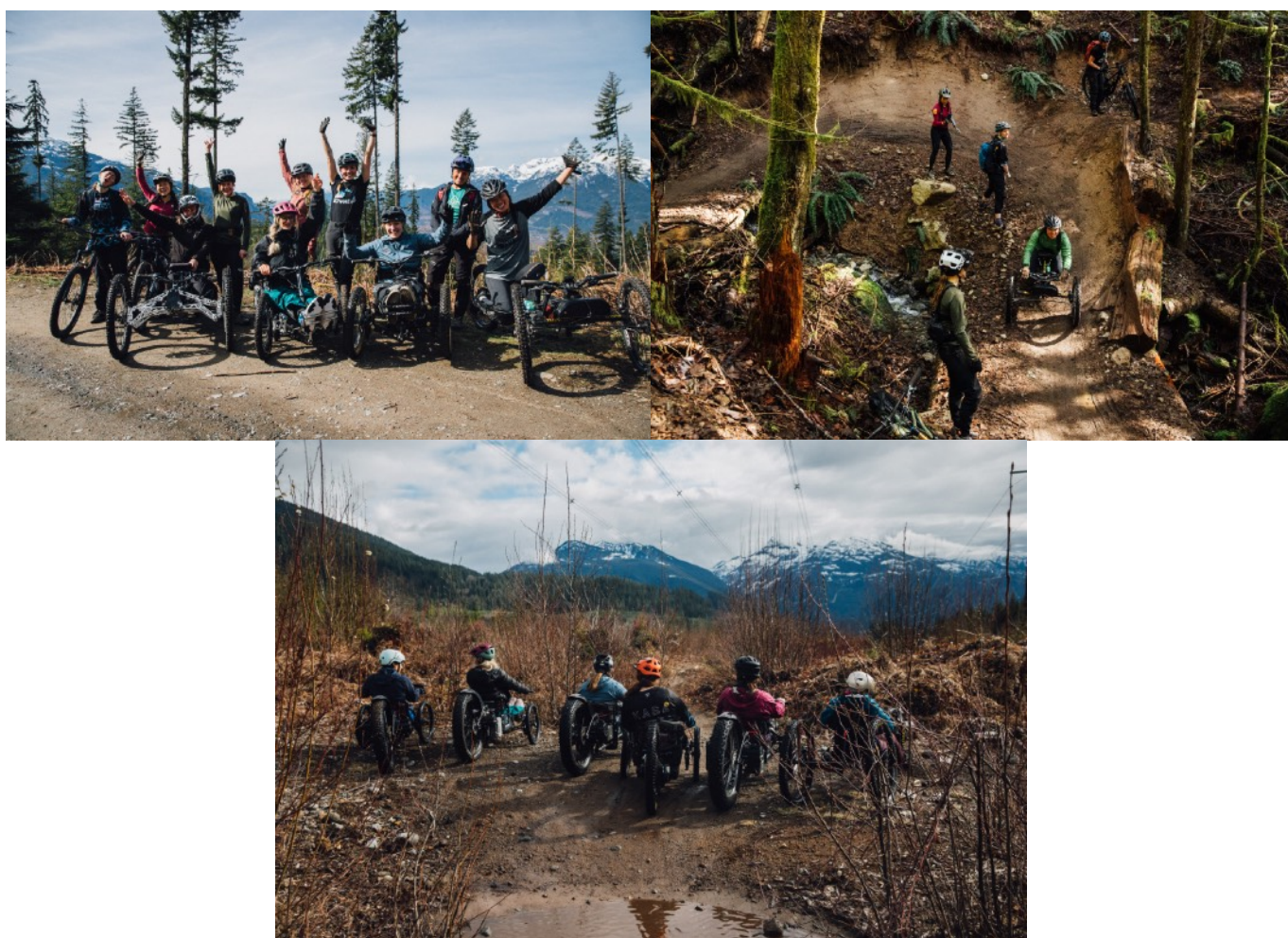


Photo credits: Hailey Elise & Norma Ibarra

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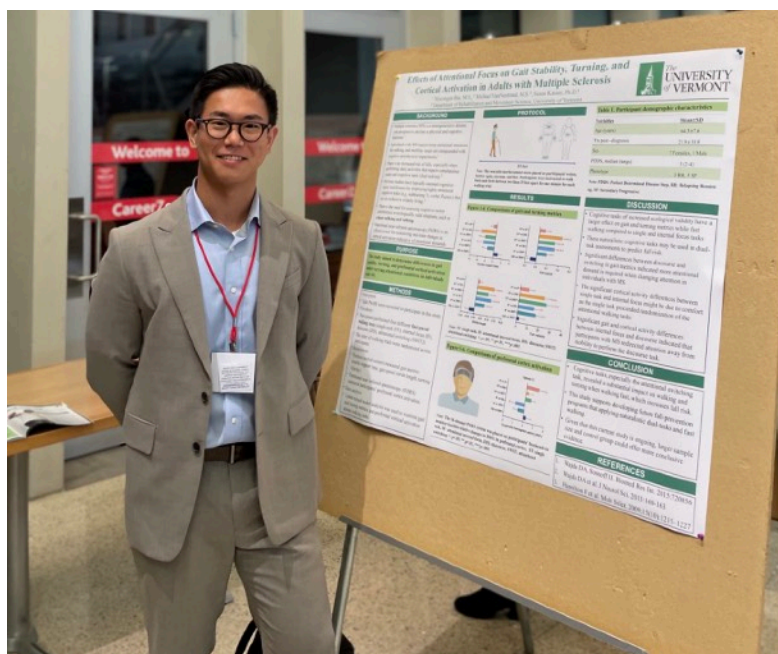
Student Highlight

Myeongjin Bae | Doctoral Student | University of Vermont

Myeongjin Bae is a second-year Ph.D. student at the University of Vermont in the Department of Rehabilitation and Movement Science. Myeongjin began his career at the University of Seoul where he completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in sport science under the supervision of Dr. Jooyeon Jin. He then moved to Vermont to expand his research experience and skills. Myeongjin currently works with Dr. Susan Kasser who was a former president of NAFAPA from 2014 to 2016.

Myeongjin decided to study in the field of adapted physical activity when he was a senior student and started working as a coordinator in community-based adapted exercise programs for people with physical disabilities. He was inspired when participants became healthier, happier, and motivated to be physically active. The communication with participants encouraged him to come up with new research ideas and insights. He earned the best adapted physical activity service award issued by Seoul Sports Association for the Differently-abled (SSAD) in 2020. Currently, he is volunteering as a coordinator in the Individually Designed Exercise for Active Lifestyles (IDEAL) program which is a balance-specific, fall-prevention exercise program for individuals with multiple sclerosis at the University of Vermont.

Academically, Myeongjin has excelled since beginning his graduate career. He earned the outstanding paper award in 2020 at the University of Seoul for his systematic review study of disability sports. He was a recipient of the Patricia Austin Graduate Student Award, which is one of the most prestigious awards for graduate students at the 2022 NAFAPA symposium for his master's thesis work on the effects of a multicomponent exercise program on health outcomes in adults with spinal cord injuries.



Myeongjin's research interest focuses on developing evidence-based exercise programs targeting physical and cognitive function improvements for individuals with multiple sclerosis. He is currently working on a systematic review regarding high-intensity exercise training on functional outcomes and a meta-analysis investigating the effect of home-based exercise training on health outcomes in individuals with multiple sclerosis. He is collaborating with various disciplinary researchers from physical therapy, exercise science, and communication science, which encourages him to be innovative and to think critically about

health issues for individuals with physical disabilities and clinical populations. In the future, he plans to lead an interdisciplinary research team aimed to investigate underlying mechanisms between exercise and cognition and to develop novel and innovative exercise programs for individuals with physical disabilities.

Myeongjin is also a member of The Human Motion Analysis Lab supervised by Dr. Susan Kasser. The lab focuses on underlying mechanisms of postural control and evaluating targeted interventions to mitigate balance impairment and reduce fall risk for individuals with multiple sclerosis. Currently, his lab works on several cross-sectional and survey studies related to community mobility and cognitive attention.

Outside of his studies, Myeongjin enjoys weightlifting and playing badminton and soccer. He has loved living in Vermont and spends his weekends going out for dinner and playing pickleball with mentors. He hopes to get a fluffy and friendly cat once he gets a job and will name his kitty “April”, his favourite month of the year.

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Announcements

Publications:

- Dr. Meghann Lloyd and colleagues (2022) have a recent publication on the positive effects of participating in the Special Olympics for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities participating in Special Olympics (for more information check out this [website](#))



Conferences:

- 24th International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity (for more information, registration and proposal submission, see this [link](#))
 - June 25-29 (2023) in Dunedin, New Zealand. The proposals deadline has been extended to March 20, 2023
- National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID) Annual Conference (for more information, registration and proposal submission, see this [link](#))
 - July 13-15 (2023) in Arlington, VA. Proposals are due March 24, 2023

Events:

- Special Olympics World Games 2023! June 17-25 (2023) in Berlin, Germany
 - Opportunities for research at the 2023 Games (more [information](#))
 - Propose a unique research study ([link](#))
 - Ideas for research/theses ([link](#))

Coming soon...

- NAFAPA Fall 2023 Event! Check in with the fall newsletter for more information. Additional details for registration and attendance will be on the NAFAPA [website](#)

Opportunity to Submit Announcements

Do you have an announcement to be featured in the November 2023 issue of the NAFAPA Newsletter? If so, please contact the editors today!

Meet the Editors

With the 2022-2024 NAFAPA elections this past fall, Kate Rozendaal and Ueli Albert serve as members-at-large on the NAFAPA Board of Directors.



Kate is currently in the second year of her doctoral program in Counselling Psychology at the University of Alberta. She is an assistant coach for the Canadian Women's Sitting Volleyball Team. Home for Kate is in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.



Ueli is in his first year of doctoral program in Educational Studies at Acadia University. He is a Chartered Professional Para Athletics Coach and lives with his wife and two children in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada.

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