



# Michigan Amateur Hockey Association

## **Disabled Section Report**

I am excited to have been recently appointed to serve Disabled Director for Michigan Amateur Hockey and the District Representative to USA Hockey's Disabled Section. As part of my role with MAHA, I am focusing on outreach with each affiliate association and program to learn about our great disabled organizations throughout the state. Additionally, I aim to strengthen the Disabled Section, raise awareness about our specialties in hockey, and establish a plan for a state playoff or jamboree for our six disabled disciplines. With these goals in mind, I am confident that we can achieve success in growing the game throughout disabled hockey.

## **Hendrickson Festival**

In early June, two programs from Michigan attended the fifth annual Hendrickson Foundation Hockey Festival in Blaine, MN. The Grand Rapids Jr. Sled Wings and Motor City Veterans Hockey Association each competed in their respective disciplines and enjoyed a great weekend of hockey in June! Formed in 2011 in partnership with USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey, the Hendrickson Foundation strives to enrich the lives of individuals with disabilities, and their families, through the game of hockey. The Hendrickson Festival is an annual event that hosts more than 1000 athletes from over 50 adaptive and warrior hockey teams from all over North America for a weekend of tournament games and jamborees on eight sheets of ice at the National Sports Center Super Rink in Blaine, MN. The festival includes an exciting celebrity game, celebrity sled race, premiere games and a reception.

## **Annual Congress**

The USA Hockey Disabled Section met in June as part of the Annual Congress, my first as representative to the Michigan District. It was an enjoyable experience, sharing great dialogue on how USA Hockey can continue to grow the game for everyBODY! During our meetings, our section sadly bid farewell to our Chairperson, JJ O'Connor, who has stepped down after 20 years of service to USA Hockey. The section representatives elected Amy LaPoe, Special Hockey Rep, to serve as our new section Chair. I spoke at length with Amy last week about how we can grow and develop the Disabled Section in Michigan and I am excited to see her carry-on JJ's vision!

## **Continuing to Reach Out to Disabled Programs**

As I indicated previously, one of my major goals is to establish a connection with each affiliate organization in the section. Over the next 6-12 months, I hope to meet program leaders and attend an activity for each program and see first-hand what each outstanding organization is doing to help our athletes. I have already reached out to all listed organizations and continuing to establish contact with other known groups in the state, and I hope to start working on in-person outreach this fall.

## **Thank You**

I would like to extend a sincere note of appreciation to everyone who supported my appointment to serve. I look forward to meeting many of you soon, and working with everyone to continue to make Michigan the premiere hockey community!

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Michael Palmer

Michigan Disabled Sports Director

