

Discover your 'Climb-Ability'

Jasper Chisnall reports on accessible adventure for people with intellectual or mild physical disabilities

"I'm scared," said Tom (not his real name), turning to his Mum.

"There's no need to be scared," she replied, thinking he needed some reassurance.

"No... it's okay to be scared, because, if I'm scared, I can be brave!"

It is moments like these that prove just how powerful climbing can be.

Tom was part of the first 'Climb-Ability' programme launched earlier this year by **Master Adventure**, a company that offers climbing instruction to all comers. The course was specially tailored, in conjunction with caregivers, to suit a small group of participants with autism or Down's syndrome. Tom had come to a profound conclusion: to be brave, you have to face a fear. After all, what is bravery without fear?

As Tom repeatedly showed his bravery, it was clear that climbing was a perfect exercise for him to increase his resilience. Here was someone challenging a genuine fear with a positive

attitude and, with encouragement, each week he overcame it, much to his own delight.

There is a real need for accessible and inclusive climbing programmes for people with disabilities, where participants can enjoy and benefit hugely from their experiences, which can also help them in their everyday lives.

Often I am asked 'Who can climb?' My answer is anyone who wants to. While that might seem somewhat flippant, there is truth to it. With the right attitude, a bit of creativity and some help, I believe anything is possible.

Realising that there can be many barriers to accessing inclusive sports, Master Adventure has worked hard to remove as many obstacles as possible to climbing, with all equipment provided free, and cost subsidies available when needed.

Understanding that climbing has the ability to positively impact people in many different ways, we believe that there are other groups that could benefit



from tailored climbing programmes. Currently we are planning to add an at-risk youth initiative called 'ROCK-Up!' It is being designed to benefit groups of young people who are experiencing economic, social and/or cultural disadvantage in their lives.

Just like our 'Climb-Ability' programme, 'ROCK-Up!' will use climbing as a platform to explore personal growth opportunities by allowing participants to learn to

challenge themselves, work together and surpass their own limits. With our experience in leading and developing adventure activities, we look forward to seeing the impact this amazing sport will have on these disadvantaged young people.

Please note: The name of the participant was changed to protect the privacy of the individual involved ■



AUTHOR Jasper Chisnall holds instructor certificates in a wide variety of adventure sports, including the Single Pitch Award/Rock Climbing Instructor qualification and Wilderness First Aid, and has nearly eleven years of experience in working in the outdoor industry. He worked as a Multi-Activity Instructor, a Senior Instructor and an Activities Manager before setting up his own company, **Master Adventure**.

FIND OUT MORE For more information, see www.masteradventure.ie, email info@masteradventure.ie or phone 087 795 0747.

**MASTER
ADVENTURE**