

Women's Initiatives Committee (WIC) 2016 AGM Report

2015 was another busy season for Canadian female skydivers.

This year, we funded one individual by helping her with her travel expenses to Nationals. Along with her partner, she has been instrumental in having Acrobatic Wingsuit adopted as a discipline in Canada and continues to run wingsuit courses and she also assisted in organizing the first Canadian women's wingsuit record!

1. *Catherine Bolduc*: member of team Fast Forward, Artistic Wingsuit

We also funded three events this year by helping with expenses for either organizers or participants

1. *Maple Bacon Beaver Boogie*, Skydive Burnaby
2. *Women's Flight-1 Course*, Parachutisme Nouvel Air
3. *I Fly Like a Girl, So Try and Keep up*, Okanagan Skydive

The last portion of our funding was geared towards committee improvement and learning. Three of our members had the amazing opportunity to attend a conference dedicated to women in sport. Our report on this event was published in the August-September issue of Canara.

2016 will bring forth a new organization of funding for our committee. The previous Athlete Development funding that was managed by the CNTC has now been moved under the portfolio of the LTAD committee. As an ad-hoc committee of LTAD this means our committees will now be working side by side in receiving funding requests. Our plan is to have one application process and the events will be then given to the appropriate committee. We are also instituting a policy that athletes and events will not be reimbursed for funding until after we have received a report and/or content for Canara. This ensures that our Membership and Registered Participants are able to see how CSPA funds are being used for the development of athletes and the promotion of female involvement in our sport.

Looking forward to 2016,

Michelle Matte-Stotyn

Chair, WIC

A little more from our recipients:

Women's Flight-1 Course

The course went well, but no jumps could be completed on that day due to bad weather. All the participants will come back to complete the jumps.

It is hard to provide a full report after the course because no jumps were done on that day. What I have realized just by teaching the theory part of the course is that female skydivers do have a lot more questions. I feel challenges women face under canopy is simply the lack of comprehension on what can be done with a parachute and the extent of the control they have on the direction of the canopy. It was hard to connect and totally understand what women face under canopy and in the sport because I am a male who has been jumping for several years. My progression is different from theirs. At one point in the course, I had Karine Provost speak her experience and share her history so that participants could understand what she went through. It helped me understand better where some of them come from (crash landings and little to no support to improve).

After the course, 3 participants came and did some jumps. After only one debriefed jump, I can already see improvement in flaring technique, understanding of the pattern and willingness to improve. I am looking forward to seeing the rest come back to jump.

This is definitely a must do again. This is the kind of funding and event that does not get lost and will definitely help keep ladies in the sport. – Martin Lemay

Catherine Bolduc

Cette année encore, grâce au Comité initiative des Femmes, j'ai pu progresser dans ma discipline ; le Wingsuit acrobatique. En Août dernier, se tenaient les Championnats Canadiens de parachutisme sportif à Skydive Edmonton, en Alberta. Mon équipe Fastforward et moi avons travaillé en collaboration avec l'ACPS, afin que la discipline du Wingsuit acrobatique y soit présentée aux championnats, en tant que sport de démonstration.

Nous avons concouru et remporté la première place lors de cette compétition. Par le fait même, nous avons démontré notre sérieux et notre intérêt envers cette discipline. Les championnats de 2015 représentaient pour nous trois, Jean-Denis Desrochers, caméraman, David Lutzy et moi-même, Catherine Bolduc, l'aboutissement d'une première année dans le monde de la compétition. À la suite de cet événement, nous sommes passés en vitesse Mach 3 et avons fait les démarches pour nous permettre de participer au Mondial de 2016 !

Sans le soutien de tous nos partenaires, donc le Comité initiatives des Femmes, je ne pourrais pas consacrer autant de temps à mon entraînement. La collecte de fonds est une part importante du travail d'une équipe. En alléger le fardeau, par des programmes comme celui du CIF, ne fait qu'encourager la progression des femmes dans le sport. Cet été, le soutien financier du CIF m'a permis de réduire mes frais de transport et d'hébergement lors de ma participation aux Championnats Canadiens de parachutisme sportif. Encourager la participation et la progression des femmes par un programme de soutien personnalisé ne peut qu'amplifier l'intérêt de ces dernières.

Je ne saurais terminer aucun article, mémo, ou même, commentaire sur ma participation et ma progression dans le sport sans remercier l'école de parachutisme Voltige, qui nous supporte et nous encourage toujours. – Catherine Bolduc

Maple Bacon Beaver Boogie

This year I was given the opportunity to be an organizer at Skydive Burnaby's Maple Bacon Beaver Jumper Boogie thanks, in part, to support provided by the CSPA. Unfortunately, we had to struggle with bad weather for the 2nd year in a row! The FS folks were lucky enough to get in the only jumps of the weekend on Friday with me while the freeflyers were treated to some tunnel coaching at iFly Toronto by the other two wonderful organizers, Melody Allen and Monika Wittmer. As a result, despite the bad weather we still saw breakthroughs in skills acquisition and learning for sure! The rainy days gave us an opportunity to gather in our sisterhood and discuss many topics from packing to jumpsuits to progression planning and so on with quite a lot of time for fun shenanigans in true Burnaby style of course! That so many women stuck out the bad weather is a true testament to the positivity and rapport of the event, Skydive Burnaby, and its organizers.

Many thanks to the CSPA for providing the funding assistance to allow me to participate in this event, which would have been cost prohibitive to the dz otherwise. Whenever we have an opportunity to showcase female leadership in our sport and provide an all-female training setting we see an equal boost in the self-esteem of the women with whom we are working. The CSPA and its Members and Registered Participants can rest assured that these all-female events foster learning that benefits our larger goal as what these women learn separately is always brought back to the sport that brings us all together in the first place. – Andrea Greening

I Fly like a girl, So try and keep up

Late in the 2015 season, Okanagan Skydive had the opportunity to promote a Women's Only Free-fly seminar. We were very fortunate to have Olga Kuznetsova who hails from Montreal (Canadian National Champion 2011 & 2013 and represented Canada in 2 World Meets in 2012 & 2014, artistic free-fly) organizing our event. Olga's coaching reflected on the participants an increased comfort and confidence learning new positions and situations. Olga is a fantastic coach. Her flying abilities are second to none and her realized attitude puts jumpers at ease.

Group discussions took place on the rules and regulations of 2-way free-fly competition and on the discipline needed to compete at a high level. Even though the weather was challenging, Olga did ground seminars and everything that she could, to progress the women whom turned out. These jumpers greatly appreciated that there was an event happening just for them. – Vanessa Chalmers

Conversion 2015: Women in Sport

As a person very new to the world of skydiving, I will admit that I arrived in Quebec City with the fear that I would fail to perform to the same standard as Michelle, and Kaneena; two much more experienced jumpers, who would undoubtedly have a lot more knowledge about our sport than I do.

After three days of hard work, and soaking up every bit of information I could, I am happy to say I came away from the conference feeling empowered, and with a much deeper understanding of the issues we are currently facing.

In closing, I would like to extend my gratitude to the CSPA, and the wonderful Board of Directors, for allowing the committee this very worthwhile experience. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn and grow, and be a part of a team driven towards advocating for our sport, and especially our female participants. –Chelsea Stephen

First of all, I would like to thank the CSPA Board of Directors and the WIC for the amazing opportunity to attend this inspirational, informative, and eye-opening conference. Prior to attending, the only expectation I had was to meet many influential females in sport, and honestly, I was a bit anxious to go; would I represent our sport appropriately?

In hindsight, I had nothing to feel anxious about. Organizers and participants of the conference were all very welcoming and open. Everyone wanted to advocate for the same thing; women and sport. Participants included female Olympic competitors and medalists, coaches from many other sports, sport academics, and many others. Partaking in this conference, I felt I grew as a person, and as a member of the WIC. I feel diversity is key to growing a stronger overall membership, and with small changes, such as an online networking tool for women, we can achieve this within our skydiving world.

On a last note, I was very lucky to be with Michelle Matte-Stotyn, and Chelsea Stephen during this conference. These two ladies are extremely intelligent, driven, and fun! Great people to have represent the WIC and CSPA! –Kaneena Vanstone