

Mary Haberer, Magna Int.

Mary Masters the Fitness Challenge

The 2014 Corporate Fitness Challenge, “Fit for Charity” served two important purposes; to expose employees to a variety of physical activities, and to support local charities. The resulting teamwork, comradery and fun were just the side-effects. Every minute that employees spent trying out hot yoga, rock climbing, hockey and crossfit, just to name a few of the many organized activities, they were earning dollars for one of five local charities.



One of those charities, the ABLE Network (Access to Better Living and Employment), is a community based program that provides relevant inclusive work and recreation opportunities for young adults with Intellectual Disabilities in natural job and community settings. ABLE participants are supported in five core programs of work experience, transit training, recreation, literacy and volunteer activities.

It’s through the ABLE Network that Mary Haberer came to work for Magna almost two years ago. Thirty-six year-old Mary works in food services, cleaning dishes and stocking the kitchenettes with supplies. When asked what part of her job she likes best, she replies with grinning enthusiasm, “Everything!”

Talkative and outgoing, Mary is a people-person who enjoys her work environment, surrounded by friendly co-workers. “Being around Mary is inspiring,” says Lori Kennedy, Food Services Manager. “She has a wonderful sense of humour, always teasing and joking with us. She makes us see the fun in life and her very presence reminds us to stop, slow down and enjoy what we’re doing.”

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Mary, a multi-sport Special Olympian, can't count how many awards she has won. Competing since her early twenties, she's an established athlete in the pool and on the field. Most recently, she competed in the 2014 Special Olympics Summer Games in Vancouver and picked up two silvers and two bronze medals in swimming.

This Olympian trains every day, when she can, and she does it all on her own, without a personal trainer. After work, Mary hits the gym where she does the treadmill and weights. After dinner, she's either swimming or playing basketball, and in the summer months, she golfs and plays baseball. Mary maintains a healthy diet, though she eats everything. "Sometimes I try to avoid sugar," she says, "but it's hard." (We hear you, Mary!)

Mary embraced the 'Fit for Charity' challenge, choosing to compete for two charity teams: CHATs, which provides Community & Home Assistance to Seniors, and the ABLE Network. Ashley Robinson, a co-worker who helped Mary log her minutes into the computer system each day during the challenge, recalls Mary's fun competitive edge. "She was so excited to share her fitness minutes with me every morning—which far exceeded my own—then she'd tease me by suggesting I double up my efforts," Ashley laughs. "She's been a fun competitor."

Mary is the embodiment of ABLE Network's mission statement: "Our participants confidently contribute to the workplace and community, growing their independence and abilities through relevant experience in natural settings."

We're proud to have Mary in the Magna International family.