



Sarah Will

There are many obstacles each of us must face. We can choose to rise above these experiences and make our lives more important because of them, or we can waste the opportunity to grow within ourselves and to help others to grow. Sarah Will is someone who made the most of her situation and because of it, has helped many youth conquer some of their challenges. She is a champion of resistance because she has made herself and others around her better because of her trials.

One of Sarah's biggest passions was skiing. She worked very hard at becoming better and faster and was very successful. In 1988, she was skiing in Aspen, Colorado and had a major accident which left her paralyzed from the waist down. Many of us would have given up on skiing after an accident like that, but not Sarah. She found out that even though she could not use her legs anymore, she could still ski. Instead of using two skis, she used a mono-ski which was attached to a seat and a footrest. There were also poles to give the skier more control.

Sarah entered many races using the mono-ski and was very triumphant. In 1996 she lost one gold medal to a Japanese racer at the Nagano, Japan Winter Olympics but took gold in the next three events. She ended up winning eight Paralympic gold medals.

Not only did Sarah improve herself, but also she allowed young people to use their disability to their advantage by setting up a mono-ski camp in Vail, Colorado. She has helped four students qualify for the U.S. Disabled Ski Team. In the eyes of many, especially those she has helped, Sarah is a champion of resistance.

Reference: *Reach: Educator's Guide to the Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Games of 2002*. SLOC Education Department. 2001.