

## 1973-2023 Wostawea Time Capsule Story

# “Early Jackrabbit Memories”

Story shared by Rita Monteith

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My time with the Jackrabbit program was the last half of the 1980s and the early 1990s. We met at the Odell Park Lodge and had full use of the building.

I always considered the program a success, not because of my teaching, but because of the outstanding parents who got involved and volunteered their time and talents. We met each Saturday morning from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. There was always a parent who looked after the hot chocolate and Timbits to be passed around after games and a hike through the trails in the park. The hike was accompanied by skiing parents and perhaps an older teen brother or sister. We had so many children we needed scouts to keep the line in order to make sure no one was left behind.

Mornings started out with a warmup, parents included. Then we demonstrated the skill for the day. The children, ages six to thirteen, were divided into smaller groups of five or six, and an instructor (who was often a parent), would work with each group before bringing them back to the front of the lodge to display their skill. The Jackrabbits were taught the snowplow, herring-bone, stride, glide, position of poles, and how to hold the poles: we'd say, “the rabbit goes up through the hole and grabs the carrot!” Students and coaches of that time will know what I mean. We learned the proper transfer of weight: “like a slow dance.” When poles and glide came together, the kids would take off across the snow. A younger sibling would sometimes come along and amaze us with their ability!

I could never have taught the program without the parents' help – there were just so many Jackrabbits. I believe the parents enjoyed these Saturday mornings as much as the children did.