

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

det**news**.com

Around Michigan: Spotlight

State athlete, 15, earns trip to train in Italy

John Wisely / The Detroit News

January 19, 2006

Jarrold Starkey's skiing has long impressed his family and friends, but it was his writing that earned him a trip to Italy.

The 15-year-old resident of Bangor Township penned an essay under the topic "What ability means to me" and was chosen as one of 10 people from across the country to visit the 2006 Paralympic Academy in Torino, Italy, next month.

"It means opportunity," said Starkey, who was born with a medical condition that forced doctors to amputate his left leg when he was 10 months old. Starkey has been skiing on one ski for about seven years through Michigan Adaptive Sports, a group promoting athletics for those with disabilities.

Starkey removes his prosthetic leg when he hits the slopes and uses modified ski poles for balance.

"I ski slalom and giant slalom," Starkey said. "I don't really do down hill or Super G yet."

While he admits he can out-ski a lot of his friends, Starkey's writing was a different story.

"I hate writing," said the sophomore at John Glenn High School in Bay City. "I hate English class."

His mother, Cheryl Starkey, urged him to enter the contest.

"I told him he needed to write it and then take it to school and have one of his English teachers look it over," Cheryl Starkey said. "He didn't want to and I told him 'Then you don't want it bad enough.' "

The idea of flying to Italy, site of the Winter Olympics, and seeing the related Paralympics competitions featuring the best athletes with disabilities in the world convinced Starkey to take his mother's advice. He sent in his essay and waited to hear if he was a winner

He expected to learn if he had been chosen on Dec. 9. When no call came, he figured he didn't make the grade, but on Dec. 15, he received word that he was one of 10 chosen to make the trip to Torino.

Starkey will spend March 8-13 in Italy meeting Paralympics athletes and participating in educational programs.

"They will have the chance to meet with the Paralympians," said John Register of the Paralympic Academy, in Colorado Springs, Colo.

As part of being selected, Starkey is allowed to take one guest with him. He was trying to decide between his mother, a nurse, and his firefighter father, but his parents settled the question for him.

They asked him to take his ski coach, Mike Henry, a fellow amputee.

"Together, they will benefit more," Cheryl Starkey said.

You can reach John Wisely at (313) 222-2035 or jwisely@detnews.com.