



## Bev Vaughn Announces Retirement as AAASP Executive Director

Bev Vaughn, co-founder and executive director of the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP) since August 1996, has announced her retirement, effective August 31, 2021. Vaughn notified the AAASP Board of Directors of her retirement plans at the AAASP Fall Strategic Planning Meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta, Georgia.

Vaughn has always envisioned a world where students with physical disabilities have the opportunity to experience the thrill and excitement of playing competitive sports for their school, just as their non-disabled peers do. Her approach to this area of sport development has included the design and implementation of a sustainable inclusive systematic method, paired with solution-based strategies, best practices, adapted athletic policies, educational training, and resource development enabling AAASP's success of getting students with physical disabilities, *off the sideline and into the game*. Her retirement brings to close 25 years of service at AAASP, devoted to leading the charge for these children.

Vaughn's 45-year career has been dedicated to working with underserved and at-risk populations specializing in the fields of therapeutic recreation, psychiatric and rehabilitation medicine, public education, disability sports policy, government relations and interscholastic adapted athletics. Taking positions with Denver Children's Hospital Short Term Child Crisis Psychiatric Unit; Tahlequah Oklahoma Talking Leaves Job Corp Center for Native American students; Atlanta's Northside Mental Health Inpatient Unit; Emory University Hospital Psychiatric and Rehabilitation Medicine Units; DeKalb County Schools Special Education/Related Services; and AAASP, Inc. Vaughn served in leadership roles that resulted in studying, stabilizing, designing and redesigning innovative strategies and approaches to programming and delivery of services for these populations.

Following the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta, Vaughn, along with Tommie Storms, co-founded AAASP with the mission to develop and support a standardized structure for education-based adapted athletic competition to improve the well-being of students with physical disabilities. Vaughn's powerful innovative vision, exemplary programmatic design and creative leadership, coupled with Storms' financial, business and marketing acumen, has resulted in AAASP becoming one of the most successful examples of competitive, inclusive, and compliant interscholastic adapted athletic programs in the United States. Throughout her 25 years of service at AAASP, Vaughn has led her organization in forging partnerships with key stakeholders including the National Federation of State High School Associations, the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, as well as, state education departments, school districts, state high school associations, government leaders, and rallied community support in serving over 7,000 seasonal student athlete participants taking part in over 2,100 interscholastic adapted athletic competitions.

AAASP's executive director position will be filled by Tommie Storms, AAASP co-founder and Director of Operations, effective September 1<sup>st</sup>. Storms was confirmed and unanimously approved at the March 17, 2021 AAASP board of director's meeting.

The American Association of Adapted Sports Programs, Inc. (AAASP) is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary this year of bringing interscholastic wheelchair sports to schools. AAASP, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia since 1996, has developed one of the nation's most comprehensive school-based athletic programs for children with physical disabilities attending grades 1-12. Many prominent individuals and national organizations in the industry have recognized AAASP as the model for the nation. For more information about AAASP, please visit our website at [www.adaptedsports.org](http://www.adaptedsports.org) or join our conversations on Facebook (American Association of Adapted Sports Programs), Twitter or Instagram at: @AdaptedSports.

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