

Adapted Golf Cart and Other Recreation Opportunities

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The Institute for Disability Services (IDS) Technology Learning Center (TLC) at the Southern Miss Gulf Park campus has several adapted golf carts designed for individuals who have limited or no use of their legs.

I accompanied Jerry Alliston, Coordinator for Project TRIAD (Training, Resources and Information for the Attainment of Degrees) and Jesse Gables, Youth Council Chair for TRIAD, to the Gulf Coast to tryout the carts.



TRIAD assists youth with disabilities in their transition from high school to adult life by teaching them about career and educational opportunities. The program also provides clients with recreational opportunities. We met Ashley-Nicole Ross, the recreational therapist from TLC, at a driving range in Gulfport owned by Bayou Vista Golf Course. She explained how the adapted golf cart – which looks like a regular golf cart – works. “The adapted golf cart stands the golfer fully upright to give him/her the ability to produce a full, two-handed golf stroke,” Ashley-Nicole said. “The ergonomically-designed controls make driving easy, and a swivel seat makes it easy to enter and leave the cart.”

Three years ago, Jesse lost the use of his legs in a car accident. Since then, he has not golfed at all. After a few strokes with the cart, though, he was hitting balls as well as the rest of us. “Once I got a feel for how to use the equipment, I was hitting balls as far as I ever have,” Jesse said.

The cart was a different experience than when Jesse had golfed before the accident, and he had to get used to the feel and movement of it. As soon as he did, though, he had no trouble at all. “I would recommend it to anyone who wants to use it,” he said. “Once you get used to having to use your upper body, you can play just as well as you could before.”

“I play golf for a hobby, and it’s rewarding to have everyone come together and play as a whole,” said Ashley-Nicole.



TLC has three adapted golf carts. The one we used is stationed at the main course of Bayou Vista Golf Club. The other two are located at the TLC facility on the Southern Miss Gulf Park Campus. They are available on loan and can be taken out of the coastal area. While TLC provides trailers to transport them, the person or persons borrowing them must have their own trailer hitch.

After trying out the golf cart, we went to the Southern Miss Gulf Park campus where TLC is located. We toured the facility built since Katrina. The floors inside TLC are made of rubber, but it is impossible to

know this unless someone tells you. The rubber is there to make it more comfortable to move across, particularly for individuals with physical disabilities.

TLC has various pieces of equipment for individuals with disabilities of all ages. Anyone who has a disability can use the facility free of charge. Available equipment includes computers, adapted sports and recreation equipment, adapted toys, and much more.

“I think it’s a great idea to have equipment that you don’t have to pay for, that you can just use,” said Jesse.

Part of our tour of TLC included the Fitness Trail, a paved track that takes visitors to exercise equipment accessible to individuals with disabilities. The trail includes exercise equipment that works every part of the body. In this way, the fitness trail can help people with just about any disability get an effective workout.

“If I lived in the area, it’s definitely something I would use,” said Jesse.

TLC has other recreational opportunities, too. “We have a variety of programs including pottery, golf, tennis, basketball, ping pong, kayaking and many more,” Ashley-Nicole said. TLC also collaborates with the City of Gulfport for recreational activities that include individuals with disabilities.

To learn more about the adapted golf cart, the Fitness Trail or TLC in general, call Ashley-Nicole Ross at 228.214.3514 or send an Email to ashley.n.ross@usm.edu. For more information about TRIAD, contact Jerry Alliston at 601.266.5979 or send Email to jerry.alliston@usm.edu. For more information about IDS and TLC, visit us on the Web at www.usm.edu/ids.