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## **HISTORY IS MADE AT THE DOUBLE H RANCH - a child, living on a ventilator, skis down the slope -**

Lake Luzerne, NY – March 15, 2009 – History is made today at the Double H Ranch as Anthony Guarino becomes the first Double H student, living on a ventilator, to ski down the slopes at the Double H Ranch. Anthony has Myotubular Myopathy, a rare disease causing low muscle tone and diminished respiratory capacity. Anthony is wheelchair bound and non-verbal. Today is not the first time Anthony has made history at the Double H Ranch. With the help of Anthony's Angels, a group of medical volunteers and staff, Anthony was the first summer camper, living on a ventilator, to soar through the sky on the Giant Swing at the High Ropes Course during Summer Residential Camp; at which time Anthony fingerspelled "This is the best day of my life."

Anthony's Angels have been brainstorming since June 2008 on making March 15 a day on the slopes for Anthony just like a day on the slopes for any other child. There were a lot of things to take into consideration – how to be sure Anthony's ventilator stays warm and his airway open, how to secure Anthony into the adaptive ski to fully support his neck and head and how to get Anthony up the slope without the assistance of the chair lift, which presents too many risks.

Today, surrounded by his many angels, Anthony again makes history as he soars down the slopes at the Double H Ranch. And, by his side, his sister, Cassie, who lives with Spina Bifida, a birth defect involving the spinal column, also skies for her first time.

It's a story about inspiration... it's a story about hope.

### Adaptive Winter Sports Program

Double H Ranch's Adaptive Winter Sports Program, in its twelfth year, provides over 175 students and 350 family members the opportunity to take to the slopes to learn a life-long skill and provide an experience that can be enjoyed by the whole family. We are the second member of Paul Newman's Association of Hole in the Wall Camps, the largest global family of specialized camps in the world, and the only member camp with a winter program. The Ranch's winter program is the only privatized Adaptive Winter Sports Program in the country, solely available to children and families with special needs, not open to the public and free-of-charge. The Double H winter program is unique in that it is one hundred percent volunteer driven – supported by over 200 volunteers made up of 140 ski instructors and National Ski Patrol, lodge hosts and program volunteers. We host 28 regular ski days (weekend) serving thirty students per day and five Family Sleepover Weekends, serving 60 family members per day. The diagnoses we serve in the winter program are neuromuscular (nearly half the children we serve in the winter), cancer (including leukemia), sickle cell anemia and other blood disorders, HIV/AIDS, mitochondrial, rare and other diseases. The 175 students in the winter program this year originate from New York, Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The majority of day skiers live within two hours of the Double H.

### Double H Ranch

The mission of the Double H Ranch is to provide specialized programs and year-round support for children and their families dealing with life-threatening illnesses. Our purpose is to enrich their lives and provide camp experiences that are memorable, exciting, fun, empowering, physically safe and medically sound. All programs are FREE of charge and capture the magic of the Adirondacks.

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