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Hal O'Leary
Born: 1937

Hal O'Leary, a ski instructor at Winter Park Ski Area, volunteered to help when Winter Park was asked to assist Children's Hospital in Denver and Fitzimmons General Hospital with a small ski program for amputees. The program has grown to be the largest of its kind in the world.

Although the program struggled in its early years, O'Leary's tenacity won out and the program continued to grow, with Hal printing the first teaching manual in 1973. He has since written several widely acclaimed teaching manuals for the disabled.

Hal has a natural talent for relating to each participant on an individual basis, modifying techniques and equipment to suit the person, and giving all a belief in themselves to be able to achieve full potential. It is a delight to these athletes to move with ease, grace and speed, things many felt were out of reach.

Recreation does more than build self-confidence. It helps to relieve social barriers and myths held by society, replacing them with understanding. O'Leary has traveled the world teaching and consulting with other disabled person programs and has been an outstanding spokesman for the disabled cause with the U.S. Government. His tiny voluntary program in 1969 has blossomed into a giant program serving 43 disabilities and 2500 persons from the United States and around the world.

Some of O'Leary's extended achievements which have gained recognition follow:

- 1978 Hal O'Leary, Winter Park Recreation Association, Distinguished Service Award
- 1979 March 10, Governor Richard Lamm proclaims this Hal O'Leary Day in Colorado
- 1982 Hal O'Leary, Golden Quill Award from U.S. Ski Writers Association for outstanding contribution to American skiing.
- 1988 Hal O'Leary, Appreciation Award from Australian Disabled Skiers Foundation
- 1990 Hal O'Leary inducted into the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame
- 1990 Hal O'Leary receives the Leota F. Pekrul Service Award from Zonta Club of Denver
- 1990 National Sports Center for the Disabled, the El Pomar Award for Excellence
- 1992 Hal O'Leary receives the Jimmie Heuga Award from the Far West Ski Association
- 1992 Hal O'Leary receives the James R. Winthers Memorial Award, National Handicap Sports top award
- 1992 National Sports Center for the Disabled, Appreciation award from Amputee Coalition of America
- 1992 Hal O'Leary named one of the 100 Best Things That Ever Happened to Skiing by SKI Magazine
- 1993 National Sports Center for the Disabled, the Colorado Tourism Achievement Special Award from the Colorado Tourism Board
- 1993 Hal O'Leary, Program Director, the James Brady Award from the Colorado Sports Council
- 1993 In conjunction with the above, the Hal O'Leary Meet the Challenge Award to be awarded annually to a disabled skier by the Colorado Sports Council in honor of Hal

Hal O'Leary was elected to the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame in 1990, and elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1994.

