

## Gwen Botting

### Kayaking Blind - Independence at its Best in the Apostle Islands

With Andrea Knepper



There are very few activities that persons who are blind or low vision are "allowed" by sighted "others" to do on their own. Chicago Adventure Therapy and Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind (Michigan) teamed up in 2022 for the trip of a lifetime for teenagers 12-17 and blind staff to kayak on Lake Superior in the Apostle Islands. Come see the amazing photos and hear the way our campers and volunteers impacted each others' lives

Gwen Botting is the Executive of Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind. Gwen has a 28 year-old son who is totally blind, and is successfully living on his own. Gwen and her husband Jim have spent decades helping Greg learn the skills he needs to live on his own and be independent. In 2012, after 15 years of volunteering, Gwen became the director of OUB to help other kids like Greg to learn critical skills they need. These skills include cooking, cleaning, gardening, social skills, outdoor physical activities, natural science, engineering, sleeping in tents, managing their personal items and much more. Each year OUB takes an Adventure Trip which has included a river trip on the Manistee River in Michigan, visits to the Au Sable Light House in the Upper Peninsula to see a shipwreck up close and climb the lighthouse, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, Hocking Hills, Ohio and much more. Most of OUB staff are also blind or low vision, ensuring that OUB provides excellent mentorship. 2022 marked Gwen's 11th summer season leading OUB.

