



Name: Gary Sjonnesen

Profession: Certified Prosthetist CP(c)

Work: Director of Professional and Clinical Services at Ottobock

Role within OPC: I am currently a member of Orthotics Prosthetics Canada.

The Importance of my Work

I feel we as orthotics and prosthetics professionals change lives, giving individuals back something they have lost.

Favourite part of being a prosthetics professional

I enjoy seeing individuals smile and their eyes light up when we are able to help them achieve something that they didn't feel was possible again since their amputation.

My Proudest Moment with Orthotics Prosthetics Canada

Prior to OPC, I was the president of CAPO which provided me with many challenges but also a great deal of satisfaction.

The Future of Orthotics Prosthetics Canada

I am really pleased with the direction OPC has taken to increase recognition of our profession. The greatest need, in my opinion, is to continue to educate both the general public as well as other Health Care Professionals about the Prosthetics and Orthotics profession.

My experience during the 2016 Rio Paralympics

I was one of four Canadians that were part of a group of Ottobock Practitioners and Technicians who attended 2016 Rio Paralympic games to provide technical support for the athletes, repairing both their competition and everyday devices. There was an approximate total of one hundred Ottobock employees from around the world providing this service. In just over two weeks we performed almost 2400 repairs, which included everything from repairing blown tires on wheelchairs to the fabrication of complete prosthetic devices, and everything in between.

The biggest thrills for me at the Paralympics was meeting so many athletes, a number of them Canadians. I was able to meet Brent Lacados who won three medals at the games, including a silver in the 400 metre wheelchair. I also met Chantal Petitclerc at Canada House, Ms. Petitclerc is the most decorated Paralympic athlete in history, having won over twenty medals in her career; currently she serves as a Senator, and was Canada's Chef de Mission for both the 2016 Paralympics and 2014 Commonwealth Games.



Gary Sjonnesen and Ms. Chantal Petitclerc

Patient Success Story

During my recent trip to the Paralympics Games I ran into a member of the CPC (Canadian Paralympic Committee) who relayed a story about an athlete he met that I helped while working the Para Pan AM Games in Toronto in 2015. This individual was from Venezuela and was a high level lower limb amputee, Hip Disarticulation, who was competing in swimming at the games. As such, he did not use a prosthesis in competition but his everyday prosthesis was in quite a state of disrepair.

I spent some time with him trying to refurbish this prosthesis while he was at the games. At the time I was feeling that I really was just doing enough to make it functional again but after speaking with the member of CPC it has apparently made a significant difference in his life since he returned home to Venezuela. The story moved



Gary Sjonnesen and his team at the 2016 Rio Paralympics

the CPC member to such an extent that he has decided to personally sponsor this individual to come to Canada in order that I can make a complete new prosthesis.

What really makes this significant to me is the fact that I felt that what I did at the Para Pan AM games for this

individual was just the bare necessities to make him functional again but to him, it was actually a major improvement in his quality of life at home. It really made me even more grateful to be living in Canada and reinforces my understanding of just how lucky we are here and how we really should not take the things we have here for granted.

Favourite thing to do outside of work

I am an avid golfer, although my score card does not always reflect that. I also enjoy woodworking when I have the time.

For more information, please contact:

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