

## **It was Love at First Dive...**

By Jim Elliott, CEO Diveheart

### ***The Dream of Building the Deepest Therapy Pool in the World!***



Since 1976, Downers Grove based Diveheart founder and president Jim Elliott knew that scuba diving was therapeutic and beneficial for people in general, and especially for individuals with disabilities. The son of an Army veteran with a disability, Elliott spent time at Hines V.A. Hospital in Maywood dodging wheelchairs when he visited his father. The father of a blind daughter, Elliott was tutored through boy scouts by a one arm scout master and walked his Cub Scout friend Timmy with Cerebral Palsy to school so that bullies would not pick on him or steal his lunch money. This background gave Elliott a solid footing in dealing with individuals with a variety of disabilities and the sometimes not so friendly world around them.

As a young journalist at the College of DuPage in Glenn Ellyn, with no special interest in scuba diving, Elliott took a scuba class in the event he ever had to interview someone like Jacques Cousteau. When Elliott did his first open water dive, it was love at first dive! Decades later in 1997, after guiding and teaching blind skiers since the mid-1980s, Elliott would become a scuba diving instructor, working with people with a variety of disabilities, and then go on to found Diveheart in 2001, a non-profit based in Downers Grove and dedicated to serving children, veterans, and others with all types of disabilities, using adaptive scuba and scuba therapy as tools to help them “Imagine the possibilities” in their lives. Just as in the blind skiing world, Elliott never dreamt that Diveheart would be more than a small local charity. However, when covid hit, after serving thousands around the world, Elliott had to cancel two hundred pool programs around the U.S. alone, and fourteen adaptive scuba trips for people with disabilities.



To say the least, Diveheart had grown since 2001. Covid gave Elliott & Diveheart a chance to retool and focus on the vision of a deep warm water therapy pool facility that they wanted to build as a destination that could be used for research, rehabilitation, education, training and provide vocational opportunities for veterans and others, not just with disabilities, but of all abilities. Fast forward to 2023! Two patents later and millions of dollars in pro-bono services and land donation guarantees, Diveheart has completed a feasibility study and revealed its deep pool design in the hope of garnering millions of dollars to build the world's first deep warm water therapy pool facility in the United States. Elliott says anyone who wants to partner with an international non-profit and be part of a multimillion dollar project that will change the world for those with disabilities, should check out and contact [www.Diveheart.org](http://www.Diveheart.org) for details. "We need to do it here in the U.S. before someone else decides that they can do it before us ". Elliott said. "Not everyone honors U.S. patents".

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