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## Gawronski Headed Across the Pond

Jenn Suhr won't be the only local resident traveling with Team USA to the London Olympics later this month.

Dunkirk Senior High School Class of 2002 alumna Julie Gawronski will be taking the journey across the Atlantic to work at, and provide support for, the USA House.

"Words can't express how excited I am to head to London in support of our country's best athletes," Gawronski said. "It will truly be an honor. I get goose bumps just thinking about it. I was able to support the Paralympic Team during the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver/Whistler and at the 2011 Parapan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico, but this will be my first Olympic games."

Gawronski will leave for London on July 17, with the expectation of being done with her Olympic duties on Aug. 15.

"Not only do the athletes prepare for years leading up to the games, but many of the USOC staff do as well," Gawronski said. "We have an entire International Games department dedicated to the logistics surrounding the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Personally, I have been attending training and planning meetings for the last few months in preparation. My main duties will start once I'm on the ground in London."

Gawronski, who was a standout in softball and soccer at Dunkirk, will work to help USA House provide integrated hospitality and business opportunities for the United States Olympic Committee's key constituents, including sponsors, suppliers, licensees, donors, National Governing Bodies, International Olympic Committee members, other international guests and Olympians, as well as members of the U.S. Olympic team.

"The USA House will provide a platform for (national governing bodies) to conduct business meetings and/or press conferences, interact with Olympians and U.S. Olympic team members and host special events," Gawronski said.

Gawronski, whose normal job duties with the USOC include working for U.S. Paralympics as a coordinator for Military Programs, noted she got into this line of work due to her love of sports.

"Sports have always been a huge part of my life and I knew that I wanted to continue to be involved after my collegiate career had ended," Gawronski said. "It was a goal of mine to someday work for the USOC and I was granted my chance while I was completing my Master's Degree. I applied for, and was offered, a temporary internship position located in Colorado at the Olympic Training Center for the summer of 2007. That summer I fell in love with the USOC as well as Colorado and decided that a call home was necessary to ask my family to send me my belongings."

After being hired for a full-time position at the Olympic Training Center in 2007 to work on coordinating logistics for incoming camps and events, Gawronski began to learn more about the job she would later hold.

"It was a great introduction to the Olympic and Paralympic Movement as I worked with all the different national governing bodies and the various programming that each would host," Gawronski said. "As I worked at the Training Center, I learned more about the paralympic movement and met many of the athletes and staff. To say I was inspired is an understatement. From that point forward, my goal was to get involved with U.S. Paralympics full-time. I made the move over to my current position in January of 2011."

Gawronski, who graduated from Union College in 2006 with a Bachelor's of Science degree in psychology and Canisius College in 2009 with an Masters of Science in Sports Administration, knows she will take a lot away from this experience.

"One thing I'm looking forward to is working alongside, and getting to know many colleagues, that I typically do not get to interact with often," Gawronski said. "We are all there to support Team USA as they chase their dreams so the feelings of camaraderie and sense of teamwork are amazing."

Another thing Gawronski noted she's be looking forward to, after her long days of working at USA House are over, is the chance to see some of the sights the United Kingdom have to offer.

"I will be working long hours each day from when I arrive until mid-August," Gawronski said. "However, after the Games are finished, and we are all packed up, I have plans to travel around England, Wales and Scotland."

Despite an injury to her bicep in college that she finally had taken care of two years ago, Gawronski makes time to take advantage of the Colorado landscape.

"I don't do well sitting still," Gawronski said. "I still play pick-up soccer from time to time, but I've been having a blast exploring the Colorado playground in my backyard. I just built a new mountain bike and I try to snowboard and ski at least 30 days a winter. Hiking, trail running, and cross-fit are some other activities I enjoy."