My name is Lisa Hertwig and I received a double lung transplant on the 5/11/16 after having waited 3.5years.
Since my transplant I have been keen to try as many new experiences as possible. I had a desire to volunteer abroad as I currently volunteer in many areas here in Scotland. I investigated volunteering in south Africa, but the charity told me it was too unhygienic so advised I didn’t go. I then looked Into Camp America but working/volunteering insurance proved difficult. I then seen via social media the winter transplant games were being held in Canada and I thought that would be the perfect opportunity. I had never been to Canada. Having experience in transplant I wouldn't be going in blind.
I contacted the winter transplant committee and found out all the info I needed. I also joined team GB group chat to introduce myself and they helped make sure that I was on same flights as some and in same hotel as some of the team too.

Prior to organising a volunteering opportunity I had fundraised the previous year doing a 5K and climbing Ben Lomond mountain in Scotland. This helped fund part of my trip.

My first day in Banff- Canada I helped with Registration with the competitors. That evening I helped with the opening ceremony parade as a Marshall. There was then a gathering in a local bar with a buffet and drinks where I got to know more of the GB team.

Having no skill in skiing or snowboarding or any other winter sports I knew I didn’t want to compete but I was happy to spectate and help. I was the only volunteering who wasn’t Canadian and who had travelled. They were short of volunteers at some events. It is really important events such as these have volunteers in order for them to be able to go ahead and function as smoothly as possible.

My 2nd day I was a score recorder which meant I wore a head set and someone in the hut told me the competitors finish time and I wrote it on the board so the competitors could view once crossed finish line.

The 3rd day I had a day off. I went on an excursion to Lake Louise which included a husky dog sledding experience. This is something I have watched on TV many of times and always wanted to try. It felt incredible and so relaxing. Something I will never forget.

The 4th day I was a flag girl at the bottom of the slopes. Two competitors would race and I had to wave the flag if the competitor on my side crossed finish line first.

The 5th day I was score recorder again as I had been on the Monday.
At night was the gala where speeches were made, we ate food and a live singer performed. It was quite emotional in a good way.

The 6th day I walked around the local shops soaking up the culture and the sunshine. I took a trip up Sulphur mountain on the Gondola which was something else. Being on top of the Rocky Mountains at 2281m high was surreal. I fear heights so travelling up the gondola alone my heart rate peaked at 151bpm on my watch. But sometimes you must push yourself out your comfort zone to get the most out of life. At the top there was a museum you could walk around, restaurants, shops and a musician playing music at a bar.

I was anxious that I was going to be very cold in Canada having heard it was -13. Surprisingly it wasn’t bad. It didn’t feel like British cold as there was very little wind even up the mountains. I believe it's the wind in Britain that makes it so cold. I had also borrowed friends’ thermals and appropriate clothing which helped. If anything, I sometimes felt too hot with the layers on.

So overall my trip was a success and very memorable. I got to help at a special event. I got to meet people who had had transplants, living donors or donor families and hear their success stories and what the games meant to them. The Canadians were so friendly and helpful which was lovely to volunteer alongside them. I am glad I carried through with my plan of volunteering abroad as sometimes it's easy to say no it would be too much effort or money or risk. I gained memories, new experiences and new friends.

Thanks to my donor I get to do things I could have once only dreamed of. If you think transplant sport is for you, I feel you should give it a go!

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.