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— Colleen & Michael Karow

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ADA Has Made Progress, But Much Is Still to Be Done

With this July having been the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I thought it appropriate to examine, and in many cases celebrate, the progress that has been made under ADA relative to providing the full benefits of this society to people with disabilities.

Much of this was the result of lawsuits by private individuals, organizations, and the U.S. Department of Justice under the ADA. But in looking at the progress, there is also much to be concerned about in major areas of life activities, such as employment.

To be sure, there have been many positive developments these past 20 years because of the passage of the ADA. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, in the employment and education arenas, the ADA is lowering the barriers to educational and professional advancement faced by many with disabilities. Discrimination in pension and retirement benefits, along with reasonable accommodations in the workplace and on college campuses, have been attacked and addressed in many instances. In sports, there also has been more access and “reasonable accommodation” in recreation and even in professional sports (e.g., the Casey Martin Golf Case).

Greater accessibility in a wide variety of private-sector settings has been achieved, including shopping, dining, recreation, and business and leisure travel. Large department stores, fitness centers, restaurants, theatre chains, convenience stores, grocery stores, theme parks, gambling venues, even county and state fairs, have removed barriers and made their places more accessible. Rental car agencies have had to provide hand controls and accessible shuttle buses for persons with disabilities. Hotel chains, bus services, and airlines have had to become more accessible. Stadiums must now provide “line of sight” seating to persons with disabilities.

In healthcare, hospitals have been required to provide aids to hearing impaired persons including TTY, interpreters, sign language flash cards, visual alarms, closed-captioning for TVs, and more staff and volunteer sensitivity training.

Although there is obviously much to celebrate in these findings, there is also much to be concerned about for lack of progress. According to a recent survey by the National Organization on Disability, indicators have improved for some measures of 13 key life activities, but have remained static or actually have become worse in others.

For example, measures of disparity between those with and those without disabilities have improved (become less disparate) in education and political participation; but little or no progress has been made in other key areas of life, including employment, poverty levels, socializing, and access to healthcare and transportation.

To be sure, some of this will be addressed slowly by litigation and ADA enforcement activities. However, much will require taking a fresh look at things and developing partnerships that make sense and actually produce results. As an example, Disabled Sports USA commissioned the same survey group NOD did for its surveys, Harris Interactive. What we found in those surveys is that people with disabilities show and claim vast improvement in key areas of life because they are active in sports. This includes over double the employment rate as compared to the general disabled working population; higher levels of fitness; higher levels of life satisfaction and socializing activity. This should compel us all to help promote President Barack and First Lady Michelle Obama’s campaign for fitness and against obesity, because fitness works to promote success in all areas of life! (“If I can do this, I can do anything!”)

Another initiative DSUSA is pursuing is to work with local public and private recreation groups to provide instructor training and the adaptive equipment needed for success with their programs aimed at those with disabilities in their own communities. This is another way to spread services to the broadest possible audience. In that regard, the federal government just issued accessible guidelines to recreation programs and facilities as part of its DOJ Standards for Accessible Design that will provide further guidance on what is a good, recreationally accessible program.

Needless to say, our efforts at Disabled Sports USA take time and funding to achieve success. The employment and sports study with Harris cost more than $100,000 alone. So next time you are thinking of making a difference, please remember DSUSA (www.dsusa.org) in your giving efforts.

Kirk Bauer, JD
Executive Director, Disabled Sports USA, Inc.
Trijicon Incorporated's Logo Guidelines

Color Usage

Colors indicated on this page should only be used in the Trijicon logo.

- PMS 485
  - C: 0
  - R: 238
  - M: 95
  - G: 50
  - Y: 100
  - B: 36
  - K: 0

Black
- C: 0
- M: 0
- Y: 0
- K: 100

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For extreme cases where the logo needs to be sized less than ½” (12.7 mm) just the word can be used, but will need to be approved by Trijicon marketing.

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Welcome New DSUSA Chapters!

DSUSA is pleased to welcome several new chapters to our network, making DSUSA the largest organization promoting and providing sports and recreation opportunities for the disabled. We’re proud – and we hope you are too – to be more than 100 chapters-strong in 38 states.

It’s amazing to see how far we’ve come in 40-plus years. DSUSA started as an organization promoting skiing for amputees from the Vietnam War. Now we encompass all ages and physical disabilities offering a myriad of sports and recreational activities. We’ve championed teaching adaptive sports and are proud that organizations such as the Professional Ski Instructors of America, US Tennis, US Sailing, US Water Skiing, US Kayaking and Canoeing, USA Volleyball, USA Track & Field, and PADI adopted disability sports and continue to train their coaches in adaptations.

Solidifying Partnerships to Get Things Done

At DSUSA headquarters, we are committed to helping our Chapters succeed through education, training, grants, promotion, event management, elite competitions and Paralympic opportunities, and more. The 2008 Chapter Survey helped us define and enhance our chapter services department. We now offer Adapt2Achieve Chapter Development Conferences, expanded summer and winter chapter grant programs, Paralympic Sports Clubs through our partnership with the U.S. Paralympics, and revisions to the insurance program to help chapters continue to grow and expand their programming.

“DSUSA is excited to continue the effort to improve our support of the chapter network. And of course we are always looking to expand the network whenever possible. If you know of an organization that would benefit from becoming a DSUSA Chapter, please contact Cheryl Collins at dsusa@dsusa.org.”

We are hearing from new members that joining DSUSA has benefitted them. Here’s a sampling:

"As an organization we decided to join Disabled Sports USA for their great networking capabilities and event management assistance. The [Adapt2Achieve] event provided me with useful information to help Helen Hayes Hospital Adaptive Sports Program to be more efficient in our event planning and to continue to grow as an organization. With the liability insurance through Disabled Sports USA, we have been able to open our program up to many new activities such as waterskiing and rowing. I want to thank Disabled Sports USA for their continued support of adaptive sports throughout the country. Your help has allowed many individuals to return to active recreational lives."

– Matthew Castelluccio, coordinator, Adaptive Sports Program, Helen Hayes Hospital, West Haverstraw, N.Y.

“For years we have been building our Northwest presence, but the national connection has been missed for way too long – now we have entirely new opportunities and ideas to look forward to.”

– Outdoors for All, Seattle

“After joining Disabled Sports USA it has opened up a multitude of venues and contacts and the educational experiences are second to none.”

The following organizations are the latest additions to the DSUSA chapter network!

**Outdoors for All Foundation: Seattle**
The mission of Outdoors for All Foundation is to enrich the quality of life for children and adults with disability through outdoor recreation. The Outdoors for All Foundation is a national leader and one of the largest nonprofit organizations providing year-round instruction in outdoor recreation for people with physical, developmental, and sensory disabilities. Outdoors for All's year-round programming includes snowboarding, snowshoeing, cross country and downhill skiing, cycling, hiking, river rafting, canoeing and kayaking, waterskiing, rock-climbing, and camping.

**Helen Hayes Rehabilitation Hospital Adaptive Sports Program: West Havertstraw, N.Y.**
Helen Hayes Hospital, a nationally recognized leader in physical rehabilitation medicine, is committed to enabling individuals of all abilities to pursue competitive and recreational sports and activities. Helen Hayes welcomes individuals of all abilities and ages, whether hospital inpatients or outpatients, or those living in the community, to join us in some of many sponsored adapted sports and recreation activities.

**Adaptive Action Sports: South Lake Tahoe, Calif.**
The mission of Adaptive Action Sports is to promote action sport camps, events and programs for youth and young adults living with permanent physical disabilities. Adaptive Action Sports believes that action sports encourage individuality and creativity while building independence and self-confidence. Adaptive Action Sports hosts or participates in several events throughout the year featuring action sports including Adaptive Moto X, Adaptive Skateboarding, Adaptive Wakeboarding and Adaptive Snowboarding.

**Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation: Mercersburg, Pa.**
The mission of Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation is to provide recreational activities and teach sports to mentally and physically challenged children and adults. Two Top aims to promote year-round education and training to provide healthy experiences and activities to our disabled athletes, build confidence and self-esteem that will carry over into everyday life, and provide a supportive and comfortable atmosphere that creates fun experiences for all participants. Two Top offers adaptive skiing programs through Pennsylvania’s Whitetail Ski Resort and also offers summer kayaking and golf programs in the Mercersburg area.

**Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports (STARS): Steamboat Springs, Colo.**
STARS serves adaptive clients from Northwest Colorado, North America, and even England and Australia. Disabilities range from mild and severe cognitive disabilities to visually impaired, birth defects, and spinal cord injuries. It was established in June 2006 and is operated by nine volunteer board members and three part-time staff. As a part of its community inclusion vision, STARS has established a volunteer program with more than 100 volunteers that either assist certified instructors with lessons or help independent participants that may need additional assistance.

Demographics served include youth, adults, and special groups such as Wounded Warriors. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate in all levels of programs from beginner to advanced. Programs and camps offered include downhill skiing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, waterskiing, river trips, fishing, cycling, horse riding and more. Groups served include Sunshine Kids, Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club, Horizons, and local school districts.

**Leaps of Faith Disabled Waterskiers: Sandy Hook, Conn.**
The Leaps of Faith Water Ski Club is an organization that brings waterskiing into the lives of children, adults, and our wounded soldiers with disabilities, in addition to training disabled waterskiers to compete both on a national and international level.
Leaps of Faith holds weekend and weekday waterski clinics throughout the summer. Additionally, Leaps of Faith hold off-site clinics and assist other DSUSA chapters in incorporating waterskiing into Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project events.

As of 2009 Leaps of Faith is also hosting adaptive snow ski clinics. Clinics are open to people with all disabilities at no cost.

**Leaps of Faith Disabled Waterskiers**
90 Housatonic Drive • Sandy Hook, CT 06482
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leapsoffathwaterierskiers.com
Adapt2Achieve Mid-Atlantic

Disabled Sports USA held the second Adapt2Achieve (A2A) Chapter Development Conference June 24-27 at St. Mary’s College of Maryland. More than 50 attendees from 12 DSUSA chapters and 20 other nonprofit, government and community affiliates participated in the conference. Presenters came from across the country to share their expertise with attendees in a number of different topics including event management, youth protection, and social media. Additionally, instructor training was held in four disciplines of adaptive paddling, outrigger canoeing, sprint canoe/kayak, whitewater kayaking, and recreational paddling.

Developed in response to the 2008 Chapter Survey, the goal of the Adapt2Achieve Conferences are to allow chapters a chance to learn best practices and new techniques to strengthen their respective programs and the adaptive sports community as a whole. Adapt2Achieve Conferences are held regionally, and DSUSA plans to hold one in every region by 2012. Adapt2Achieve Mid-Atlantic expanded upon the success of the first event held in August 2008 in Wolfeboro, N.H. Conference fees are kept to a minimum and offered free to the first two members from every chapter in attendance.

Once again the feedback was outstanding. Here is what some of our participants had to say:

“As a chapter president, I am pleased to tell you how proud I am to be associated with Disabled Sports USA... [We] were very impressed with the organization of Adapt2Achieve and truly felt a sense of accomplishment at the end of the session.”
- Jan Whitaker, Cape Ability Outrigger Ohana, Inc.

“Great job with putting this all together! This is a great thing for chapters! DSUSA is providing a fantastic service for chapters to learn and improve, network with experts and people from other chapters.”
- Mark Kulzer, Three Rivers Adaptive Sports

“Thank you and all your staff for the excellent weekend program at St. Mary’s College of Maryland. You opened my eyes to many administrative issues and outreach possibilities for non-profits who serve persons with disabilities. I have a whole new way of seeing possibilities and pit holes.”
- Anastasia Hopkinson, Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating

DSUSA is excited to continue to host these events with A2A Rocky Mountain happening Dec. 4-5 in Breckenridge, Colo., just before The Hartford Ski Spectacular. Details are still being finalized, but the event will focus on administrative topics including risk management, youth protection, fundraising, social media, and marketing. To learn more about A2A Rocky Mountain contact Deidre Frith at dffrith@dsusa.org.
**Congressional Charity Golf Classic**

The Third Annual Congressional Charity Golf Classic to benefit the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project, a partnership between Wounded Warrior Project and DSUSA, took place June 14 at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Va.

Participating in the scramble were Wounded Warriors, teamed with a tournament sponsor and two members of Congress, representing each political party. Co-chairs of the event were former Congressmen Ken Kramer (R-Colo, 1979-87) and Dennis Hertel (D-Mich. 1981-93). Honorary co-chairmen were Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas) and Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-Fla.).


![Retired Spc. Dean Schwartz](image1)

![1st Lieutenant Ryan Kules](image2)

![Congressmen, PGA professionals, and guests join the Wounded Warriors for a day of competition and camaraderie at the Army Navy Country Club.](image3)

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**$1,000 Grants Available to DSUSA Chapters: Nominate the Award Winners for the Jim Winthers Memorial Award, National Disabled Ski Hall of Fame Award**

Three $1,000 grants will be awarded the DSUSA chapters whose members nominate the award winners for the Jim Winthers Memorial Award and the National Disabled Ski Hall of Fame Award.

The Jim Winthers Memorial Award recognizes the lifetime contributions and significant achievements in furthering the mission of DSUSA. Nominees for this award must have contributed a minimum of 10 years of service to DSUSA.

The Jim Winthers Memorial Award is named in honor of Winthers, a WWII veteran who was a member of the U.S. 10th Mountain Division – the Skiing 10th – an elite group specifically trained for alpine warfare. Winthers eventually became the director of the Donner Ski Ranch in Northern California and became a pioneer in teaching adaptive skiing, beginning with two friends who became amputees in the war. Winthers taught them to ski on one leg using techniques he saw in Europe.

The National Disabled Ski Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to disabled skiing in two categories: Recreational/Developmental and Competitive. The award in the Recreational/Developmental category recognizes an individual who has a minimum of five years’ experience in the disabled skiing field and has made a significant contribution to the field, including innovative techniques, specialized equipment, program development, education or public relations.

The award in the Competition category recognizes an individual (participant or coach), who has been active in disabled ski racing for a minimum of three years. Race results, team participations, innovative coaching techniques, and event promotions are considered for this category. Competitive racers and coaches must be retired from active racing or coaching, respectively, for a minimum of three years prior to nomination.

Nominations for both awards can be downloaded at [http://www.dsusa.org/awards-nominations.html](http://www.dsusa.org/awards-nominations.html). Nominations must be received by Sept. 30, 2010.
DSUSA Welcomes Wounded Warrior Dean Schwartz to Staff

Retired Spc. Dean Schwartz, Virginia Army National Guard, has accepted an internship at DSUSA. Schwartz will be splitting his time between the DSUSA headquarters and Walter Reed Army Medical Center, recruiting newly wounded service members for the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project.

While serving with the 276th Engineer Battalion in Mozul, Iraq, Schwartz was injured by a rocket propelled grenade in May 2004. The blast injury resulted in the amputation of his left leg above the knee. While rehabilitating at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), Schwartz participated in many DSUSA programs designed for Wounded Warriors including snow skiing, waterskiing, scuba diving, cycling, surfing, golfing, sailing, fishing, kayaking, and more.

Schwartz received a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Virginia-Wise. While at DSUSA he will be honing his skills in event planning, the logistics of a nonprofit organization and general business.

Our Readers Say...

From time to time, we get emails, letters, and phone calls from readers who want us to know how much they enjoy Challenge Magazine and how information from Challenge was helpful to them.

Here is a sampling:

“TODAY A WOUNDED WARRIOR FOUND A REFERENCE TO (OUR) KAYAK PROGRAM IN CHALLENGE MAGAZINE AND CALLED. HE IS BLIND. SOMEBODY HAS THE CRYSTAL BALL!”

B. F.

“I ENJOY AND APPRECIATE RECEIVING CHALLENGE MAGAZINE EACH QUARTER. YOU ARE DOING GREAT WORK.”

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The High-Fidelity Interface “feels like a part of my body. It grips my limb aggressively, but comfortably.”

– Mike Hart, crew

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*Based on commercially available prosthetic sockets.
**The High-Fidelity Interface is an original design conceived and created by Randall Alley, CEO of biodesigns. If you are a prosthetist and interested in being certified in the HiFi design or hiring us as upper or lower limb consultants, please email ralley@biodesigns.com.
Gold Medalist Soule Gets Married: 2010 Paralympic biathlon bronze medalist Andy Soule, Pearland, Texas, found himself waiting at the altar waiting for his girlfriend of three years, Lauren Preston, to come join him. Soule and Preston were married in Austin June 25.

“It was really wonderful,” said Soule. “I met this magnificent girl Lauren Preston from Austin, who’s now Lauren Soule.”

The couple was married in front of 125 guests on Lake Travis. The backdrop for the ceremony was a summer sunset, complimenting the elegance of the wedding décor. Among the attending guests was U.S. Adaptive Cross Country Head Coach Greg Rawlings.

Following Sept. 11, 2001, Soule enlisted in the Army and was sent to Afghanistan, where an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) amputated both of his legs below the waist. After attending a cross country recruitment camp, Soule found a new passion. Soule took the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver by storm, winning gold in the biathlon, the first U.S. medal of the Games and the first U.S. biathlon medal in both Olympic and Paralympic history.

Soule will attend school this summer, training his mind and body at the same time. Between marriage, school and a recent move, Soule will be busy in the months leading up to the 2010-11 winter season.

Kevin Jardine: Kevin Jardine has been named associate director and head coach of the Paralympic Military and Veterans Alpine Skiing Program. Jardine will collaborate with DSUSA, Paralympic ski programs, and the U.S. Adaptive Alpine Ski Team, to identify and train developmental and emerging injured service members who have the talent to pursue excellence at the Paralympic Games.

ESPY Award Winners: The 2010 ESPY Award in the category of Best Female Athlete with a Disability and Best Male Athlete with a Disability went to Amy Palmiero-Winters and Steve Cash.

Palmiero-Winters is the first amputee to complete the Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run and the first athlete with a disability to compete on Team USA during the World Championship in Brieve, France.

Cash, the goalie for U.S. Sled Hockey team, didn’t allow a single goal for the team in the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, shutting out five opponents. His scoreless run was a first in Paralympic tournament history. Cash is a student at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

More than 30 ESPY’s were awarded to the top athletes in the world at the Nokia Center, Los Angeles, June 14.

Kelly Bruno on ‘Survivor’: Triathlete Kelly Bruno is a member of the 20 castaways who will compete in “Survivor: Nicaragua,” the Emmy Award-winning CBS reality show. Bruno’s triathlete achievements include being the 2008 National Champion and 2008 World Champion. She was also a ball girl at the 2008 U.S. Open, the first amputee to achieve that position. When she’s not competing in triathlons or against other castaways on “Survivor,” Bruno is a medical student at the University of North Carolina.
“The thing about being active is that I don’t want to have to change feet to do all of these different activities. The Blade is very lightweight and comfortable for walking, plus it responds really well to the high energy demands of running.”

- Lee B.

Our most dynamic foot yet, the Elite Blade combines great deflection for running with a free and easy walking action. Low profile version also available.
Veterans Golf Course
Gets Million Dollar Upgrade and a Gift from Jack Nicklaus

American Lake Veterans Golf Course (ALVGC), Lakewood, Wash., the nation’s only golf course designed specifically for the rehabilitation of wounded and disabled veterans, recently opened a new Rehabilitation and Learning Center.

The two-story, 8,400-square-foot R/L Center replaces a structure affectionately called the caddyshack, where golfers checked in for the past 60 years. The new building houses a state-of-the-art full swing golf simulator, a putting area, men’s and women’s locker room, a check-in counter, pro shop and offices. Other amenities are classrooms, conference areas, and seating clusters designed for one-on-one counseling, group sessions and supportive conversations and camaraderie.

The $1.3 million R/L Center is one phase of a $4.5 million capital improvement campaign to update the grounds and facilities, including construction of an additional nine holes, designed by golf legend Jack Nicklaus who is donating his design services, valued at $500,000. He also is serving as honorary co-chair for the fundraising campaign. He is joined by Gen. John Shalikashvili, who served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1993 to 1997, and uses the course as part of his own rehabilitation since suffering a stroke in 2004.

“It has been estimated that as many as eight of every 10 veterans who play the course have experienced some form of post traumatic stress disorder,” said Harold “Pepper” Roberts, founder and president of Friends of American Lake Veterans Golf Course, the facility’s nonprofit fundraising arm. This group includes veterans of Vietnam, Korea, and World War II who serve as mentors for younger veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2009, more than 12,000 rounds of golf were played at ALVGC between April and August. The demand is expected to grow in anticipation of the largest homecoming of veterans in 30 years as service members return from Afghanistan and Iraq.

The existing nine-hole course, built in 1955 on Veterans Administration Hospital Grounds, has been operated and maintained by volunteers since 1995, when federal funds were eliminated for VA courses. ALVGC also has a short 3-hole course for those in wheelchairs and those who are learning the game. Soloriders for the mobility impaired are available.

ALVGC may be used by persons in possession of a Veterans Universal Access Identification Card and guests; all VA employees and retired VA employees and their guests; active duty and retired military with military ID cards and their guests; and VA volunteers with proper identification and their guests. First priority on the course is given to VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

The course is located near Tacoma and Seattle and nearby Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), which has more than 25,000 military and civilian workers. The post supports more than 120,000 military retirees and more than 29,000 family members living both on and off post.

To learn more about the Campaign for American Lake Veterans Golf Course, visit www.friendsofalvgc.com.
Higher Ground to Open Nation’s Largest Non-Medical Rehabilitation and Retreat Center for Wounded Veterans

Higher Ground, a leading provider of veteran rehabilitation services, has announced plans to open the country’s largest non-medical rehabilitation and retreat center for wounded veterans. The organization has made an offer to purchase the Knob Hill Inn, a 29-room luxury hotel in Sun Valley, Idaho. It will be renamed the Higher Ground Center.

The Center will specialize in serving veterans with traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, blindness, and other severe injuries. The Center will offer specialized programming for wounded female veterans, as well as specialized programming for spouses and caregivers.

Founder and chief executive Tom Iselin emphasizes that the Center will provide therapeutic care for both veterans and their spouses. “Family services will be an integral aspect of the care provided,” Iselin said. “We give spouses gold standard therapeutic care, because they often experience just as much trauma as the injured veteran. And we don’t just say ‘good-bye’ when a couple leaves – we follow up with every wounded couple for three years!”

The Center hopes to broaden its specialized treatment for veterans with varying levels of physical and cognitive disabilities by including doctors from military medical centers, such as Balboa Naval Medical. Physicians will be invited to stay for extended periods to care for patients, and conduct research on long-term veteran rehabilitation care.

The Center will host conferences for the veteran rehabilitation industry in a new state-of-the-art conference center, which will be added to the property. There are currently very few best practice standards for rehabilitating wounded veterans, and Higher Ground wants to take a lead role in helping facilitate a national code of standards for long-term care.

Higher Ground has until September 15 to raise $10 million to purchase the Knob Hill Inn. Funds will also be used to build a multi-purpose conference center, finance disabled accessibility improvements, and support first-year programming costs.

Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act Signed into Law

Military veterans, caregivers, members of Congress and others were at the White House when President Obama signed into law the “Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act,” on May 5, 2010.

The “Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act” provides support services to family and other caregivers of veterans, including:

- Educational sessions for improved caregiving;
- Counseling and mental health services;
- Respite care for family and other caregivers of all veterans;
- Healthcare and a stipend for caregivers living with severely wounded veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The bill also takes a number of other steps to help veterans, including:

- Enhancing health services for the 1.8 million women veterans, including care for newborns (for the first time in history);
- Expanding mental health services for veterans and healthcare access for veterans in rural areas;
- Prohibiting copayments for veterans who are catastrophically disabled.

Enactment of the “Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act” has been the highest legislative priority for the Wounded Warrior Project, which worked with Congress for more than a year to win its passage.

The Act was supported by a broad coalition of veterans and military service organizations, including the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), National Military Families Association (NMFA), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).
Texas Welcomes Extremity Games 5

Extremity Games® 5 (eX5) Main Event, an extreme sports competition for athletes living with limb loss and limb difference, was held at the Texas Ski Ranch in New Braunfels, Texas, June 18-19. eX5 Main Event competitions include wakeboarding, skateboarding, kayaking and rock climbing, as well as clinics in these sports and mixed martial arts. Top finishers in the events include:

**Wakeboarding**
1st place, Billy Tonis; 2nd place, Mike Schultz; 3rd place, Brando Robins
Extremity Games veteran Tonis owned first place with insane air and tricks above the wake. Schultz landed some smooth wake-to-wake maneuvers and pulled out a second place finish. Newcomer Robins held and landed the longest layout to take third.

**Skateboarding**
1st place, Stephen Shope; 2nd place, Oscar Loreto; 3rd place, Alex Miller
Shope grinded every rail on the course with flare to grab first place. Loreto aired off a funbox to snag second place. Miller, the youngest athlete at the event, sat skated his way to third place.

**Kayaking**
Men and Women
1st place, Mike Schultz, Kelly Allen; 2nd place, Jim Wazny, Brooke Artesi; 3rd place, Jeff Waldmuller, Amy Purdy
Schultz and Allen took first place by creating wakes that could put some power boats to shame. Wazny and Artesi propelled themselves like human-powered machines through the water and collared second place. Third place was a hard fought contest that netted awards for newcomer Waldmuller and Purdy.

**Rock Climbing**
Men and Women
1st place, Jeff Waldmuller, Brooke Artesi; 2nd place, Alex Miller, Kelly Allen; 3rd place, Horst Behner
Climbers Waldmuller and Artesi scaled the walls with speed that could cause altitude sickness while Miller and Kelly grabbed second place finishes with the grace of seasoned climbers. Horst Behner snuck up the final route to hold on to the third place finish in the men’s competition.

Golf and More at National Veterans TEE Tournament

Approximately 200 military veterans with disabilities are expected to hit the golf course at the 2010 National Veterans TEE (Training, Exposure, and Experience) Tournament to prove that being blind or having a disability won’t stop them from playing golf, or leading a full and active life.

Presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Tournament is a unique event that gives veterans with disabilities a chance to develop new skills and build self-esteem through adaptive golf, bowling, kayaking, and other recreational activities.

This year’s participants are staying at the Riverside Casino and Golf Resort, using five golf courses in the area. Those attending include Operation Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Veterans; combat injured participants; female veterans; World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, and Gulf War veterans; veterans who are blind, spinal cord injured, or have other disabling conditions.
UCO Hosts 24 Countries During Sitting Volleyball Worlds

The 2010 WOVD Sitting Volleyball World Championships were held July 10-18 at the University of Central Oklahoma. The competition featured 33 Men’s and Women’s national teams from 24 countries spanning five continents. 2010 Worlds served as a Paralympic Games qualifier for the top three teams in the Men’s and Women’s competitions.

The 24 countries brought approximately 550 athletes, coaches and delegates into Oklahoma. Countries represented included Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Rwanda, China, India, I.R. Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Russia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Serbia and Ukraine, Brazil, Canada, and the United States.

UCO became an official U.S. Olympic and Paralympic training site in July 2009. The university is an Olympic training site in the sports of volleyball and archery and can train any Paralympic sport. The university currently hosts 12 resident Paralympic athletes in the sports of sitting volleyball, archery and track & field.

For more information about Central’s Paralympic events, contact Leigha Joiner, event specialist for Central’s Wellness Center at (405) 974-3160 or ljoiner1@uco.edu.

11th Annual Endeavor Games

The 2010 University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) Endeavor Games for Athletes with Physical Disabilities had a record number of participants with more than 400 sport participants from 30 states and four countries.

The Games were held June 10-13 on the UCO campus and the Edmond North High School track facility. The UCO Endeavor Games are the nation’s largest multi-sport competition for athletes with physical disabilities of all ages.

The 2010 Games hosted sport clinics, sponsored by U.S. Paralympics, June 10 including, for a first time, an adaptive rock climbing clinic at Rocktown Climbing Gym.

Endeavor Games competitions, held June 11-13, were in the sports of powerlifting, table tennis, wheelchair basketball, swimming, sitting volleyball, cycling, wheelchair track & field, ambulatory track & field, indoor archery, outdoor archery, and shooting.

The 2010 Opening Celebration was held at the Oklahoma City RedHawks game. The Triple-A affiliate of the Texas Rangers hosted “UCO Endeavor Games Night” during their game against the Albuquerque Isotopes.

UCO Endeavor Games Night was held in conjunction with the Limbs for Life Limb Drive. The group collected prosthetics for Limbs for Life to be refurbished and donated.

Next year’s Endeavor Games will be held June 9-12, 2011.

For more information about the UCO Endeavor Games for Athletes with Physical Disabilities visit www.UCOEndeavorGames.com or contact Leigha Joiner, event specialist for Central’s Wellness Center, at (405) 974-3160 or ljoiner1@uco.edu.
The Gift of Giving

You never realize how truly blessed you are until something threatens to take it all away. We all experience some form of this threat in our lives at some point. But in my opinion, it’s about finding the positive out of that threat, which truly defines who we are. For almost everyone, 9/11 was an extremely devastating American tragedy. For me, it hit a little closer to home. My father is a NYC firefighter and was on duty the day of September 11. I am so blessed to say that he is all right, but nevertheless has suffered, as did many. Even though it was such a terrible day, something positive did come out of it. Something so positive, that it has greatly changed my outlook on life.

After the fires were extinguished and the dust settled at Ground Zero, the compassion in Americans started to shine through. There were so many individuals and organizations reaching out to help the NYC Fire Department endure their loss of 343 heroes. An organization called Disabled Sports USA was no exception. Their generous invitation for our family to attend The Hartford Ski Spectacular ignited so many passions within us; passions we never thought we’d experience. My sister, who is visually impaired, realized her passion for the sport of skiing, which led her to compete in all five alpine events at the 2010 Winter Paralympic Games in Vancouver. My passion, maybe not as glamorous as my sister’s, was not any less significant. Seeing these people volunteer to bring joy to the lives of those who may not have as much, touched me deeply. I knew from that moment on, that was what I needed to do. As my sister trained at the Adaptive Sports Foundation in Windham, N.Y., I became a volunteer ski instructor. I cannot express the joy I get when I take Billy, a seven-year-old with autism, skiing for the morning. Seeing the grin on his face is worth everything to me. Volunteering for organizations whose mottos are “If I can do this, I can do anything,” “Making possibilities for people with disabilities,” and “Changing lives through sports,” you realize quickly that these are not just slogans on a banner, but truths that are made possible by giving spirits and to know that I played a small part is a true honor.

This year was my junior year of high school. Between AP courses, and SATs and ACTs, it is overwhelming. My mom had signed me up to only volunteer for the minimum eight days, knowing how much stress I was going to have to deal with. To me, it didn’t matter what else I had going on, I knew that I needed to do my part to bring happiness to these children’s lives, even if it was just for a few hours on the ski hill. I wound up volunteering every weekend that season and I loved every minute of it.

This all started after 9/11, but this wasn’t the only thing that positively changed my life from that day. FDNY and NYPD did their part in protecting Americans here in New York and they did an amazing job, but then the American military grabbed the ball and ran with it and are continuing to do an amazing job protecting Americans. I am so lucky not to lose my father to that horrific act of terrorism that day, or to any act after, and I have them to thank for that. I owe them so much and I am truly grateful for all they do for us. I teach amputee soldiers coming back from Iraq how to ski and water ski. A few years ago at one of our water ski events here in New York, a soldier who had just come back from Iraq missing two legs and an arm wanted to water ski. On the second try, he was waterskiing! To see the smile on his face, and the sparkle return to his eyes, was one of the most amazing things. In that moment, he realized that his life was not even close to being over. In that moment, he felt more powerful, more alive and more joyful than ever before. In that moment, he realized that if he could do this, he could do anything.
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ascent in climate
to extreme alpine
abled veterans from
ed reaching the top
Tanzania, Africa.
Sponsored by DSUSA and the Challenged Athletes Foundation, the three climbers from Disabled Sports USA’s Warfighter Sports program included executive director of DSUSA, retired Sgt. Kirk Bauer, 62, single above knee amputee injured in Vietnam; retired Army Sgt. Neil Duncan, 26, Denver, a double leg amputee injured in Afghanistan; and retired Army Staff Sgt. Dan Nevins, 37, Jacksonville, Fla., a double below knee amputee injured in Iraq.

The climbers, escorted by Masai Giraffe Safaris guide group, chose the Rongai route on the northeast side of the mountain. The group began their climb early in the morning, and typically finished by early afternoon, a strategy necessary to acclimate to the high altitude.

Below are excerpts from a journal kept by Bauer as he made the climb.

**Day 1**: Reached 8,500 foot elevation in three hours. There is still a lot of vegetation at this level. We were near a corn field when suddenly some screaming from the trees to our right. There were blue monkeys and Colobus monkeys with long white manes jumping from tree to tree. It was absolutely spectacular.

**Day 2**: A four-hour climb to 11,800 feet. Today’s climb was much tougher with relentless large and loose rocks to climb over and through. Neil had a tough time with his above knee/below knee double amputation. The theme today was “No Rocks Rock” because on the stretches where there were no rocks, we could really travel. We are definitely getting close to tree lines and high points for vegetation.

**Day 3**: Arrived at Third Cave Camp at about 13,000 feet elevation. Today’s climb was very steep and difficult for shorter distances and then long hikes through alpine meadows. The nights are now very cold, below freezing, and days will still hot, in the 70s and 80s. We are really happy to bundle up at night. Tomorrow’s climb will get harder and longer.

**Day 4**: Today we climbed to 15,500 feet to Kibo Hut. This is the highest any of us has ever climbed. Rest and staying warm are extremely important now. At 14,500 feet we left vegetation of any type. Now it is just rock, sand and gravel. Dan’s inflamed residual limb caused him a great deal of pain on his fourth day. A few times he felt like quitting, but pushed through the pain. He will now take the next 14 hours to rest his right limb.
Day 5: We attempted to climb to the crater at the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro. This is a 3,000 foot-plus elevation climb in a very short distance, so the path is steep and rocky with much loose rock and large boulders at the top to climb around. We started before dawn with headlamps.

After a full day of climbing, we reached the rim of the crater at 19,300 feet and decided to move on to Stella Point at over 19,000 feet. We camped there for the night. Most climbers are not allowed to camp this high but must return to Kibo or below after reaching the summit. We have a special handicapped permit to allow us to camp here.

Day 6: After a very cold and windy night, we rose at sunrise and climbed the remaining distance to the summit at Mt. Uhuru overlooking the crater at 19,345 feet. The view was absolutely spectacular with the crater on one side of the summit and the large ice fields of the permanent glacier on the other. Mt. Meru, the sister mountain of Kilimanjaro, could be seen from the summit.

The climb back down to Kibo Hut turned out to be as physically exhausting as the climb up. For an amputee, climbing downhill requires a great deal of work by the thigh muscles to control the artificial leg. We also had to negotiate a large field of loose rock called scree, which you literally surf down. There were some pretty spectacular falls and summersaults when our artificial feet got buried in the scree.

Continued on next page >>
Day 6 cont’d: Dan came down with severe fever, shakes, congestion and cough. Fearing high-altitude sickness, our guide had him taken down to lower altitude in a stretcher. This is a big steel mesh stretcher on one wheel that the rangers literally run down the mountain. The rangers and guide moved him into the town of Arusha at 5,500 feet.

Day 7: Descent to Mandara camp at 9,000 feet, a 6,500 foot drop in one day. Much rockier and more difficult than anticipated.

As a result the day ended up being a 14-hour descent with the last three hours walking in darkness in the rain forest. The Celebes monkeys were making a racket and we had just seen a puma like cat in the brush.

Neil likened it to two Bataan Memorial Marches (36 miles through the desert) back-to-back. Our thighs felt like hot bricks. And all were sore.

Day 8: The last day we hiked through a beautiful rain forest that was filled with exotic plants, hanging moss, blue monkeys and beautiful flowers. We finally reached Marangu Gate, the official end of our climb.

I cannot even begin to convey the exhilaration of finally reaching that cold windy summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro and then finally descending to Marangu Gate to make our climb official.

- Kirk Bauer
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Introducing an online community for people affected by amputation and limb deficiency. Password-protected and monitored for your safety. If you’ve been there, you should be here.
Archery is a sport accessible to just about everyone with a disability, including the visually impaired. While it is not only fun to challenge yourself to hitting the target, it’s also physically beneficial, increasing body strength, focus, flexibility, and attention skills.
Archery is a sport that almost anyone can compete in. It can be done just for fun, for hunting, or for competition. It can be done if a person is young or old! It’s usually fairly easy to adapt - and the thrill of hitting the bull’s-eye is unforgettable,” said Randi Smith, U.S. Paralympic Archery Team head coach.

Archery instructors, shooting ranges, and classes abound. The best way to try archery is to make inquiries at local clubs and organizations that either have programs or members willing to provide one-on-one instruction. A good starting point to search out instruction is the USA Archery Association to find a certified coach, according to Glen Harris, CSA, USAA Level 4 National Coach Director. Harris is also the National Chairperson of Disabled Archery USA. “A certified coach can make an evaluation and be able to give direction on how it can be done. Do not think you cannot do it; we’ll find a way,” Harris said.

Adaptive Equipment

For most people, very little adaptive equipment is necessary, but of course, it depends on the ability.

“Some common adaptations include a stand or stool to sit on, a mouth tab for an archer who can only use one arm, or a mechanical release,” Smith said. “Many able-bodied archers also use a mechanical release.”

Mouth tabs enable a shooter to steady the bow with his hand and pull the string back with his mouth. Devices and shooting rests can be mounted to a wheelchair or a tripod to secure a rifle or bow in place while the archer readsies to shoot. Slings and shoulder straps that fit snugly to the body can also help shooters with disability carry and support equipment.

According to Harris, quadriplegics with very little or no arm function can use a crossbow mounted on a gun rest. Although crossbow cocking devices are available to simplify the process, cocking still requires considerable upper body strength. For those persons, an electronic cocking device is available.

Archers with significant upper extremity disability are allowed to utilize a device to secure the bow to the hand. These devices may be as sophisticated as a universal cuff or as simple as tying or bandaging the bow to the hand of the archer. Additionally, persons with significant upper extremity disability are allowed to have a person rock (the part of the arrow having a notch for a bowstring) the arrow onto the bow.

“There are always more possibilities than limitations,” Harris said. Many wheelchair archers require no equipment modifications, but position themselves at a ninety-degree angle from the target and may remove the front armrest to allow increased draw of the bowstring.

Visually impaired archers can have a foot locator to enable them to stand at the correct point, a tactical aiming device, and spotter, who help the VI archer line up and call the result of arrow strikes.

“Archery is an awesome sport for people with disabilities; it readily lends itself to adaptations that are very compatible to the game as developed

Target archery has been a Paralympic sport for more than 30 years and is governed by the Federation of International Target Archery (FITA). The rules and scoring are the same as in the Olympics.

There are basically four classes in Paralympic Archery with divisions for men and women. Sometimes two divisions may be combined. The divisions are based on physical classifications. Athletes have to be officially classified before they shoot internationally. The classification is done by physical therapists and other professionals.

W1 (AR1) Archers: Have some sort of disability that effects both their upper and lower body. They use a wheelchair for mobility, and have some sort of function loss in their hands and/or arms. Most W1 archers shoot compound bows, but they cannot have peep sights or magnifying sights. There is a maximum weight of 45 pounds for men; 35 pounds for women.

W2 (AR2) Archers: Use a wheelchair for mobility but have good hand and arm function. W2 archers shoot recurve bows from wheelchairs, following FITA rules.

W3 Archers (ARST): Archers with a physical disability who shoot from a standing position. Many of the archers use a stool or some sort of support, but their feet are on the ground. They shoot recurve bows, following FITA rules.

Open Compound: Archers who fit into one of the above categories, but choose to shoot a compound bow following FITA rules. FITA rules allow a peep sight in the string, a magnifying sight, a mechanical release, and a maximum weight of 60 pounds.

More information about classifications can be found at http://www.paralympic.org/release/Summer_Sports/Archery/About_the_sport/Rules/index.html

Rounds

A FITA round is 4 distances with 36 arrows shot at each distance. The two longest distances use a 122 cm target (about 48”); the two shorter distances use an 80 cm target (about 36”). Distances are 90, 70, 50, and 30 meters for men; 70, 60, 50, and 30 meters for women and W1 shooters.

All 70 meter rounds, Olympic rounds, and team rounds are held at 70 meters.

Harris noted the learning curve to reaching elite level could be three to five years of intense training, including daily shooting, aerobic and strength training and learning the FITA rules.
Continued from previous page

for able-bodied persons,” said Harris. “It’s individual specific.”
Bow lengths and weights vary considerably. Bow lengths vary from four to six feet; it is generally recommended that persons in wheelchairs and children utilize a 48-inch bow. Draw weights range from a 10 to 15 pound bow for a child under 10 years old to a 30 to 40 pound bow for teenage boys and men.

Individuals wishing to hunt start with bows weighing between 40 and 50 pounds. “The basic skill set for bow hunting and target archery is exactly the same,” Smith said. “The difference is in the equipment and the precision necessary. Most bowhunters don’t shoot beyond 40-50 yards while Paralympic competition is at 70 meters with some competitions out to 90 meters (100 yards).

“Archery allows everyone success at some level. Not everyone goes into archery to be a Paralympian, but it can be fun at whatever level a person chooses,” she said. “The easiest way to find out is to give archery a try. Most archery clubs and pro shops will help people get started. Events like the Endeavor Games in Oklahoma offer clinics for people to give it a try.”

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Additional Resources

- American Disabled Archers: www.americanabledarchers.com
- ActiveAmp.org: www.activeamp.org/sports/archery.htm
- Disabled Archery: www.da-usa.org
  (at press time, this site was under construction)
- DSUSA Chapters: http://www.dsusa.org/chapter.html
- International Archery Federation: www.archery.org
- National Center on Physical Activity & Disability: www.ncpad.org
- Physically Challenged Bowhunters of America: www.pcba-inc.org
- Salt Lake Archery Company: www.xmission.com
- UCO Sports & Recreation (Endeavor Games): www.ucoendeavorgames.com
- United States Association of Blind Athletes: www.usaba.org/Pages/sportsinformation/sportsadaptations.html
- US Paralympics/Archery: www.usparalympics.org/sports/summer-paralympics=sports/archery
- USA Archery: www.usarchery.org

Steps to Hitting the Target

Each one of these steps is possible by any disabled person; it is a matter of adjusting position, tweaking equipment, and having an aide if needed.

Stance: Must be able to consistently stand in the same place in the same position. One foot on each side of the shooting line. Wheelchair users should place one wheel on each side of the line.

Nock: Get the arrow out of the quiver, turn it around, place it on the string, keep it on the arrow rest, and get a release on the string.

Set: Get the bow into upright position, get bow hand and drawing hands in position, get fingers on string and position shoulder.

Pre-Draw: Sight the target and begin to pull.

Draw: Keep the sight on the target and continue pulling.

Anchor: Draw the string to the front of your chin. Continue to draw smoothly without stopping.

Aim: Keep the string lined up with the center of the bow. Continue a smooth gradual draw.

Release: Release the bow, but keep the bow towards the target as you release.

Follow Through: Drawing hand continues back beside the neck with fingers relaxed; bow arm continues extension toward the target; maintain follow-through until the arrow hits the target.
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• Understanding the USSA coach certification process
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• Youth and Wounded Warriors: interested in the alpine race program, contact Deidre Firth for an application, dfirth@dsusa.org;
• Adapt2Achieve Rocky Mountain: Contact Deidre Firth for an application, dfirth@dsusa.org. Package includes two free slots in two-day administrative track, three nights lodging, and some meals;
• Bridging the Gap – Recreation to Competition: For an application, contact Kathy Laffey, klaffey@dsusa.org. Recipients receive ground transportation to and from airport, one night lodging, one-day lift ticket, registration for full-day clinic, and some meals.

For detailed information, contact DSUSA at (301) 217-9839 or email info@dsusa.org. Online registration is at www.dsusa.org; click on The Hartford Ski Spectacular logo.
Racing down the slopes after a freshly fallen snow is a nice image for many wounded warriors, especially if they did this prior to being injured. However, one might have doubts about doing such a thing after being hurt; there may be questions like: Is it possible? Is it safe? CAN I do it? Well, Latseen Benson and Heath Calhoun are not only proof that it can be done, but also testaments that wounded warriors can excel at skiing.

Retired Sergeant Latseen Benson was wounded on November 13, 2005 by an IED in Iraq. Benson, whose wife Jessica describes him as “intense,” is a bilateral amputee with left and right above-the-knee amputations. This “ski junkie” would never leave the mountain if he didn’t have to.

How did you become interested in skiing and what do you like most about it?
LB: “Ten weeks after I was injured, I was invited to Windham Mountain for a ski weekend. After lying in a hospital bed and sitting in a wheelchair, the feeling of going down a mountain was amazing. I was hooked from the very first time. The pure adrenaline rush and speed of going down the mountain is the best part of skiing.”

What are your ultimate aspirations in skiing?
LB: “I would like to make the U.S. Adaptive Ski Team and represent our country once again. However, this time it will be at the Paralympics and not on the battlefield.”

What advice do you have for service members just starting out in the sport?
LB: “Take the opportunities that are given to you. Don’t think you can’t do it just because you’re missing limbs or can’t walk or see. Listen to your instructors and trust in what they say.”

Do you have any training tips you would like to share?
LB: “Try to improve on one thing every time you’re on a mountain, whether it’s turning, [speeding up/ slowing down], or stopping. [Lastly,] listen to what people tell you. Even if they’re not in the same equipment as you [listen, because] you may be able to adapt the information to your needs.”

Do you have any advice on the types of equipment to buy or not to buy?
LB: “Try as many different pieces of equipment as you can before you buy something. Even if you like something very soon, keep looking. It’s okay to go back to what you liked but it [is not good] when you find something better down the road. Also, talk to the racers and look at what they’re wearing and using. [Lastly,] don’t over purchase ski clothes. Being in a mono ski, you can’t be bundled up so much to where you can’t move.”

Injured by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq on November 3, 2007, retired Staff Sergeant Heath Calhoun is a bilateral, above-the-knee amputee. A 2010 Paralympian, Calhoun not only competed with the Alpine Skiing team back in March, but he also was selected as the American flag bearer for the Winter Paralympics in Vancouver.

How did you become interested in skiing and what do you like most about it?
HC: “I was at Walter Reed and I started to hear about a couple of ski trips they had available. That sparked my interest. Initially, [since] I was in a wheelchair and couldn’t walk, [skiing] was the first thing that made me feel like I had my legs back. I could do the same slopes, and the chairlift; everything was the same as everyone else that was skiing. At this point, I just enjoy the feeling of coming down the mountain and making turns.”

Where is your favorite place to ski?
HC: “The four mountains in Aspen. It’s a lot of terrain out [in Aspen] and you can find anything you want [out there].”

What advice do you have for service members just starting out in the sport?
HC: “Skiing is something I didn’t think I was going to like [because] I didn’t want to be in a mono ski. Then the first time I got into it, I just fell in love with it. So, try everything that is available to you [because] you never know what you’re going to love.”

Do you have any tips with regard to training, buying equipment, or securing grants?
HC: “[In terms of training,] you have to listen to the instructors and try to do what [they] tell you to do, [because] it really helps. [In terms of equipment,] the VA provides mono skis and outriggers. The Challenged Athlete Foundation provides grants [directly through their website, www.challengedathletes.org. You can go to the site and put in a grant request.]”

“The pure adrenaline rush and speed of going down the mountain is the best part of skiing.”
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Endolite Introduces Lighter-Weight EliteVT Foot

Endolite introduces the EliteVT foot for the ultimate in versatility, shock absorption, rotation and stability in one compact package.

Features include:
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For more information, call Endolite, (800) 548-3534 or visit www.endolite.com. Also available in pediatric sizes.

Össur Expands its Cushion Liner Family

Össur’s most popular IceroS® liners – Comfort, Dermo, and Synergy – are now available with either locking or cushion suspension options. Each of these new liners now offer a more comfortable, softer distal silicone cap, which makes them better suited to conform to complex distal end shapes. A simple to use, durable solution for anyone looking for the ideal cushion liner. IceroS cushion liners are recommended for use with the IceroS Sleeve. For more information, visit www.ossur.com or call (800) 233-6263.

New High-Tech Socket Improves Performance

A technologically-advanced socket – the High-Fidelity Interface from biodesigns inc. – improves comfort and functionality for persons with limb loss. The High-Fidelity Interface for both upper and lower limb applications offers a radical departure from the traditional model in that it imparts a high level of intrinsic bone control as the interface captures and reproduces skeletal motion. Benefits include a more efficient, better performing and more comfortable socket with increased prosthesis stability, more energy efficiency, and tactile feedback. For more information visit www.biodesignsinc.com.
Össur Launches New RHEO KNEE with Multiple Advantages
The new and improved RHEO KNEE, the latest addition to Össur’s innovative Bionic line, now offers a higher weight limit (275 pounds), increased torque, faster swing speed, and improved aesthetics. Thanks to its low build height, the RHEO KNEE is compatible with the entire Össur Flex-Foot line. Together they deliver maximum dynamics and a natural gait experience. As always, the RHEO KNEE recognizes and responds immediately to changes in speed, load, and terrain, restoring the user’s ability to walk naturally, comfortably, and confidently at any speed. For more information, visit www.ossur.com or call (800) 233-6263.

Some Things Just ‘Click’: Unique Threadless Valves Click Into Place
Here’s a new, easier way to ensure a secure fit with your socket: Otto Bock’s PushValve and MagValve simply click into place. These breakthrough valves avoid cross threading that occurs with traditional valves. And the audible click alerts you when the seal is locked into place. Ask your prosthetist about the PushValve or MagValve from Otto Bock – and get clicking for more security!

New Transfemoral Liner by Ohio Willow Wood
The Alpha® AK Locking Liner with symmetrical gel style features hybrid gel, which has a higher durometer that combines durability with comfort.

The liner features 9 mm distal gel thickness and 2.5 mm anterior/posterior gel thickness. This symmetrical design of the gel allows the liner to be rotated for extended wear.

The liner utilizes one-way stretch fabric that stretches circumferentially allowing for easy donning of the liner and provides tissue compression without applying uncomfortable pressure on the limb. The one-way stretch fabric limits liner elongation which controls pistoning without requiring a rigid distal matrix.

The Alpha AK Locking Liner with symmetrical gel style also features a flexible accordion umbrella that blends with a patient’s anatomy for almost unnoticeable feeling.

For information, ask your prosthetist or contact: Ohio Willow Wood at (800) 848-4930 or www.owwco.com.

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Kyle Otto, STRIDE’s Paralympic Hopeful

Editor’s Note: In the last issue of Challenge, we informed readers about the opportunities of being a member of the Paralympic Sport Club network. In this issue, STRIDE Adaptive Sports, a Paralympic Sport Club member, provided a profile of an up and coming athlete who has found a niche in adaptive shooting and has been nominated as an emerging U.S. Paralympic athlete.

From his elementary school years, Kyle Otto, 15, of Valatie, N.Y., has tried it all: biking, skiing, whitewater rafting, snowboarding. Kyle has cerebral palsy with hemiplegia and sports are often difficult for him without adaptive equipment. But recently, Kyle has discovered his true passion and his natural ability in one main sport: adaptive shooting. As quickly as he started, Kyle has enjoyed the sweet smell of success. Six months and twelve days after touching a gun for the first time, Kyle Otto won the West Virginia Disabled Regional Air Rifle Championships, took home second place honors at the Northeastern Regionals in Boston, competed in the 16th Annual West Virginia Challenged Sportsman’s Games as well as the NRA Disabled Air Rifle Regional Championship, which drew competitors from as far away as Texas and New York.

Until October 2009, Kyle had never touched a gun in his life. Before that, the Otto’s were an anti-gun family. That all changed after Kyle attended the NRA Adaptive Shooting Clinic, hosted by STRIDE Adaptive Sports in Albany, N.Y. A not-for-profit volunteer organization, STRIDE Adaptive Sports has been dedicated to enriching the lives of children and individuals with disabilities through sports and recreation programs since 1985, and a place where the Otto family has found continued support, encouragement and opportunity for their son. “We went from being an anti-gun household to having a practice range in the basement!” joked Kyle’s dad, Bruce. “All we wanted for Kyle was for him to find a hobby that he loved. Once he did, there was no looking back. We knew we had to commit to this for him.”

Through his stellar performances at each regional event, Kyle has proven and demonstrated his own commitment. A regional is held in five stages of fire. There are 20 shots fired in each of three positions – prone, offhand and kneeling – followed by 40 prone, totaling 100 shots, and an aggregate score of 1,000. At the West Virginia National Competition in June, Kyle led with a score of 892 out of 1,000, edging out the competition ranging from experienced shooters from Ohio, Texas and West Virginia.

Mary Ellen Whitney, STRIDE’s CEO, has seen the progression and passion Kyle has for Adaptive Shooting, and has nominated him as an emerging athlete for the U.S. Paralympics. STRIDE is a designated U.S. Paralympic Sport Club, and Whitney believes Kyle has a great chance to make the team in future years. “I’ve known Kyle since he was in second grade, and his intense personality to succeed is innate. But Kyle struggled with the appearance differences in sports where he needed adaptive equipment. His commitment to his newfound passion in shooting is different. It’s natural, and he can focus his attention to success in competition by committing to practicing at home.”

The commitment has certainly paid off.

Contributed by Mary Ellen Whitney, CEO, STRIDE Adaptive Sports.

Bart Center Paddling and Cycling Trips in Southern Vermont

The Bart J. Ruggiere Adaptive Sports Center offers paddling and cycling opportunities in Southern Vermont, providing magnificent fall foliage views to participants. Cycling routes include both flat and hilly areas and paddling is on flat water as well as more adventurous day trips down the Battenkill River. Adaptive equipment, including handcycles, is available. Other fall and winter activities include:

- The NO LIMITS bicycle tour, Saturday, Sept. 18. Fees are: $30 for the 100-mile century ride, 60-mile and 30-mile recreational ride; $15 per person for the nine-mile family recreational ride. There is no fee for handcyclers. A barbeque is included. Online registration is at www.bikereg.com.
- Adaptive ski lessons and equipment, Sun Mountain, Bromley Ski Resort. Contact the Bart Center for dates and fees.

Reservations are required for all activities. Visit www.bartcenter.com, email bartcenter@comcast.net or call (802) 824-5522 ext. 430; summer and fall (802) 447-1054.

The Bart Center helps its clients in getting out and enjoying the outdoors. Its motto: The only limits that you have are the limits that you set.
Higher Ground Fly-Fishing, Fall 2010

The Higher Ground program of Sun Valley Adaptive Sports is hosting fly-fishing events in September and October for active-duty military and veterans.

Sun Valley’s staff of therapists, in collaboration with the world-class guides of local Silver Creek Outfitters, has organized six day trips offering premier adaptive fly-fishing in local ponds, creeks and rivers.

“Recognizing the sport’s over-arching benefits, our philosophy aligns with the age-old adage that men and women ‘go fishing all of their lives without knowing it is not fish they are after,’” noted Kate Weihe, Sun Valley Adaptive Sports operations manager and volunteer coordinator.

“These camps allow the veterans to pursue a lifelong sport, embrace the serenity of their surroundings, and gain the skills and knowledge needed to continue in their home communities.”

Upon his departure, one service member who felt at first he was too disabled to fish, noted that he caught the “biggest fish ...on the Big Wood River in a year! I now feel more ‘able’ than ever!”

The Higher Ground program of Sun Valley Adaptive Sports is designed to use various types of sports, family and coping strategies to heal, inspire, and rehabilitate men and women of the armed forces who have been wounded in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terror. The program specializes in serving active-duty military and veterans with traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder and blindness. The program also serves those who have suffered spinal cord injuries and amputations.

The goal of these events is to not only aim for success in the physical sense of sports and recreation, but also to allow the participants to return to their daily lives with a renewed sense of independence, restored self-confidence, an eagerness to improve relationships, and the ability to cope with stresses. The events also include caregivers for the week of rehabilitation and restoration.

“We recognize the important roles the caregivers play in the recovery efforts of wounded veterans, and also believe they undergo just as much trauma during the recovery and reintegration. This is why we include caregivers at every Higher Ground event and pay all of their costs to travel and participate,” said Weihe.

The Higher Ground program is made possible by local supporters and contributors, along with the unwavering support of Disabled Sports USA. All events are five-to-six days and are free to veterans and caregivers.

For more information about Higher Ground and its year-round events, visit www.hgvets.org or call Kate Weihe at (208)726-9298 ext 151.
ASA Offers Learn-to-Ski Scholarships

Most of the time it’s not about the strength, motivation or the ability to ski – the challenge is getting there. Adaptive Sports Association (ASA), Durango, Colo., has helped people “get there” for more than 25 years with Learn-to-Ski scholarship weeks.

Learn-to-Ski scholarships include transportation, lodging, meals, lift tickets, lessons and equipment rentals. The typical scholarship recipient stays for six days with four days of snow sport instruction in two-track, three-track and four-track skiing, snowboarding, mono-skiing, bi-skiing, ski biking and more. The following scholarships are available and can be applied for at www.asadurango.com.

• Alcon Blind/VI Veteran’s Scholarship for blind and visually-impaired military injured in Iraq, Afghanistan and other recent conflicts.
• Dave Spencer Memorial Scholarship, in memory of ASA founder, Dave Spencer, who lost his leg to cancer. Ideal candidates are those who have an amputation or limbs at risk related to cancer. Five full scholarships are awarded every year.
• Madison West Kiwanis Club Scholarship, available to Madison, Wis.-area residents with disabilities.
• Torrey Pines Kiwanis Scholarship, available to San Diego, Calif., residents with various disabilities.
• Veteran’s Scholarship for military severely injured in Iraq, Afghanistan and other recent conflicts.
• Individual scholarships to people with varying disabilities available on an as-needed basis.

For more information on Learn-to-Ski scholarships, general winter program questions or other areas of programming including summer adventures, contact Ann Marie Meighan at annmarie@asadurango.com.

TASP’s Off-Road Arm-Bike Adventure

Telluride Adaptive Sports’ (TASP) premier off-road arm-bike adventure, the Moab Mania Off-Road Arm-Bike Event, will take place Sept. 25-28 in Moab, Utah. Designed for those who desire a high-end athletic experience, TASP will host four rides in the Moab area, including world famous Gemini Bridges and Monitor and Merrimac Buttes. Bikers will experience views of sandstone formations, natural bridges, canyons and the Colorado River. Participants do not need to be experienced one-off riders, but should be at a reasonably high fitness level because these are demanding rides.

Overnight camping will be on the Colorado River at the fully accessible Riverside Oasis campground. The site has full bathroom and shower facilities and is located at the North end of Moab, positioned at the trail head of point-to-point rides and slick rock loops.

The $500 cost includes all camp, food, activity fees charged by the Bureau of Land Management, and any support needed to have successful rides.

For more information, contact Tim McGough or Courtney Stuecheli at director@tellurideadaptivesports.org or (970) 728-3524.

“HAD I NOT THE GREAT FORTUNE TO LEARN TO SKI THROUGH YOUR PROGRAM, I WOULD NOT HAVE EXPERIENCED ALL THE GREAT WONDERS THAT CAME INTO MY LIFE AS A RESULT. AS MY SELF-CONFIDENCE GREW, SO DID MY WILL TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF.”
2010 Learn-to-Ski Scholarship Recipient
Grammy Winners Vince Gill, Amy Grant and PGA Pro Fred Funk
Headline Benefit for Challenge Aspen

Music legends Vince Gill and Amy Grant, PGA Pro Fred Funk and Nancy C. & Richard R. Rogers joined forces in Aspen/Snowmass again this summer to benefit Challenge Aspen with the 7th Annual Vince Gill and Amy Grant Golf Classic. The annual gala evening event and golf tournament supports Challenge Aspen’s mission of making possibilities for people with disabilities.

Gill and Grant headlined an evening with cocktails, live and silent auctions, dinner and an exclusive concert at Aspen Meadows Resort’s Doerr-Hosier Center on Monday, Aug. 2. On Tuesday, Aug. 3, Gill and Grant were joined by title sponsors Nancy and Richard Rogers, event co-host and golf legend Fred Funk and PGA Pros Mike Goodes, Denis Watson, Keith Clearwater and Bob Gilder, singer-songwriter Edwin McCain, and MLB Pitcher Dennis Rasmussen as they hit the links of the Aspen Golf and Tennis Club.

As part of the festivities, Challenge Aspen honored a group of newly injured servicewomen recently home from Iraq and Afghanistan. The group was part of a C.A.M.O. (Challenge Aspen Military Opportunities) retreat designed specifically for women and led by a team of professionals. The retreat included both daily activities, such as rafting and equine therapy, and wellness and educational workshops, all in a retreat-style setting. The women were joined by Grant for part of their retreat and were special guests at the Golf Classic gala.

Children and youth ages 5-18 experienced a variety of wheelchair sports at the 27th Colorado Junior Wheelchair Sports Camp co-sponsored by Adaptive Adventures and Colorado Sports for the Physically Challenged, in addition to sports, including softball, archery, basketball, swimming, tennis, rugby, handcycling, bowling, power soccer, fencing, and more, children also had the opportunity to socialize, make new friends, develop skills and gain self-confidence. The camp, now in its 27th year, was held June 7-11 in Aurora, Colo.

Adaptive Adventures hosted a Kayak Chicago Family Day for the Midwest Wheelchair Sports and Social Club, and local disabled individuals and family members. The event was held at Montrose Beach, Chicago, Sunday, June 13, in partnership with Kayak Chicago and GLASA. Adaptive Adventures—Chicago is making kayaking its primary focus for summer program growth.
Wounded Warriors Come to Play in Mammoth

Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, Paralympic Sport – Mammoth Lakes, is hosting its Wounded Warriors Elite Camp, Monday, Aug. 23 through Friday, Aug. 27. Activities for Wounded Warriors with PTSD and TBI include backpacking, camping, hiking and fishing in the Eastern Sierra. This event follows Operation High Altitude Summer Wounded Warriors Camp, hosted in June just outside the town of Mammoth Lakes. During this camp, 14 participants enjoyed horseback riding, kayaking, fishing, rock climbing, cycling and more.

Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra will host more Wounded Warrior events, including the February 2011 Operation Mountain Freedom, which includes alpine skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing and biathlon. The Paralympic Experiences program includes alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, biathlon, mono-skiing and cycling. For more information regarding Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra and Paralympic Sport – Mammoth Lakes, contact Maggie Palchak at mpalchak@disablesportseasternsierra.org.

Summer Fun at Disabled Sports USA Far West

Disabled Sports USA Far West is finishing a strong summer with more than 80 program days, featuring adaptive waterskiing, golf, whitewater rafting, road and mountain biking, four-wheel drive excursions, flat-water kayaking and sled hockey. Highlights of the summer include a week-long camp in June hosting more than 20 Wounded Warriors through a partnership with the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project. The fourth annual multisport event, “Their Spirit Inspires,” was held June 15-20 in Sacramento and offered action-packed days featuring adaptive rock climbing, an on-water challenge course and bowling in addition to the regularly-planned activities offered by Disabled Sports USA Far West.

Upcoming events include the 21st annual Foam Fest fundraiser, Saturday, Oct. 23, in North Lake Tahoe, Calif. The snow sports program at Alpine Meadows Resort, North Lake Tahoe, will open in mid-December.

To participate as a sponsor, volunteer or guest, or to learn more about Disabled Sports USA Far West, visit www.disabledsports.net or call (530) 581-4161.
Water-Skier Jean Iverson Reclaims Her Passion for the Sport

Editor’s Note: For more than 40 years, DSUSA and its chapters have been instrumental in helping people with disabilities reconnect with fun, fitness and confidence through participation in sports. Disabled Sports USA Far West shares a client success story with Challenge readers.

On Nov. 17, 2007, the Iverson family faced a life-changing challenge when Jean, mother of two young children, experienced a stroke that paralyzed the left side of her body.

Growing up in Orange County, Calif., Jean began waterskiing at age 5, sharing her father’s passion for the sport. She spent the summers of her childhood on southern California lakes with her family honing her skills. When Jean entered college at Chico State University, majoring in sociology, she joined the water ski team and skied competitively for four years. After college, Jean went to work for Intel where she met her husband, Dan, who was also passionate about waterskiing.

Jean and Dan continued their families’ passion of skiing as they started a family of their own.

Jean felt that in the months leading up to her stroke, she was in the best shape of her life, having spent the year prior getting back into shape after having her second child. It was not until Jean had a stroke that doctors found that she had a small hole separating the left and right atria of her heart; a common cause of stroke that New England Patriot football player Tedy Bruschi also experienced. The stroke paralyzed the left side of Jean’s body. Unexpected and untimely, Jean’s stroke shattered her confidence, as she was unable to walk, sit up straight, or attend to the needs of her children. Jean described her outlook as “hopeless” and she remembers thinking that she would never water ski again.

Jean was determined, however, to enjoy her life with her family. She pushed herself through physical therapy and set her mind towards recovery. She regained the ability to walk, to drive, and to attend to the needs of her children. In August 2008, Jean faced another challenge as she experienced a grand mal seizure that she estimates set her recovery back by six months. Still determined, though her confidence in herself and her recovery was diminished, she felt that she needed to show her children that giving up, was not an option. She continued to work to regain ability and was inspired by a brochure that her physical therapist gave her for Disabled Sports USA Far West. She said that the boy on the cover wearing a “blind skier” bib gave her perspective to her own disability and she told herself that she would water ski again.

In June 2010, Jean, walking with a cane, stepped onto the dock where Disabled Sports USA Far West was offering adaptive waterskiing. She was accompanied by her husband and her two children. With instruction, an adaptive water ski and the assistance of Delgar sling, Jean once again became a water-skier. Jean is thrilled to ski again and to have her kids see her doing something that had been such a large part of her life. She is overjoyed that once again her family is able to enjoy waterskiing together, building memories that parallel those that she has of her childhood.

Jean has since become a regular participant of Disabled Sports USA Far West’s water ski program, sharing the experience with her children and husband who share in the fun, skiing with their mom and wife, respectively. Jean says that she can’t wait until the next water ski session and feels that the program is helping her to build confidence, strength, and balance. She is also looking forward to trying alpine skiing in the upcoming winter at Alpine Meadows, the home mountain of Disabled Sports USA Far West. The family passion for waterskiing has been rekindled, and Jean is growing stronger and more motivated than ever.

Contributed by Michael Hunter, Program Coordinator, Disabled Sports USA Far West.

GLASA’s Go Girl Go Overnighter

Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association (GLASA) hosted its second annual Go Girl Go Overnighter, June 5-6. Eighteen girls, ranging from ages 8 to 22 participated. Their disabilities included cerebral palsy, spina bifida, visual impairment/blind and spinal cord injuries.

“We had a good mix of girls from all over Illinois and Wisconsin, most of whom do not regularly participate on any of GLASA’s sports teams. We also had a group of girls from the city of Chicago who are part of Access Living’s Empowered FeFe’s group,” noted Keri Schindler, CAPE, M.S., GLASA’s program supervisor. “It was a great opportunity for the girls to meet one another, share ideas, struggles, goals, accomplishments, fears, and more as well as try new things and have a ton of fun!”

Activities included zip lining, archery, swimming, and team building and goal setting activities. The girls prepared and cooked all of their meals, a new addition to this year’s program. Another new addition was having Peer Mentors with disabilities there as staff, a visible example of females with disabilities who had gone to college and law school, lived on their own, are employed, play sports, and more. Also attending were college students studying adaptive sports.
The Unrecables Receive Honors for Outstanding Publication

The Unrecables received a first place award for outstanding publication at the FWSA Convention in June and a second place award for outstanding website. Congratulations to Past President Sigrid Noack for receiving the highly esteemed Hans Georg Award.

Several members attended Casa Colina’s annual Land Meets Sea Sports Camp in Long Beach, Calif., in August. Activities included waterskiing, jet skiing, kayaking, sailing, wheelchair basketball, hockey, deep-sea fishing, and more.

Monthly social hours are held on the second Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at Mi Ranchito Family Restaurant in Culver City, Calif.

For more information, email info@unrecables.com or visit www.unrecables.org.

Lakeshore Foundation Continues Programs for Injured Military; Adds Family Focus

As Lakeshore Foundation enters its fifth year of serving our nation’s injured military personnel, a new family focus will be integrated through a family-specific weekend camp. Operation Down Home, a camp for severely injured military as well as their family members, was held July 15-18. Participants from across the country had the opportunity to share a weekend of outdoor recreation on the lake as well as cycling, rock wall climbing, scuba diving and shooting sports.

“I’ve heard time and again from our past participants and Warrior Transition Units that it would be great if we could include the entire family unit as we look toward providing long-term care for our injured military personnel,” said Lakeshore Foundation Injured Military Program Coordinator Mandy Goff.

“Operation Down Home is our opportunity for us to do just that.”

Following Down Home, Operation Alpha and Operation Rise & Conquer will round out Lakeshore’s programming for injured military personnel in 2010.

Operation Alpha, held Aug. 5-8, was designed to appeal to recently injured servicemen and women who have sustained a traumatic brain injury. The event on the Lakeshore Foundation Campus offered multiple recreational activities.

Operation Rise & Conquer is an extended outdoor adventure weekend on Lake Martin, near Alexander City, Ala., that involves recently injured service members and a guest in a variety of challenging outdoor recreation activities. It will be held Sept. 23-26.

All weekend Lima Foxtrot programs are provided at no cost to injured servicemen and women and one guest. Air and ground transportation, lodging, meals and activities are provided free of charge.

Operation Endurance provides a free Lakeshore Foundation membership to local military personnel who have sustained a severe injury while on active duty. The membership gives them opportunities for involvement in Lakeshore Foundation’s daily programs.

For program information, contact Mandy Goff at (205) 313-7437 or mandyg@lakeshore.org. To donate towards Lakeshore Foundation’s programs for injured military, contact Natalie Hausman-Weiss at (205) 313-7420 or natalieh@lakeshore.org.

Contributed by Laura K. Womble.
New England Disabled Sports hosts White Mountain Cycling Classic

The White Mountain Cycling Classic, hosted by New England Disabled Sports, attracted more than 200 cyclists and handcyclists to Lincoln, N.H. This integrated event was the only sanctioned U.S. Handcycling race in the Northeast during the 2010 summer series and was a USA Cycling permitted event. The White Mountain Cycling Classic was made possible by a grant from Disabled Sports USA and sponsorship from The Hartford.

The goal of New England Disabled Sports is to bill the White Mountain Cycling Classic as the perfect venue to experience competition. Whether elite level riders looking to challenge their skills or a novice wondering about the thrill of the race, this was the place to do it.

Among the cyclists were 12 military veterans with disabilities. These Wounded Warriors had an eye-opening experience and with great attitudes and determination some are focusing their sites on the Paralympics. All proceeds from the White Mountain Cycling Classic have been applied towards future New England Disabled Sports programming for Wounded Warriors.

At daybreak on Saturday, June 26, the energy level was high as competitors had their first glimpse at the circuit road race course. This five-mile loop was completed seven times for the elite level riders down to four times for the handcyclists. Spectators got quite a show as racers poured their hearts into racing for the podium. New England Disabled Sports paid special attention to safety as well as all race details and by day’s end competitors were describing the course and event as “incredible, professional,” and “an instant classic,” said Rob Mueller, managing director of New England Disabled Sports.

The next day’s criterium was challenging for even the elite level riders. A criterium is a short course, usually around one kilometer, where a group of cyclists ride for 40 minutes to an hour. Participants are required to use their skills and tactics to win the race. Utilizing some unique aspects of the Loon Mountain parking lot, riders had to stay completely focused on the course or in an instant they would go from leading to the back of the pack. Once again the level of competition was extraordinary as sweat and smiles beamed from the field of cyclists.

New England Disabled Sports has laid a firm foundation with the White Mountain Cycling Classic, as a world-class integrated cycling competition. Men, women, handcyclists, Wounded Warriors and youth were all introduced to an event that will continue to grow and challenge cyclists for years to come. Some participants of the White Mountain Cycling Classic came and left with medals and prizes but all came and left with one thing, knowing that competitive cycling is alive and well in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

New England Disabled Sports Biathlon and Shooting Program

New England Disabled Sports newest program is literally, a blast, with an adaptive biathlon and shooting program in partnership with the Pemigewasset Fish and Game Club, www.pemi.org. The program has grown since its inception with the help of a grant from U.S. Paralympics.

In order to create year-round biathlon training opportunities, New England Disabled Sports has developed some unique twists on this already internationally popular winter sport. For summer and fall training there are wheelchair, running, and walking categories for all levels and types of disabilities. The goal is to navigate a course best suited to the individual’s means of mobility; achieve an elevated heart rate; and return to the firing line, using a .22 caliber rifle to acquire a positioned target. Participants are scored on the number of hits on target combined with the time on completed course laps.

The wheelchair course and mountain bike course will be offered Sept. 18 and Oct. 3 to complete the dry land biathlon series of events, open to anyone who can ride a bike or push a wheelchair. A snow series course will be offered in the winter months.

For more information about adaptive biathlon and event dates, visit www.nedisabledsports.org.
Mentors Building
Mentors in Western Colorado

Five years ago, an occupational therapist and a physical therapist sat in their office and wondered why kids with disabilities in Grand Junction, Colo., had to travel four hours to go to summer camp. Parents were leery about sending their young children away overnight with people they did not know. After many “patio” meetings, Camp Freedom was born.

The group of therapists, nurses, and doctors who came up with the idea teamed up with Colorado Discover Ability to create an overnight adventure camp for six- to twelve-year-olds. Colorado Discover Ability has been teaching disabled children to ski in the winter and to ride bicycles and paddle inflatable kayaks in the summer for many years. Located in the alpine setting of Western Colorado’s Grand Mesa, only an hour’s drive from Grand Junction, Camp Freedom includes horseback riding, swimming, crafts, service projects, hiking, fishing, campfires, music, and skits all packed into two days. The camp finishes with a day of river rafting on the Colorado River. It serves 50 youth each summer with all levels of physical and cognitive disabilities. The participants have discovered amazing adventures and, equally important, have taught a group of caregivers more than anyone ever could.

Camp Freedom is not just a recreational camp. It’s also educational and therapeutic. Most of the volunteer staff are healthcare professionals who give six days a summer and many more of planning time to run the camp. With nurses, CNAs, therapists, physicians and administrators from the local hospital (St. Mary’s), all of whom are volunteers, parents feel comfortable and confident about leaving their children in good hands for the weekend. This also allows children with diverse disabilities and medical needs to attend the camp. For many of these children, this is the first time they have been away from their parents overnight, and almost always it is the first time they’ve ever learned outdoor sports skills. Camp Freedom has been so successful that this summer St. Mary’s and Colorado Discover Ability are planning a camp for teenagers with disabilities.

In addition to the healthcare volunteers, many local youth volunteer to help. The organizers of Camp Freedom realized quite quickly that the adult volunteer group looks very similar to a big group of parents. Parents at camp!! No way!! The campers are naturally drawn to the junior counselors. They are young, fun, and full of energy. Many of the junior counselors have continued to volunteer since the camp began five years ago. They have begun to take over the role of “team leader” and organizing activities for the campers. It has been a fascinating journey to watch these young people step up to the plate and take on great challenges. From giving a child a piggyback ride or a hiking trail because their walker was too wide to pushing a non-verbal child in a wheelchair up a mountain jeep road pointing out wildflowers along the way, they have been there.

These are skills and compassion that cannot be taught from books and lectures, only through mentoring and experience. The adult counselors have taught these young counselors how to give, love and care for children with disabilities. More importantly, the campers have taught all of the counselors that everyone has gifts that are worth taking the time to explore and embrace.

Several of the junior counselors have expressed interest in healthcare careers and in working with people with disabilities. One of our counselors, Jeslyn, turned her 16th birthday party into a community dance for high school students and raised nearly $2,000 for scholarships for this coming summer’s Camp Freedom. Another junior counselor has gone to Jamaica to help at a medical mission, which runs an orphanage for children with disabilities. At camp, the junior counselors who are more experienced are beginning to become the mentors for new junior counselors who have just begun to experience volunteer work. This is how we build the next generation of healthcare professionals, volunteers, and advocate for persons with disabilities. Mentors come in the form of adults teaching youth, and children teaching all of us.

Submitted by Lisa Thiessen, Program Manager for Camp Freedom.
How can a donation change a person's life?

"It makes me feel good when people watch me ski and notice I have one leg and they seem so amazed. I like changing the way people think when they see a disabled athlete."

Alex Tomaszewski, Age 16
DSUSA Mentee and National Racer Festival Youth Scholarship Athlete

"When I'm out there boarding, it takes the disability away from my mind and gives me more of my freedom. I'm enjoying what I went to protect. I owe a lot to this program.

It saved my life."

Navy PO3 Mark Mix
Wounded Warrior

"Disabled Sports USA's mission is to provide national leadership and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, confidence, and fitness through participation in community sports, recreation and educational programs."

Combined Federal Campaign #10151

Please donate today!

DONOR OPTIONS: (includes membership in Disabled Sports USA)

☐ Member - $25  • One-year Membership and One-year subscription to CHALLENGE Magazine (three issues)
☐ Challenger - $35  • DSUSA pin plus DSUSA Member Benefits
☐ Medalist - $100  • DSUSA Polo Shirt (shirt size ________) plus DSUSA Challenger Benefits
☐ Champion - $250  • Your name listed in CHALLENGE as a Disabled Sports USA Donor plus DSUSA Medalist Benefits (shirt size ________)  
☐ Other amount $________________
☐ Check if you would like to make a donation and waive benefits
☐ Check if you are an athlete. Disability________________ List Sports________________

YOUR INFO:

Full Name__________________________ Date of Birth: _______/_____/_____

Address______________________________

City:________________________ State:_________ Zip________________

E-mail:__________________________ Phone:________________________

PAYMENT INFORMATION (CHECK ONE): To donate online, go to www.dsusa.org and click on Donate Today

☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to Disabled Sports USA
☐ Please bill $__________________ to my: ☐ MC ☐ Visa ☐ AmEx

Card Number__________________________ Exp Date________________________

Cardholder Name__________________________ Signature_____________________

Return to: DSUSA, 451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20850 or fax to 301-217-0968. For more information, call 301-217-9841. Donations to DSUSA are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. DSUSA's tax exempt number is 94-6174016.
Staying fit and active is important to amputees such as Harry who make the most of every day. Whether he’s working out, walking his dog, or driving out west, Harry requires a liner that delivers comfort and flexibility while controlling pistoning.

The Alpha Select Liner features a hybrid gel that delivers enhanced longevity for a variety of limb shapes without sacrificing the comfort to which gel users have become accustomed. Its progressive gel style provides extra thickness and comfort distally, yet is thin both proximally and behind the knee. The flexible panel promotes a broad range of motion by minimizing tension on the knee. The liner’s one-way stretch fabric allows for easy donning yet effectively restricts pistoning without requiring a potentially irritating distal matrix.