Disabled Veterans Use Adaptive Sports in Rehabilitation

VA’s 26th Winter Sports Clinic Begins March 25 in Snowmass, Colo.

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WASHINGTON – After 10 years of war, disabled Veterans are returning to new challenges, finding ways to live life to the fullest while overcoming their disabilities. Many have sought the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic to learn how to ski and rehabilitate using a variety of adaptive winter sports.

“This clinic demonstrates VA’s commitment to provide innovative rehabilitation for the men and women disabled during service to our Nation,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The training and instruction these Veterans receive will allow them to take their rehabilitation home, outside of the medical facilities and into their daily lives.”

This year, nearly 400 disabled Veterans from across the country, including those from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn, will attend the clinic in Snowmass Village, Colo., near Aspen, March 25 – 30.
The event, now in its 26th year, is open to all military Veterans with spinal cord injuries or disease, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations or other disabilities, who receive care at any Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility.

Co-sponsored by VA and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the clinic is hosted each year by the Grand Junction VA Medical Center in Colorado and VA’s Rocky Mountain Network.

During the six-day program, Veterans will learn adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing and be introduced to a variety of other adaptive activities and sports, such as rock climbing, scuba diving, trap-shooting and sled hockey.

In addition to learning valuable skills at the clinic, Veteran athletes can set their sights higher and become eligible to compete in some of the nation’s premiere athletic events. Since 2005, VA’s Winter Sports Clinics have provided participants to American paralympic teams engaged in national and international competition.

To train these Veteran athletes and meet their unique needs, an estimated 200 certified ski instructors for the disabled and several current and former members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team will serve as instructors.

This clinic applies the rehabilitative care Veterans receive daily at VA medical centers across the country, and through sports and recreation therapy, many can greatly improve the quality of their lives.

VA continues to be a recognized leader in rehabilitation, with recreational therapy programs at each of its 152 hospitals that allow disabled Veterans to challenge themselves both physically and emotionally. DAV, which has co-sponsored the event since 1991, is a nonprofit, congressionally chartered Veterans service organization, with a membership of more than one million wartime disabled Veterans.
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Visit the event’s website: [http://miracles.dav.org](http://miracles.dav.org).