



# Disabled Sports USA Far West



## *Wounded Warrior History & Current Projects*

In 1967 Jim Winthers brought together a small group of Vietnam Veterans to support each other as they learned to cope with their disabilities. These Veterans taught themselves and others how to ski. Winthers, a World War II Veteran of the 10th Mountain Division and Director of the Soda Springs Ski School, helped form our organization, Disabled Sports USA, Far West (Disabled Sports).

Over the years, Disabled Sports has grown and changed, yet always remained true to its “Brothers in Arms” mentality of Veterans helping Veterans. Our President, Douglas J. Pringle, lost his leg in Vietnam and was one of the first Disabled Sports participants in 1969. Through his leadership, he has fostered an organizational culture of Veteran Mentors reaching out to newly disabled military service men and women.

Disabled Sports has continued its rehabilitation orientation and remains dedicated to the belief that sports are a vital part of the process in which disabled individuals gain self-confidence, mobility, and greater independence. Our programs promote education, socialization and employment. They help turn tragedy into triumph by instilling in participants the knowledge that it's not their disabilities, but their abilities that count.

Disabled Sports was designated by Walter Reed Army Hospital as the lead agency to provide sports rehab programs for soldiers disabled in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2005. The organization has worked extensively with military and VA Hospitals nationwide, including; Balboa Naval Medical Center San Diego, The VA Palo Alto Health Care System and the Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio.

Every summer Disabled Sports conducts its annual “Their Spirit Inspires” event which hosts recently disabled Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans in Sacramento, CA. The three day adaptive sports camp teaches them water skiing, whitewater rafting, handcycling, paddle sports, sled hockey and golf. The event culminates with an inspirational dinner honoring the soldiers and highlighting their abilities.

This winter Disabled Sports will conduct its annual “Ability Celebration” and host 25 or more Wounded Warriors for a week-long winter sports clinic teaching them to ski and snowboard, despite their disabilities.

Just as the World War II Veterans reached out to help the newly disabled Vietnam Veterans, today, Disabled Sports is reaching out to those Disabled in the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, taking them directly from the military hospitals they are recovering in, and getting them into high challenge adaptive sports activities nationwide that build their health and confidence.

### **Wounded Warrior Testimonial**

*“Disabled Sports is key for recovery; when you first get hurt, you think your life is over, and Disabled Sports steps right in and shows you what you can accomplish and what a great life you still have ahead of you.”*

Norberto Lara  
Right Arm Amputee, Iraq War Veteran  
Their Spirit Inspires Participant 2006