



National Disabled Veterans *Winter Sports Clinic*

Skier Profile

Adam McCann – Encouraging Others to Believe

Adam McCann, 24, spends one week a year amid awe-inspiring winter landscapes, enjoying the breathtaking activities and company of good friends. Although the wild rides down the slopes, and the magnificent mountain scenery of Snowmass Village, Colorado, keep this Marine Corps Veteran coming back each year, there is something more that draws McCann to the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. “It’s really being able to share stories and talk with the other Veterans that are the most important to me,” he said. “They can relate to me so much better than anyone else.”

A resident of Oberlin, Ohio, McCann was serving as a machine gunner in Iraq when he was seriously injured during a mortar attack in April 2005. During the attack, he received shrapnel to his neck and both legs. “There were four of us injured that day,” he remembers. “It happened so fast, I didn’t know what was going on.” He was only 19 years old at the time. After his injury, McCann was flown to Germany for a month and later to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, before being medically discharged in 2006. The attack resulted in damage to McCann’s left Achilles tendon and also caused significant weakness to both legs. For one year, he went through intensive physical therapy to work on improving strength in his leg muscles and his ability to support his legs while standing. “I can walk on my own now, but I still have to deal with some physical limitations,” he said.

While attending a friend’s graduation party in 2005, McCann heard about the Winter Sports Clinic and quickly became interested. “My friend’s uncle is a ski instructor at the Clinic and he put me in touch with the people who run the event in Colorado. I had never skied before my injury and I went to the Clinic that first year on my own. I got a lot out of it because the event does so much for Veterans with disabilities.” McCann travels to the program with a group of other Veterans receiving care at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center in Cleveland. McCann also receives ongoing outpatient care at the facility as well as a VA outpatient clinic in Lorain.

McCann has encouraging advice for those who may think that skiing, snowshoeing, sled hockey or scuba diving (other events at the Clinic), are not activities they can do. “Those who think they can’t do adaptive sports should come to the Winter Sports Clinic and watch the other people – then they’ll believe that they can do it, too.”

