



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 273-6000  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

# **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 29, 2005

## **Disabled Veterans Take to the Slopes at Winter Sports Clinic**

WASHINGTON – More than 350 disabled veterans will ski the Rocky Mountains at the 19<sup>th</sup> National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colo., April 3-8, 2005.

The clinic is an annual rehabilitation program open to all U.S. military veterans with spinal cord injuries or diseases, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations or other disabilities, who receive care at any Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care facility.

This year, more than 60 newly injured veterans from Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom will join their fellow veterans at the clinic.

During the six-day program, the 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, snowmobiling and sled hockey. The U.S. Secret Service will also teach a course on self-defense for people with disabilities.

Updates, photos and news releases about these events and about all participating veterans will be posted on the Winter Sports Clinic Web site during the week at [www.wintersportsclinic.org](http://www.wintersportsclinic.org) under "Participant Information."

Jointly sponsored by VA and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the clinic is hosted each year by the Grand Junction (Colo.) VA Medical Center and VA's Rocky Mountain Network.

"The Winter Sports Clinic is rehabilitation in action," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "These veterans teach all of us about determination, grace and courage."

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## Winter Sports Clinic 2/2/2/2

Known for inspiring "Miracles on the Mountainside," the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic shows that the lives of disabled veterans can be changed forever when they discover the challenges they can overcome.

“The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is a fantastic example of the partnership between DAV and VA, with both organizations committed to serving the rehabilitative needs of our nation’s disabled veterans,” said DAV National Commander James E. Sursely. “I have been a participant in this event and eagerly anticipate returning to Snowmass to represent DAV as its national commander. I know this year’s Winter Sports Clinic will be a life-changing experience for everyone involved.”

Grammy award-winning singers Vince Gill and Amy Grant will perform a private concert at the Winter Sports Clinic, courtesy of Challenge Aspen, a local organization for people with disabilities. Challenge Aspen has played a key role in supporting the Winter Sports Clinic for the past five years.

Actress Bo Derek, National Honorary Chairperson for VA’s National Rehabilitation Special Events, will also attend the clinic this year to meet with veterans. On Friday, April 8, “Race Day” at the event, she will join VA and DAV leaders to present medals to the veterans as they complete their runs down the mountainside.

VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitation, with recreational therapy programs at each of its 158 hospitals. 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.

*For further information, contact Jenny Shafer Tankersley, VA public affairs coordinator, Winter Sports Clinic, at (757) 728-3450; or Rob Lewis, DAV communications, at (859) 442-2049. Or, log on to the event’s web site at: [www.wintersportsclinic.org](http://www.wintersportsclinic.org)*

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