

2019

Wednesday, April 3



NATIONAL DISABLED
VETERANS
WINTER SPORTS CLINIC

wintersportsclinic.org | #wintersportsclinic

Veteran believes in “facing challenges head on”

By Donna J. Bell

Growing up, Veteran Carlita Maria Harter, from West Palm Beach, Florida, was always an athlete – you name it, she played it: basketball, softball, baseball, soccer and track and field. She lettered in college tennis and even turned pro before she was deployed.

So, when a neurological condition, combined with a car accident sidelined her beginning in 2004, and derailed her career with a medical discharge in 2009, she wasn't happy.

“I was pissed, I'm not going to lie,” Harter said. “I was angry, upset and depressed. I was always athletic and worked out my entire life. I wasn't familiar with my body hurting and not feeling good in my own skin.”

Harter, an Army and Air Force Veteran, traveled the world (Korea, Germany, Italy and multiple U.S. bases) and was on a career fast track when her illness struck. And while she has adapted to her new reality, it was hard to lose her competitive persona. So, when her VA recreational therapist Harper Bruenn suggested Winter Sports Clinic – Harter jumped at the opportunity.

“I've always wanted to go to skiing,” she said. “I believe in facing challenges head on.”

In her first year at the clinic, Harter was most excited about learning a new skill. On her very first day, she made six runs, the last from the upper tier – surprising her coaches with her natural ability. She was even able to record her sit ski runs on a GoPro attached to her chest.



Army and Airforce Veteran Carlita Maria Harter is looking forward to smoking the competition during Friday's races.

“It was outstanding!” Harter said, already looking forward to Friday's race day.

“I am completely stoked,” she enthused. “I am all about the competition. One of my desires is to compete at the Special Olympics. I'd love to do that at the elite level.” She loves being able to share the mountain with other Veterans.

“It is about getting out there with others who are just like me,” she said. “We may not have the same condition, but, like me, they have limitations to get over. I want to cheer on my mates and be part of that team. We are going to overcome what we have medically and push beyond.”

Co-hosted by:

VA



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DAV

FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

By Bryan Lett

Back on track

Double amputee stays active through adaptive sports



Nearly 50 years ago, Army Pfc. Dave Nichols' life changed in a heartbeat. He was just starting a deployment to Vietnam when his unit was ambushed and he triggered a Claymore mine—losing both his legs in the explosion.

At first, Nichols struggled to adapt to life as a double amputee.

“You go from being in the Army and the best shape of your life and then the next thing you know you're flat on your back with a life-changing injury,” explained Nichols. “You suddenly feel like you're at the bottom of the barrel. Then I met a girl, I went to college, started doing more things and realized I still have a lot to offer.”

As Nichols aged, he made physical activity a top priority.

“I was about 50 when I started adaptive

sports. It changed my whole way of looking at myself and the world,” said Nichols.

“You don't have to be the best, but you can go out and give your best effort.”

He encourages other veterans to seek out a healthy lifestyle at the DAV and VA co-hosted clinic.

“That's what I like about these events,” said Nichols. “You can try different activities and with some assistance and adaptive equipment you are able to go out there and give it your all.”

Nichols tries to mentor younger veterans who more recently become ill or injured and are struggling on the road to recovery.

“I've been [an amputee] for 48 years,” said Nichols. “So it's nice to let them know life moves on and there's a lot of opportunities out there, both personally and professionally.”



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MOVIE NIGHT

Join us for a presentation by actor Erik Stolhanske and a free screening of the hit film Super Troopers 2.



Date: Wednesday, April 3

Time: 8 p.m.

Place: Conference Center Ballroom, Salon A & B



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CEU Educational Workshops

Building a community through unique activities

6-7:30 p.m., Castle Peak Auditorium, 2nd Floor, Conference Center
Presented by: Elizabeth Sharp, PhD and Ann Fillies, PhD

Self Defense, A Guide to Street Survival Awareness

6-7:30 p.m., Salon E, 1st Floor, Snowmass Conference Center
Presented by: Dr. Jamie Hoffman, Ed.D.

Journaling as a Therapeutic Intervention

7:30-9 p.m., Castle Peak Auditorium, 2nd Floor, Conference Center
Presented by: Dr. Jamie Hoffman, Ed.D.

Thank a sponsor

In its 33rd year, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is host to disabled Veterans, caregivers and supporters who have made the trek to Snowmass Village, Colo., to be a part of an experience so great it's deemed "Miracles on the Mountainside."

Veterans from all generations and all eras come to this extraordinary event each year and learn a little about themselves and their capabilities. Some will accomplish things they never imagined, and some will do things they were told were impossible. But all will take advantage of the opportunity to prove that a person's disabilities do not define them.

The clinic has been the place where miracles happen for more than three decades now, but none of that would be possible without the generosity and support of our exemplary sponsors. They deserve our appreciation and an understanding of the impact they have in the lives of our participants. These individuals, nonprofits and companies recognize the bravery you displayed while serving our country and help ensure the clinic can continue year after year.

When you see a representative from one the sponsors listed below, please take a little time to thank them and tell them how much this clinic means to you. Thank you.

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