



## Therapeutic Adventures



IndependencePlus  
Adaptive Sports

a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable education organization  
*To Educate! To Challenge! To Inspire!*

## MASSANUTTEN ADAPTIVE SNOW SPORTS



## SUMMARY OF 2017 EVENT

### SPECIAL HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED THIS IMPORTANT EVENT.

The 1<sup>ST</sup> Annual – **OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS (OFO)** - Adaptive Snow Sports Weekend (February 17-19) serving our Disabled Military Heroes was wonderful! We were blessed with a weekend of beautiful weather, perfect for time spent outdoors on the slopes of Massanutten Four Seasons Resort. This event would not have been possible without the long time support, nearly 4 decades, from Kenny Hess, Ski Area Manager and all the staff from Massanutten Resort. Industry leaders, Massanutten has set the standard for quality. Through the hard work and dedication of many, we have been committed to accessibility and serving persons of ALL ages and abilities who benefit from our adaptive instruction and programs. During the past year, the *OFO Retreat Planning Team* -- Mark Andrews, Founder/Executive Director of Therapeutic Adventures, Inc.(TA); David Drys, Navy Veteran; Sara Holloway, member of TA Executive Board; and Chris Holloway, TA Volunteer and Adaptive Instructor had an outpouring of support from so many. Special thanks to our Recreational Therapy event partners from *Hunter-Holmes McGuire Veterans Hospital* (Whitney Kallenbach and Jennifer Vass); and ALL of the individuals, businesses, and organizations who supported or volunteered to help to make this event a success.

Our guests, from *Hunter-Holmes McGuire Veterans Hospital* were treated to a weekend of “*Therapeutic Adventures — Adaptive Skiing — Outdoor Fun — as well as Fellowship and Reunion to honor those who have served.*” **We served eight (8) disabled veterans (3) women and (5) men**, and two family members. Upon arrival Friday morning 2/17, volunteers accompanied the veterans to get fitted with the ski equipment and any adaptive equipment that would be used throughout the weekend. Area Use Passes (Lift Tickets) were issued to all the participants (veterans and volunteer instructors). We then matched each of the veterans with the TA adaptive instructors and other volunteers who provided instruction and support on the slopes.

A break down of the disabilities served includes: **2 veteran heroes** diagnosis - *traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI) quadriplegia*, **1 veteran hero** diagnosis *traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI) paraplegia*, **2 veteran heroes** diagnosis *polytrauma - traumatic brain injury (TBI) & post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*, **1 veteran hero** diagnosis - *totally blind (B)*, **1 veteran hero** diagnosis - *cancer, joint disorders & chronic pain syndrome*, and **1 veteran hero** with *polytrauma - traumatic brain injury (TBI) & post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and visual impairment (VI)*. We had two Bi-skiers, one Bi-skier/guided, one Mono-skier, one Blind skier/guided, one modified 3-Track skier, and two 2-Track skiers.

Behind the scenes ground support and off slope logistics were provided by a large number of volunteers throughout the event: David, Wendy, Kaydence & Trevor Drys, Sara, Chris, and Lorelei Holloway, Sister Calder, Sister, Dahle, Sister Johnson, Sister Stoker, Cindy Veenis, Michelle Norvel, Sandy Bynaker, the Walker Family, Christine Johnson, Helen "Queen Mum" McKean, Missy "Princess Mum" Sutterfield, Teresa Andrews, and Greg Leffler. The attention to details and tasks performed by these individuals helped to keep the OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS event running smoothly throughout the weekend.

After providing a morning sessions of instruction (Friday, Saturday and Sunday), the group relaxed at the Mid-Mountain Grill, enjoying burgers, hot dogs, snacks, and drinks (*Donated by David & Wendy Drys*). A number community volunteers and the Massanutten Ski and Snowboard Team - Kolton Almany, Kaydence Drys, Trevor Drys, Lorelei Holloway, Logan Skinner, Alec Young took meal orders and served all the veterans and volunteer instructors.

After lunch each day, everyone returned to hit the slopes for more instruction in the afternoon. Veterans were then transported to their respective lodging sites on the mountain. The women veterans and VA staff shared one of the units. The men veterans shared the other units. Everyone was provided with some time to rest and socialize prior to the scheduled evening activities.

Friday evening, we hosted a Reception, Happy Hour, and Dinner for the veterans, volunteers and other special guests. The food for the Reception was provided by *Dr. Koterwas Orthodontics, Hanks Grill and Bar, Christine Johnson, and other volunteers*.

During the Friday evening OFO Happy Hour - Reception, Mark Andrews welcomed all the guests - veterans, and volunteers with the following message:

We are committed to the belief that when volunteers come together and when we support our veterans, it is amazing what can be accomplished!

*'What Is A Veteran? A "Veteran" - whether active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve - is someone who, at one point in his/her life, wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America," for an amount of "up to, and including his/her life." That is honor! And there are way to many people in this country today, who no longer understand that fact. Throughout this weekend and forever more, we want you to know that we are grateful for your service. This event - OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS is just a small token of our appreciation for your sacrifices and all that you have given to protect the freedoms we all enjoy. May you enjoy new freedoms yourselves as you discover new found Tracks to Independence on the snow.'*

For close to 4 decades, Therapeutic Adventures staff has been honored and privileged to provide adaptive outdoor programs for disabled Veterans. We have worked with Hunter Holmes McGuire Veterans Hospital the entire time since our beginning. Our program, **OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS** provides adaptive instruction and guide services, unique mentoring experiences, and personal development for disabled military heroes - veterans and their families. We have worked with military after they have returned home from serving in the Korean War, Vietnam, Bosnia, the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq. We have also worked with those who are victims of war and oppressed societies such as Somalia, and some Eastern European countries.

## Summary of 2017 OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS

Page 3 of 5

March 2, 2017

He then presented each of the veterans with:

- ❖ A commemorative OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS - event Long Sleeve T-Shirt
- ❖ Circle of Courage pin
- ❖ Commemorative Massanutten Adaptive Ski School Pin
- ❖ Special *Therapeutic Adventures* Patch - made by Helen McKean

Friday evening dinner for veterans, volunteers and guests, was prepared/donated by Helen "Queen Mum" McKean and Missy "Princess Mum" Sutterfield. The menu was Tortellini Soup, Greek Salad, Hot Chicken Salad, Croissants, a special Peach Cobbler & Ice Cream dessert was made/donated by Chef "Q" Derks from the Tree of Life in Richmond.

Saturday and Sunday mornings, Cindy Veenis, Christine Johnson, Joanne and Christopher Koterwas and other community volunteers who provided/donated a variety of breakfast casseroles, muffins, bagels, fruit and yogurt, juices, and coffee.

To help capture the details of the weekend, the emotions, and the essence all the amazing accomplishments of the Disabled Military Heroes and the volunteers committed to providing adaptive instruction and support on and off the slopes, our OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS event was extremely fortunate to have Michael Skinner of Pendragwn Productions, Washington, DC immerse himself in the scheduled activities from behind his magical cameras. Nothing tells a story better than an up close and personal video.

The Saturday evening dinner for veterans, volunteers and guests was provided/donated by Teresa & Mark Andrews. The menu was Tuscan Soup, Meat Lasagne and Vegetarian Lasagne, and French Bread Helen and Missy made a Mixed Greens Salad and Fruit Salad. For dessert, Teresa made a Lemon Cake and Italian Pecan Cake. Leah Leffler made a special Tiramisu Layer Cake.

All of our Disabled Military Heroes made tremendous progress on the slopes improving their adaptive skiing skills and functional independence.



Congratulations to two of the veterans, Preston Curry (Mono-Ski) and Rickey Wood (Bi-Ski) who became our newest members of the the *Massanutten Adaptive Snow Sports - Summit Club*. The *Summit Club* was organized to recognize the courageous efforts and commitment of those adaptive skiers and snowboarders who work hard to achieve a higher-level of skill development and functional independence. Members of this elite group consistently display and exemplify qualities that we all can admire - hard work, courage, discipline, preparation, practice, persistence, perseverance. Not to mention, each *Summit Club* member has demonstrated an ability to safely and successfully ski black diamond terrain.

Through charitable donations, creative partnerships and the generous commitment from all of our OFO volunteers, I am pleased to report that we provided *FULL SCHOLARSHIPS* for ALL the veterans. That's right, to show our appreciation for their service and sacrifice, all lodging, meals, adaptive snow sports instruction, awards, and other scheduled activities were provided at NO \$ COST to our guests.

In addition to all the *Financial and In-Kind Donations* that we received from local businesses, we also had tremendous support from all our volunteers (*Therapeutic Adventures and Community*) Throughout the course of this event, we had a total of 49 registered event volunteers who put in 578 hours of documented volunteer service.

It is safe to say that we accomplished our goals. Throughout the weekend, the women laughed, bonded, supported one another, and shared in the joys of having a respite away from the challenging daily routine associated with cancer. Many nice fish were caught, photographed and returned back to the stream.

### ***A few comments from the OFO participants***

*Thank you for a great time. I had a lot of fun. Can't wait till next year.*

Michael

*Hello Mark, thank you so very much for this weekend.*

Denise and Ginger

*I enjoyed my time with the Therapeutic Adventures Family and still smiling when I think of the Massanutten ski trip. I thank all that have made this ski trip an adventure and learning experience which I will not forget.... God is blessing each one of you that have given up their time and generosity to make this happened... Again, Thank you Mark and to the team.. Thank you for a wonderful and joyful experience.*

Francene

*Thank you for the wonderful time skiing. I totally enjoyed myself.*

Rickey

*Hi Mark,*

*I really, really enjoyed the Ski Weekend!! Your staff & volunteers were awesome. I was able to overcome some of my fears. I'm really looking forward to other opportunities to join Therapeutic Adventures again in the future. I really want to thank you again for all that you've done and provided for us. So happy to be a part of Therapeutic Adventures.*

*Thank you! Everybody 😊 - You were AMAZING!!*

Cynthia

*Thank you for a great experience.*

John