

RIM SPECIAL

ATHLETES

Veterans participate in winter sport clinic



Rim Special Athletes at Snow Valley in early March. Some of the veterans use special ski equipment provided by RSA. (Photo courtesy of Rim Special Athletes)

By RHEA-FRANCES TETLEY
Staff Writer

Rim Special Athletes (RSA) began its veterans winter sport clinics at Snow Valley on man-made snow in January. Because of a lack of snow this season, they had their last session at Snow Valley just before it closed for the season on March 9.

RSA offers these skiing classes to help America's injured veterans recover from combat and service-related injuries such as amputations, brain injuries, PTSD, blindness and other injuries by integrating the activity of alpine skiing and snowboarding into interventions that physically challenge their bodies through movement. This activity of skiing and snowboarding builds their confidence and gives the veteran a feeling of resiliency and growth.

Some vets require adaptive equipment and RSA supplies that; through specially trained instructors, they enable the vets to strive to reach their individual lofty goals. In past years the vets have reported this ski program has enhanced their skills in all aspects of their lives. RSA was able to host nine of their scheduled 12 sessions this season from January through March.

These skiing and snowboarding activities give the vets a more positive body image. It allows them to enjoy activities they had done previously or to discover new challenges and sports they never had previously attempted. This adaptive ski program is offered in conjunction with the rehabilitation program the veterans are enrolled in at the Veterans Administration in San Diego to help them recover from injuries suffered during their years in the service.

The RSA veterans winter sport

clinic promotes bio-psychosocial rehabilitation and sports performance enhancement by challenging both the mind and body through building and strengthening their internal positive resources, while having fun.

Some of the goals of the RSA winter ski clinic are to improve the veterans' endurance, strength, flexibility and balance, which will help him or her to be able to do their own self-care, enhance their life management skills and enjoy a new sport, which will assist them in enjoying life again. This helps them learn an injury is not the end of enjoying life, but they learn how to enjoy it in a slightly different way.

The vets were excited that snow had fallen on top of the man-made snow last month. Most ski days, the VA brings between 12 to 24 skiers for the day. RSA trains the vets how to ski with their particular special need, as some may have lost a limb, an eye or other physical disabilities, and many suffer from PTSD.

Through this program, the vets learn to focus more on the process, which also gives them the ability to cope with stress and pressure. The RSA skiing program demonstrates to them that, even when they fall down, getting up and skiing again is fun. RSA President Jack Cooperman is very proud of how impactful this program can be on the veterans and their future lives.

The Rim Special Athletes Foundation serves individuals of all ages with a variety of disabilities. RSA also offers summer programs at Lake Arrowhead and other activities for those who live locally. For more information on the Rim Special Athletes Foundation, or to get involved in their activities, see their website, <https://rimspecialathletes.org>. Contact them directly by email at RimSpecialAthletes@gmail.com.