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CEDARPINES PARK • VALLEY OF ENCHANTMENT • CRESTLINE • TWIN PEAKS • RIMFOREST • AGUA FRIA • BLUE JAY • DEER LODGE PARK • LAKE ARROWHEAD • CEDAR GLEN • SKYFOREST • RUNNING SPRINGS • ARROWBEAR • GREEN VALLEY LAKE

Rim Special Athletes complete winter snow activities

By RHEA-FRANCES TETLEY
Staff Writer

The Rim of the World Special Athletes held their last ski day on the slopes of Snow Valley with their veterans winter sport clinic. The veterans come from the San Diego area Veterans Administration.

These skiing lessons are a part of their rehabilitation from battle-inflicted injuries such as amputations, brain injuries, PTSD, blindness and others physical and emotional injuries. Integrating alpine skiing and snowboarding with other interventions that physically challenge the veterans' bodies through movement builds their confidence and gives them a feeling of resiliency.

This program began about a decade ago, when Jack Cooperman began teaching injured veterans to ski, despite their physical impairment. The Rim Special Athletes, over the years, has developed specialized teaching techniques and purchased a variety of adapted equipment to help each one ski confidently.

Some of the vets require adaptive equipment, which RSA supplies, such as for those with prosthetics and those who need mono, bi and sit-skis. Along with specially trained instructors, it enables the veterans to achieve the lofty goals of making them feel independent. It can also help them achieve skills and do things they had never considered doing prior to their injuries. The skiing program is in conjunction with the various rehabilitation programs and counseling the veterans are enrolled in at the VA, after experiencing injuries suffered in battle.

On the last day, RSA cooked a barbecue for all the vets, the ski instructors and the ski patrol members who help the veterans get on and off the ski lifts with their special equipment. The RSA volunteers were also hosted and fed during the event, including David Motley, who snowboards with those vets who have perfected their skills and want to try Slide Peak.

Motley also volunteered last month during the RSA tubing day. The weather was perfect, just warm enough, and the snow was still nice as it had snowed only a couple days before.

For their graduation trip, the winter sport clinic veterans traveled to Mammoth Mountain in the Sierras to ski and took with them RSA President Jack Cooperman to thank him for all the encouragement he gives them throughout the season.

The summer season of activities for Rim Special Athletes will be starting soon at



At the end of the season at Snow Valley, the veterans from the winter sport clinic sponsored by RSA happily posed together. (Photo by Rhea-Frances Tetley)

Lake Arrowhead, where RSA will be offering lake activities such as kayaking, swimming, stand-up boarding and aqua cycling. See their website at www.RimSpecialAthletes.org for the days and dates of their free activities and to find out how to join with them.