



News

March 8, 2010

The Adventure Begins *The 2010 Veterans Ski Trip*



Left: Veteran James “Jim” Hammond sledding down the hill with a Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation instructor. *Right:* Veteran Ron Starcher (in foreground) at Whitetail Resort. *Photos: Ana Fitzpatrick and Kelly Whipp*



The Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center’s (MVAMC) Visually Impaired Service Team Support (VIST) Group recently hit the snowy slopes of Pennsylvania through a unique recreational partnership hosted by Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation, Whitetail Resort, and the MVAMC.

Veterans Ron Starcher and James “Jim” Hammond, Jr., braved the cold to get in some quality skiing during the first exhilarating adventure of the season on Feb. 18, 2010.

Although Ron Starcher participated previously in cross country skiing, he had never experienced downhill skiing remarking now “others will know the next time what an experience this is and what they are missing.”

The thrill of winter recreation was not lost on fellow Veteran and first-time skier Jim Hammond. “It was fun to try something I have not done before.”

“Both Veterans expressed having a great time and wanting to share their experiences with other members,” said VIST Coordinator Donna Cobean. “After breaking for lunch, Ron went out again to tackle even a larger slope.”

-more-

The Adventure Begins

The 2010 Veterans Ski Trip

Page 2 of 2

The VIST program plays a very important continuum of care for blinded or severely visually impaired Veterans noted Cobean.

“These services include educating Veterans and families about the latest information on specialized services and equipment; arranging for adaptive devices; providing a peer-to-peer group setting for support and skill development; coordinating activities to improve self-esteem including offsite activities; referring as well as transferring to specialized care centers and scheduling annual reviews to assess individual need,” said Cobean.

The ski trip was suggested by MVAMC’s Chief of Ear, Nose and Throat, Dr. Andrew “Andy” Cukier, who made the initial contact with Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation, and later attended the event along with Cobean, Anita Starcher, VIST volunteer Ana Fitzpatrick, and MVAMC staff Tanya Jenkins, Kelly Whipp and Darrel Anderson.

“Our thanks to [Two Top Mountain Adaptive Sports Foundation](#) and [Whitetail Resort](#) for helping to support our Veterans,” said Cobean, who can be contacted at (304) 263-0811 ext. 3856 or donna.cobean@va.gov.

###

The Martinsburg VA Medical Center mission is to honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. Located in West Virginia, the Medical Center offers a comprehensive range of services, including internal medicine, ambulatory surgery, audiology and speech pathology, dental, nursing home, nutrition, podiatry, prosthetics, women’s health, mental health, and rehabilitation medicine. With a service area of nearly 130,000 veterans in West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, the Medical Center operates three VA-staffed Outpatient Clinics in Cumberland and Hagerstown, Md., and Stephens City, Va., and three contract clinics in Franklin and Petersburg, W.Va. and Harrisonburg, Va. Construction for a new clinic in Fort Detrick, Md. has started with an opening tentatively scheduled in Fall 2010.