

HOMELAND

MAGAZINE

Vol. 8 Number 2 • February 2020
www.HomelandMagazine.com

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Adaptive Sports Center

Advocacy. Collaboration. Empowerment. Since 1987, those are just three of the many values that the Adaptive Sports Center in Mt. Crested Butte, Colorado has focused on delivering outdoor adventures and activities to veterans and individuals from throughout the country. With the organization's Operation Rise & Conquer program, military service personnel who have a disability can be provided with high-quality adventures which help inspire them to regain confidence and trust in themselves.

"Our instructors are experienced working with severely injured military, both active duty and veterans with permanent physical disabilities," said Justin Clapp, Adaptive Sports Center Marketing Manager. "We've welcomed groups of veterans from Brooke Army Medical Center, Los Angeles VA, Fort Carson, Team Racing 4 Veterans and Peace of Adventure. When you see the looks on the faces of our active military and veterans when they tackle an outdoor adventure, you are watching their confidence rise right in front of you. It's immeasurable."

Adaptive Sports Center participant José Santiago has conquered thousands of miles through bike riding with the organization, after he sought help for a brain injury he suffered during a 2003 tour of Iraq. He joined the army in 1999 as a combat medic deployed to Iraq from 2003 – 2004 with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

He suffered a traumatic brain injury by being knocked unconscious several times from roadside bomb blasts.

"The Adaptive crew is like family to me, and so are the veterans I get to ride with," he says. "It motivates me to be around them. When I'm tired and about to give up, I see someone who's missing two legs and half of his arm climbing Independence Pass (a 12,095 foot mountain pass in Colorado) without complaining, I just keep going."

José Santiago now helps recruit other veterans to visit the Adaptive Sports Center so they can also see how the organization's outdoor adventure activities make a difference. "Cycling really helps veterans connect with each other and talk about things they don't normally want to talk about. But when you're on a bike, it just comes out. We're free."

As the participation at the Adaptive Sports Center has continued to grow, so didn't the need for a new space for future outdoor athletes. In 2016, the organization kicked off what has turned out to be the biggest campaign in their 33-year history, one that secured the future for the Adaptive Sports Center for many years to come.

Fast forward to 2020, the Adaptive Sports Center is now able to better serve their participants, impact more people, and secure their future with the opening of the Kelsey Wright Building which happened this past June.

With the opening of the building this summer, they've been able to improve the participant experience while meeting the increased demand for their services which is projected to grow for years to come.

The Kelsey Wright Building broke ground in spring, 2018 and more than doubles the square footage for the programs that they offer along with housing for its participants. The location at the base of Mt. Crested Butte is also home to state-of-the-art adaptive equipment including monoskis, biskis, snowboards and downhill mountain bikes.

"The new Kelsey Wright Building has opened up many avenues for participants to continue to be empowered through outdoor activities," said Marketing Manager Justin Clapp. "With the new amenities that the building provides our team, participants will be able to focus on themselves during their time in Mt. Crested Butte as they see themselves reach their goals overall."

Key elements of the new facility include:

- Equipment Modification and Fit-Up Area
- Adaptive Climbing Wall
- Dedicated Lodge Housing for Participants
- Administration Offices
- Event Space
- Meeting Area and Classroom
- Industrial Kitchen for Food Service
- Basement with locker rentals for the public

While their projected activity totals are expected to surpass 10,000 annually by 2030, the Adaptive Sports Center plans on managing their growth carefully and deliberately to ensure that they continue to offer individualized programs with a personal touch.

"Our focus at the Adaptive Sports Center is on enhancing the lives of people with disabilities through the outdoor activity programs that we offer," said Justin Clapp. "Our participants can be reassured that they will always receive the personalized attention they have known from our programs, and that we will continue to set the standard of excellence for adaptive adventure and adaptive programming."

To find out more about the Adaptive Sports Center, Operation Rise & Conquer, or to register for seasonal programs please visit www.adaptivesports.org or call 970-349-2296.



ADAPTIVE SPORTS CENTER
CRESTED BUTTE, COLORADO