



## **About WAS**

Wintergreen Adaptive Sports ("WAS") is a chapter of Disabled Sports USA and is a 501(c)3 non-profit located at Wintergreen Resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Central Virginia. Established in 1995, WAS provides adaptive sport instruction in skiing, snowboarding, kayaking, canoeing and golf to students with a wide range of physical and cognitive disabilities.

WAS operates seven days a week during the ski season from mid-December to mid-March. During the summer, WAS offers adaptive canoeing and kayaking instruction on various weekends from June to mid-September. Additionally, WAS conducts a mid-summer golf tournament for Wounded Warriors at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, VA.

WAS is governed by a 12-member board of directors. A full-time executive director oversees WAS day-to-day operations which are led by a staff of seven part-time seasonal employees. Instruction is offered by approximately 130 volunteers, most of whom are certified by PSIA (skiing), AASI (snowboard); or ACA (canoeing and kayaking).

## **History**

Established in 1995 and now the largest adaptive snow sports program serving the Mid-Atlantic, WAS provides trained volunteer instructors as well as standard and adaptive ski and snowboard and paddling equipment to people with a wide range of disabilities. Through its program of adaptive sport instruction, WAS offers the therapeutic results of exercise – physical, emotional, and psychological – as well as friendship, inspiration, and encouragement to individuals with a disability, their families and caregivers.

WAS has just completed its 20th year of operation. It has grown steadily over the years to where it now has over 95 volunteer snow sport instructors and over 30 water sport instructors. Included in these numbers are the approximately 30 junior instructors who serve in the snow sports program as apprentices but who also add a unique measure of enthusiasm, playfulness, strength, endurance, and responsibility. WAS has over 50 instructors with PSIA or ACA certifications, the highest instructor certification ratio of any program in the Eastern United States.

WAS is also known nationally for having been the first chapter of Disabled Sports USA to offer a Wounded Warrior Ski and Snowboard Weekend, completing its eleventh such event in 2016, for its extensive mentoring program, under which experienced students and instructors with disabilities serve in mentoring roles with new students, and for its unique junior instructor program. Thanks to generous sponsors, WAS offers complementary snow sports and paddling instruction to combat-injured service members through its "Every Day is Armed Services Day" program, a summer Wounded Warriors Weekend in its paddling program, and a ski race team that competes against other adaptive ski race teams throughout the U.S.

-more-

Over its 20-year history, WAS has given more than 6,000 ski and snowboard lessons to over 1,500 individuals. Over 400 volunteer instructors have donated their time and talents to the program. After nine years of canoe and kayak instruction, WAS has given over 300 all-day lessons with a staff of over 30 volunteers. Today, WAS has become the largest – and one of the most respected – adaptive sports programs serving the mid-Atlantic.

**What is the mission of WAS?**

The mission of WAS is to improve the lives of people with disabilities through outdoor sport and recreation. Anyone with a disability is eligible for its services. WAS students have ranged in age from three to 88 and instruction is offered to individuals of any age with any cognitive, physical, or sensory disability.

The WAS emphasis is on "Safety, Fun, and Learning" and its motto is "All We See is Possibility". In recent years, the most common disabilities among its students were (in descending order), Autism/Asperger's Syndrome, intellectual disability/Downs Syndrome, spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, spina bifida, and PTSD.

###