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CHALLENGE ASPEN MILITARY OPPORTUNITIES (C.A.M.O.) OFFERS NEW & RETURNING CAMP FAVORITES FOR SUMMER 2009

Women's Retreat, Fly Fishing, Black Canyon Rafting and First Military-Based Equine Therapy Camp in the Roaring Fork Valley Round Out Camps June through September



2008 Rocky Mountain Adventure participants with spouses & program director Sarah W. Volf

Aspen, Colo. (April 6, 2009) - Challenge Aspen has been honored to serve veterans with disabilities and their families since its inception. In 2005, in response to the increasing number of injured service men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, Challenge Aspen initiated several year-round outdoor recreational programs specifically designed for newly injured veterans as a healing tool to help usher them back into their new-normal daily life. Due to the popularity, demand and great success of these programs, Challenge Aspen launched a new division in 2008 called Challenge Aspen Military Opportunities (C.A.M.O.) to serve, honor and empower injured service members and their families through top-quality recreational and educational experiences.

Today, C.A.M.O. director Sarah W. Volf announced the addition of four new summer camps in addition to the return of the program's most popular summer offerings, set to kick off June 21 with Rocky Mountain Outdoor Adventure. "We're so excited to be offering some great summer programs for C.A.M.O. participants this year and especially thrilled about an inaugural program especially designed for servicewomen. Although injured servicewomen only account for 3% of the overall population, there is a notable shortage of opportunities for 'female specific' rehabilitation and therapeutic

recreation programs. Challenge Aspen is one of the first to offer a servicewomen's retreat, and we plan to host more."

Rocky Mountain Outdoor Adventure: June 21-26

C.A.M.O. again provides a unique opportunity for a small group of newly injured soldiers with severe disabilities in an adventurous outdoor setting. The program is tailor-made, based upon the needs and goals of the individual participants and their family members. Activities include whitewater rafting, horseback riding, rock climbing, and more.

***NEW* - Black Canyon Whitewater Adventure: July 24-29**

For the very first time, a C.A.M.O. group is going rafting through the exciting whitewater of Colorado's Gunnison Gorge! C.A.M.O.'s unique permit grants access to Class III and IV rapids within spectacular 1200-vertical-foot canyon walls of granite in the remote wilderness, providing a mix of exciting whitewater and calm water float time. Beach camping offers opportunities for hiking, world-class fishing or just kicking back and watching the river flow by.

***NEW* - Horses for Heroes: July 6-11 & August 9-14**

A community-based collaboration between C.A.M.O. and Sopris Therapy Services, "Horses for Heroes" presents the first military-based equine therapy camps in the Roaring Fork Valley.

In addition to daily equine therapy sessions led by a team of professionals, participants have the opportunity to participate in other activities such as whitewater rafting, climbing and visits to the Hot Springs.

***NEW* - Women's Mountain Retreat: August 2-7**

Recognizing a need, C.A.M.O. offers a retreat designed specifically for newly injured servicewomen with cognitive and/or physical disabilities. The program will be led by a team of professionals and will include both daily activities, such as rafting and equine therapy, and wellness and educational workshops in a retreat style setting.

Aspen Wilderness Experience: August 16-22

Challenge yourself with an overnight whitewater rafting adventure that begins in the beautiful Colorado wilderness and ends in the stunning Utah desert! Enjoy the thrill of camping, kayaking, rock climbing and relaxing in natural hot springs during this summer favorite. Activities focus on group efforts, camaraderie, trust, and overcoming obstacles.

***NEW* - Fly Fishing Extravaganza: August 31 - September 5**

New for 2009, the extravaganza focuses on fly fishing, an activity that has proven to be extremely popular with the military. The program consists of river (drift boats) and lake fishing in the pristine Rocky Mountain wilderness with adaptive equipment and techniques as necessary.

Rocky Mountain Expedition: September 6-11

Another C.A.M.O. favorite returns with a week-long recreational and educational program specifically for newly injured soldiers with traumatic brain injuries (T.B.I.) and polytrauma. Participants enjoy a variety of outdoor activities and wellness and educational sessions.

About C.A.M.O. (Challenge Aspen Military Opportunities)

The mission of C.A.M.O. is to raise awareness and educate, honor and empower injured service members with cognitive or physical disabilities and their families through quality recreational and educational experiences. Through these experiences, injured service members are able to realize their life potential, bridging the gap between injuries and moving forward with life's challenges despite adversity.

Operation C.A.M.O. is dedicated specifically to the rapidly growing number of injured soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, who face a multitude of physical, emotional and professional challenges, and who are committed to the hard work required to overcome these challenges extending far beyond their hospital stay. Currently, there is no government funding for these types of programs, and Challenge Aspen is one of only a few organizations offering this type of therapy. For more information, visit www.challengeaspen.org.

Find helpful guidelines for writing about disability at www.lsi.ku.edu/~lsi/aboutus/guidelines.shtml.

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