



Challenge Aspen Contact:
Sarah Williams Volf
970-309-7254
sarah@challengeaspen.com

CHALLENGE ASPEN KICKS OFF INAUGURAL WOMEN'S MOUNTAIN RETREAT, WELCOMING TEN INJURED SERVICEWOMEN TO THE ROARING FORK VALLEY

Aspen, Colo. (August 3, 2009) – Ten injured servicewomen, returning to the U.S. from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, will set off for fun, camping and camaraderie in Westwater Canyon this week, compliments of the C.A.M.O. (*Challenge Aspen Military Opportunities*) program. This weeks' Women's Mountain Retreat is the very first of its kind, specifically designed for women who are recovering from war injuries. The retreat attendees include women with traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), nerve damage, vision loss and paralysis.

"We have been especially looking forward to this inaugural women's program. These types of critical injuries aren't often linked to women in combat, but they exist and desperately need our attention. Some of the injuries our guests are bravely recovering from have come from combat. Others have come from training," says Sarah Volf, C.A.M.O. program director. "These are remarkable women, and we look forward to getting to know them better. One of the women attending this week is the honored recipient of a Purple Heart as a survivor of a mortar attack in Iraq. We will learn a great deal from this first camp for injured female soldiers and will use that knowledge to plan other, helpful camps down the road," she explains.

Women have become an even more crucial element of U.S. troop strength than is commonly known. One in ten U.S. Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan are females. Over 100,000 women have been deployed since September 11, 2001. Over 400,000 women in the military are serving in Active Duty. More women have fought and died in the Iraq War than any since World War II.

The Women's Mountain Retreat this week will specifically focus on new adventures and wellness, offering a unique opportunity for the returning injured veterans to get to know one another in a relaxed, understanding environment with comrades who understand the specific challenges injured female veterans face. Activities planned for the soldiers include a Jeep tour, an overnight rafting and camping trip in Westwater Canyon, and a wellness day at the Glenwood Hot Springs. As a special treat, the ladies will enjoy makeovers, compliments of L'Oreal Cosmetics, in preparation for Monday

night's 6th Annual Vince Gill and Amy Grant Golf Classic gala, where they will be recognized as guests of honor.

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.

###