



DS NEWS USA

Sports Leads to Higher Employment for People with Disabilities, Study Finds

Disabled Sports USA (DS/USA) announced the results of a study conducted with well-known polling firm, Harris Interactive, which shows a direct, positive correlation between involvement of people with disabilities in sports during and after rehabilitation and higher employment levels.

The study also found a positive correlation between attitudes and development of skills and traits that are valuable to successful employment. In short, people with disabilities who were introduced to sports – and remained active in sports – had higher levels of employment, were more fit, confident and sociable, had a more positive view of the future, and best of all, believed that sports helped to get them there.

In a follow-up study, DS/USA found that “Recreational Rehabilitation Service Providers” also believed that their patients/participants who engaged in regular physical activity developed these skills and attitudes faster and to a higher degree and were more employable.

In addition to DS/USA, funding for the studies and surveys came from the U.S. Department of Labor and DS/USA’s partner in sports, Wounded Warrior Project.

Four separate studies involved more than 1,100 adults with disabilities, DS/USA chapter participants, severely injured service members and providers of recreational sports programs for people with disabilities.

The studies found that people with disabilities who indicate that they are physically active are more likely to be employed, advance in their jobs, and led to a healthier lifestyle. In addition, those physically active report a greater life satisfaction and that they are more sociable and positive about their life prospects.

Results showed that the chapter participants (76%) and Wounded Warriors (64%) are more physically active than the general population of adults with disabilities (30%). Chapter participants (68%) and Wounded Warriors (51%) are twice or nearly twice as likely to be employed as adults with disabilities (33%).

Significantly, physically active people with disabilities including all chapter participants, Wounded Warriors, and adults with disabilities, reported that exercise has helped them to not only obtain a job but also to advance in the workplace. More than half (54%) of physically active adults with disabilities believe that being physically active has helped with a promotion. Nearly six in ten (59%) Wounded Warriors and 56% of adults with disabilities who are physically active believe that being physically active has resulted in an increase in their workplace responsibilities.

Furthermore, a majority of the chapter participants (76%) and Wounded Warriors (52%) report that they are in very good or excellent health compared to adults with disabilities (25%). Also, the majority of chapter participants (65%) and nearly half of Wounded Warriors (49%) report that they led a healthier lifestyle than the average American compared to adults with disabilities (19%).

In addition to this study, DS/USA sent a questionnaire to its 98 executive and/or recreation program service providers (chapters of DS/USA) in 38 states to determine whether or not the provision of sports and recreation positively impacts the development of personal and job-related skills of participants. More than 89% of the service providers strongly agree that participation in sports helps improve fitness levels, self-

confidence, independence, and socialization skills. 100% of all service providers strongly agree or somewhat agree that participation in sports programs provide opportunities to develop employment skills such as accountability and responsibility, effective communications, management, and team-building skills. Further, more than 80% strongly agree that participation in sports leads to faster rates of rehabilitation, and at least 86% strongly or somewhat agree that participation in sports leads to higher rates of rehabilitation and employment.

In conclusion, the studies showed that a majority of the participants and the service providers believe that participation in sports-related exercise has benefits that extend beyond the physical gains. This includes higher levels of employment, improvement in physical and mental health, quality of life, and skills valuable to employers, all of which can lead to employment advancement.

“These studies show what we and our chapter leaders have always known anecdotally – that participation in sports by people with disabilities, leads to higher employment levels and individuals who are more confident and able to cope with life’s challenges. We now have the actual data to show how valuable sports are to total and complete rehabilitation,” said Kirk Bauer, JD, executive director of DS/USA for the past 26 years. Bauer benefited from the sports programs of DS/USA after he lost his leg to a grenade in Vietnam in 1969.

Summaries of the study can be found at www.dsusa.org.

Handbook to Help Wounded Warriors Launched at Kickoff Party



A kickoff party to support the release of a new book, “Returning Wars’ Wounded, Injured, and Ill: A Handbook,” was held Oct. 30 in the Washington, D.C., offices of Deloitte Services, LP. Attending were, from left: Ron Drach, Wounded Warrior Project Board President; Melissa Stockwell, Wounded Warrior and Paralympian; Kirk Bauer, DS/USA Executive Director; and Kathy Celso, DS/USA Special Projects Manager.

The book, edited by Nathan D. Ainspan and Walter E. Penk, provides practical guidance and suggestions on living with disabilities. In addition to remarks by the book’s editors and contributors, attendees heard from Stockwell, the first female amputee of the Global War on Terror, whose photo appears on the cover of the book.

Kirk Bauer Named One of 2008's Most Influential and Innovative Sports People

In the July 2008 issue of SportsEvents Magazine, Disabled Sports USA executive director Kirk Bauer was named in the magazine's list of the top 25 "Innovators & Influencers" in the sports community. According to Michelle Martin, managing editor, these 25 are "influencing sports today and building lasting legacies that will impact future athletes, opportunities and events by their in-roads, inspiration and innovation."



In addition to Bauer's achievements with Disabled Sports USA, Martin described his success in "establishing the first nationwide fitness exercise program for the disabled and designating Paralympic athletes as full members of the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) through the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act Amendments of 1998." She also quoted Bauer as saying that he enjoys working in this industry for the chance to change people's lives after a debilitating disease or injury.

Others who joined Bauer on the list include: tennis legend Billie Jean King; Peter Ueberroth, president of the USOC and director of the 1984 Olympic Games; Donna Lopiano, former CEO of the Women's Sports Foundation; and Olympian Joey Cheek, who donated his 2006 Olympic medal bonuses to "Right to Play" promoting sports in third world countries.

Adaptive Snowboarding Committee Formed, USASA to be Governing Body

The United States of America Snowboard Association (USASA) has supported adaptive riders by providing competition opportunities through the Adaptive Division since 2000. Recently a new adaptive committee was formed to address rider needs like accessibility, disability classification, and outreach. USASA just signed a letter of support with the World Snowboard Association, which is a key step toward making adaptive snowboarding a Paralympic sport. USASA Adaptive Committee members include representatives from USASA, Disabled Sports USA, Adaptive Action Sports, and the National Ability Center. For more information, contact USASA representative Noah Cermak at noah@ridemass.org.



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Congratulations Jessica, Paralympic Champion!

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Photos courtesy of Howard County Recreation & Parks Department

Summer Camp: Endless Fun for Everyone!

This past August, Disabled Sports USA (DS/USA) worked with the Howard County Recreation & Parks Department along with several other Maryland-based organizations to develop a new week-long sports camp for teenagers with and without disabilities: Endless Summer Adventures Camp.

Taking place in Queen Anne's County, Md., this inaugural event provided 26 teenagers of varying abilities with the opportunity to participate alongside their peers in outrigger canoeing, kayaking and sailing. The campers participated in a variety of fun team-building sport activities such as the 'shark and minnows' kayaking game and friendly races between 12-person

outrigger canoes. They also worked together to independently steer a 20-foot sailboat on Chesapeake Bay!

In addition to the stimulating sport activities, the teenage participants were also provided with the opportunity to connect with one another as they cooked s'mores, reflected on the day's adventures and shared stories around a campfire during an overnight campout. As a result, the campers developed sport skills, improved self-esteem and established healthy relationships with other like-minded peers.

Howard County Recreation & Parks staff member Corey Hearne said, "Watching the interaction and teamwork between the participants with disabilities and those without and seeing their success as a group made this camp one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had."

Aside from the Howard County Recreation & Parks Department, the groups that helped make this event possible include Cape Ability Outrigger Ohana, Inc.; Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating; Kent Island Outrigger Canoe Club; and Team River Runner, Inc.

The successful partnerships created through the Endless Summer Adventures Camp has opened doors for DS/USA to continue its efforts to further improve and expand adaptive sports and recreation programming in its home state of Maryland.

"Having so many wonderful groups to work with in Maryland made this camp a great success," said Adam Scott, DS/USA. "As the Endless Summer Adventures Camp is only the start of developing greater inclusive sport programs for individuals living in Maryland, we hope that its successful outcomes will soon serve as a model of inclusion for other DS/USA chapters around the country to replicate."



DO YOU HAVE PAIN?

The Translational Pain Research Group at the Brigham and Women's Hospital is seeking individuals with chronic pain as a result of Spinal Cord Injury to participate in a research study.

VOLUNTEERS MUST:

- BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE;
- BE IN GOOD PHYSICAL HEALTH;
- HAVE HAD PAIN FOR AT LEAST 3 MONTHS

Volunteers who qualify for the study **will be reimbursed** for their time. The cost of **travel** to and from BWH will also be reimbursed.



**BRIGHAM AND
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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL

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