

Media Relations

Dept. Of Defense Grant To UNH Brings Military Teens To NH For Winter Sports Camps

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The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program, in partnership with Northeast Passage at UNH, will host winter sports camps for teens from military families, including teens with disabilities, in January and February, 2012. Credit: Sled hockey and Nordic skiing courtesy of Northeast Passage; snowshoe photo by Jeremy Mayhew.

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program, in partnership with Northeast Passage at UNH, has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense and other partners to share New Hampshire's winter sports experiences with teens from military families around the country during four camps in January and February, 2012. Two of the camps will host teens with physical, developmental and cognitive disabilities, the nation's first-ever winter sports camps for military teens with disabilities.

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“Connecting geographically dispersed military teens is important to foster their ability to support one another. These camps let us take advantage of New Hampshire's abundant natural resources for winter outdoor recreation,” says Charlotte Cross of UNH Cooperative Extension, director of UNH's Operation Military Kids program. “We are also very excited to partner with Northeast Passage to serve military families who have teens with special needs.”

The camps, all run out of the Appalachian Mountain Club's Highland Center at Crawford Notch, are free (except for a \$20 charge for incidentals) to 14- through 18-year-olds in military families; registration includes food, lodging, lift tickets, lessons, and equipment rentals. The overnight camps will give military youth the chance to work together, socialize, play and experience new winter activities, including Nordic and alpine skiing, dog sledding, ice skating, and tubing.

Working with Northeast Passage, a nationally renowned UNH program that develops and delivers barrier-free recreation programs, teens with disabilities will sample the same range of winter sports as the non-disabled teens. Camps for disabled teens will make provisions – and in some cases, provide limited travel funds – for personal care assistants accompanying the campers.

“Throughout our 22-year history, Northeast Passage has introduced teens with disabilities and, more recently, veterans and military personnel with disabilities, to winter sports in New Hampshire. We've watched our participants grow, change, and connect with others as they experience something they may never have thought possible,” says Jill Gravink, founder and executive director of Northeast Passage. “This project is a natural extension of that work, and we look forward to working with our partners at UNH and in the White Mountains to bring the thrill of winter sports to this group of teens.”

Camp sessions are Jan. 6 – 9, 2012 (teens with physical disabilities), Jan 20 – 23, 2012 (teens with developmental and cognitive disabilities), and Feb. 19 – 22 and Feb. 26 – 29, 2012 (teens with no disabilities). For additional information and to register, visit www.nhomk.com, or call UNH Cooperative Extension at 603-862-0876 or e-mail militaryteen.camp@unh.edu. More information about Northeast Passage is at www.nepassage.org.

Funding for the camps comes from a partnership between the Department of Defense, Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel

of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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Photographs available to download:

http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/oct/bp21nepassage_02.jpg

http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/oct/bp21nepassage_03.jpg

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Caption: The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program, in partnership with Northeast Passage at UNH, will host winter sports camps for teens from military families, including teens with disabilities, in January and February, 2012.

Credit: Sled hockey and Nordic skiing courtesy of Northeast Passage; snowshoe photo by Jeremy Mayhew.

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