

Media Relations

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UNH Continues Support of Veterans Thanks to Federal Grant

DURHAM, N.H. – A renewed federal grant from the Veteran’s Administration will allow Northeast Passage (NEP) at the University of New Hampshire to continue providing adaptive sports and recreation therapy to veterans and current military personnel with disabilities. The \$300,000 grant helped 271 unique veterans last year and demand is expected to grow this year.

“Our first year has been spent really figuring out what works for programming in this region. We’re so pleased with the outcomes we’ve received and we’re thrilled to be able to continue our work,” said Jill Gravink, director of NEP. “Our continuum of service model is proving successful in helping veterans improve their quality of life.”

NEP has been working with veterans for 10 years, including through U.S. Paralympics, but Gravink noted this particular funding is unique in that it allows services to be provided for any disability to veterans from any era. “Funding streams in the past had limitations and tended to focus on physical disabilities from the recent era. PTSD is a big concern, especially with Vietnam veterans, and this funding allows us to provide services to anyone who needs us.”

Veterans and current military members with disabilities can work with NEP one-to-one in their home to set and accomplish goals, and veteran specific sports and recreation opportunities are also available. Most of the veterans NEP works with are from New Hampshire, but others come from Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts.

“We owe such a debt to our disabled veterans for their tremendous sacrifice to our country,” said U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.). “Adaptive sports programs are a great way for them to build comradery and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Northeast Passage does an outstanding job empowering individuals with disabilities and I’m very pleased that this grant will allow more veterans to gain access to their programs.”

Gravink noted that “the skills gained through participation in adaptive sports can translate to all areas of a participant’s life. We’re seeing these experiences have a powerful impact on the individuals and families we’re working with.”

“I am pleased that Northeast Passage will receive a grant from the VA to support adaptive sports programs,” said U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.). “Sen. Shaheen and I are working together to ensure that Northeast Passage has the resources necessary to continue the important work of ensuring that disabled individuals, including many New Hampshire veterans, can enjoy recreational activities and achieve a better and more well-rounded quality of life.” The demand for Northeast Passage’s services has increased over the past year and Gravink knows they are only scratching the

surface of what's needed in New England and beyond. For more information on Northeast Passage's services for veterans, visit www.nepassage.org.

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