

# U.S. Paralympians, Wounded Warriors To Join The Hartford Ski Spectacular Hosted by Move United

*The Hartford Ski Spectacular is one of the nation's largest and longest running adaptive winter sports festivals for people with disabilities*

BRECKENRIDGE, CO, UNITED STATES, December 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Move United is hosting the 36th annual The Hartford Ski Spectacular at Beaver Run Resort and Breckenridge Ski Resort in Breckenridge, Colorado, December 3-9. The event will bring together more than 800 athletes, ranging in ability from first-time skiers to elite adaptive athletes with opportunities to participate in six adaptive sports.



Derick Byrd, an adaptive snowboarder, goes down the slopes at Breckenridge Ski Resort as part of the 2022 The Hartford Ski Spectacular hosted by Move United

"The Hartford Ski Spectacular is a transformative event in the lives of thousands of attendees and has been for more than three decades," said Glenn Merry, executive director of Move United. "For 30 years, The Hartford has been an ally to the disability community and continues to demonstrate their unwavering commitment to advancing adaptive sports in our country."

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During the festival, The Hartford, along with the most decorated U.S. Winter Paralympian in history, Oksana Masters and Paralympic Medalist Keith Gabel, will surprise 13 deserving athletes with custom-fit adaptive sports equipment on Wednesday, Dec. 6. Adaptive athletes pay approximately 15 times more for equipment than non-adaptive athletes. Over the past five years through its Adaptive Sports program, The Hartford has provided 5,000 pieces of adaptive sports equipment that has impacted

more than 40,000 individuals in over 40 communities across the U.S.

"We are honored to celebrate 30 years as the title sponsor of The Hartford Ski Spectacular" said Jonathan Bennett, head of Group Benefits at The Hartford. "As a leading disability insurer, we have seen the power sports has on getting people back to living active and productive lives. Our long-standing partnership with Move United is helping to break down barriers to participation and make it possible for more youth and adults with disabilities to enjoy the freedom and exhilaration of sports."

In collaboration with the town's Ullr Fest, Move United is hosting the "Race for everyBODY" on Friday, December 8 at Breckenridge Ski Resort. This is an inclusive event that will feature adaptive athletes but is also open to the public.

In addition, over 60 wounded military veterans, service members, family and military medical staff from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, San Antonio Military Medical Center, Fort Carson Soldier Recovery Unit, as well as veterans from nearly a dozen VAs and communities across the U.S will participate in the event as part of their rehabilitation. Since 2003, Move United has served more than 18,500 severely wounded veterans, service members and family members, offering adaptive sports programs in more than 70 different adaptive sports in 45 states through a national network of more than 225 member organizations.

"At The Hartford Ski Spectacular, I've learned a lot and have become a better snowboarder. It is a great opportunity for me to build on my skills, but it really inspired me to want to be a recreational therapist and instructor," said Warfighter and Marine Corps veteran Cristian Martinez.

The Hartford Ski Spectacular also strengthens and expands adaptive snow sports programs in communities across the country by training staff and volunteers at Move United member organizations through the Ski Spectacular Instructor Academy. In addition, the ski instructor academy, endorsed by Professional Ski Instructors of America - American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA-AASI), offers training for instructors in the latest and safest adaptive ski and snowboard techniques for individuals with disabilities.

Additional event sponsors include Veritas Capital, Oshkosh Defense, Leonardo DRS, Tee It Up for the Troops, Bob Woodruff Foundation, Beaver Run Resort & Conference Center, Breckenridge Ski Resort and Breck Sports. This event is also funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Through grant support from the VA, Move United receives funding to increase, expand and enhance the quantity and quality of adaptive sport activities available for disabled Veterans and members of the U.S. Armed Forces to participate in physical activity within their home communities and more advanced U.S. Paralympic and adaptive sport programs at the regional and national levels. The VA also provides essential equipment and technical support to The Hartford Ski Spectacular.

Move United member organization, Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center, will serve as the host organization for the event. Additional contributing members include, Boise Adaptive Snowsport Education, Lounsbury Adaptive Ski Program, New England Disabled Sports, Oregon Adaptive Sports, Spaulding Adaptive Sports Center, Summit Adaptive, and Waterville Valley Adaptive Sports. Partnering organizations include Grand Junction VA Medical Center, Professional Ski Instructors of America-American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA-AASI), and Colorado Adaptive Sports Foundation.

Follow all the action at The Hartford Ski Spectacular by following Move United and #SkiSpec on Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and X. To get involved, please visit <https://www.moveunitedsport.org>.

Shuan Butcher

Move United

+ 12402682180

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