

U.S. Paralympics and St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks Partner to Create Paralympic Sport – Southern Maryland

Paralympic Sport – **Southern Maryland** is a community-based sports club developed to involve youth and adults with physical and visual disabilities in ongoing sports and physical activity, regardless of skill level. All programs and activities will be based in Southern Maryland and run by **St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks. This is the first club in Maryland operating under a Recreation and Parks Department.**

“U.S. Paralympics is dedicated to creating opportunities for individuals with physical and visual disabilities to be physically active in their own communities. Participation in physical activity enhances not only self-esteem and peer relationships, but also results in greater achievement, better overall health and higher quality of life,” said Mike Mushett, U.S. Paralympics Director of Community Programs.

With 21 million Americans living with a physical or visual disability, including thousands of military personnel who've been severely injured while on active duty, this is an important community need. U.S. Paralympics is committed to working with community organizations across the United States to create 250 Paralympic Sport Clubs by 2012.

St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks is a strong advocate for people of all ability levels; the Department believes that every individual, regardless of ability level, is deserving of satisfying recreational, leisure and sporting activities. Paralympic Sport – **Southern Maryland** will initially focus on aquatic programming and programs for injured military personnel, with hopes of expansion to cycling and kayaking in the near future. Sponsors and volunteers are currently being sought.

For more information on how to get involved with Paralympic Sport-Southern Maryland contact Christina Bishop, 301-475-4200 x 1802 or christina.bishop@stmarysmd.com

For more information about U.S. Paralympics, please contact Susan Katz, (719) 866-2068 or susan.katz@usoc.org.

About U.S. Paralympics:

U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, is dedicated to becoming the world leader in the Paralympic sports movement and to promoting excellence in the lives of persons with physical disabilities. Visit the U.S. Paralympics website at www.usparalympics.org.

