



CARLISLE ACADEMY
INTEGRATIVE EQUINE
THERAPY & SPORTS

VETERAN SPORT PROGRAM

Carlisle Academy Integrative Equine Therapy & Sports located in Lyman, Maine, is a founding member of the USEF/USPEA Para-Equestrian Center of Excellence Program, an accredited Paralympic Sport Club, as well as a PATH Premier Accredited Center with a 19-year history. The Academy operates a continuum of integrated equine sports, therapy, and wellness programs. In 2008 Carlisle became the first-accredited equine veterans program in Maine and has operated under PATH's Equine Services for Heroes since that time.

In 2016 in partnership with the United States Equestrian Federation, Carlisle Academy expanded into Paralympic sport programs for veterans through a Federal Adaptive Sports Grant under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. With clinics, outreach, and ongoing education, emerging athletes and coaches gain access to international para-equestrian experts and physical therapists to provide professional assessments and training to enhance sport performance in Para-Equestrian Dressage and Para-Equestrian Driving.

Carlisle Academy's aim through the VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program is to:

- Create a strong foundation of veteran athlete and coach development from the grassroots level through to the elite competition.
- Provide monthly onsite para-dressage and para-driving clinics in select national locations as direct training to eligible veterans utilizing gold-medal coaching experts.
- Encourage para-eligible veterans to participate with the VA's *Veteran Assistance Program for Paralympic Athletes*.
- Provide a National Para-Equestrian Coach Development Program enabling an exponential impact on coaching support to disabled veterans.
- Coordinate with veterans-oriented competitions/games to promote inclusion of Para-Equestrian sports.

The Academy's 150-acre facility is centrally located in Southern Maine. With two indoor arenas, a full-size dressage arena, a driving field, a therapy room and classroom, the space is comfortable and conducive to a productive learning experience. The facility is accessible with ADA-compliant restrooms, parking, viewing room/classroom, lift system, and mounting ramps.

Eligible veterans have physically disabling conditions such as vision impairment, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, and amputation.

For access to funded sport services for veterans, contact Sarah Armentrout, Head of School at 207-985-0374 or sarmentrout@carlisleacademymaine.com.



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What is Para-Equestrian Sport?

Para-equestrian is an equestrian sport governed by the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), and includes two competitive events: Para-Equestrian Dressage and Para-Equestrian Driving. Para-dressage is conducted in similar fashion to conventional dressage, but with riders divided into different competition grades based on their functional abilities, and is the only equestrian discipline recognized at the Paralympics. Para-Driving operates under the same basic rules as Combined Driving but places competitors in various grades based on their functional abilities. Within this adaptive sport orientation, athletes may pursue a national or international sport classification which allows them to compete at recognized regional, national and international horse shows.

“Para” refers to parallel to able-bodied sports, designed for the independent rider/driver with permanent, physical and visual disabilities seeking a competitive track. Paralympics is not Special Olympics, just as Para-Equestrian Sports are distinctly different from Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT). Working with equines in any therapy or sport capacity is good for the whole person. Engaging and empowering disabled veterans through adaptive sports such as these can be life-changing.

