



Athlete Profile (National)

Tricia Wilson-Sapp – Games are the Coolest Thing in the World!



Tricia Wilson-Sapp talks a lot about families, and this 47-year-old entrepreneur from Rockwall, Texas, has two. Her biological family consists of three children and three grandchildren. The other was formed after years of participation in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

A former stocking and accounting specialist in the Army and Marine Corps, Wilson-Sapp is adamant that participating in the Games is key to recovery and re-entry into life for veterans. “The first Thanksgiving after my injury, I didn’t have any desire to leave home,” she said. “I fell out of my chair and needed emergency surgery for a second injury to my spinal cord, yet I *still* felt I would get better and walk.”

She credits Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) volunteers for consistently showing up at the hospital and later at her home. “They wouldn’t go away. They kept trying to get me to participate in their programs.” Although she admittedly “chickened out” of a VA winter sports clinic in 1994, those same PVA volunteers kept trying until she finally agreed to attend the Wheelchair Games the following year. Wilson-Sapp has been a consistent competitor ever since. At the 2006 Games in Anchorage, she will again participate in her favorite events, which include both basketball and softball.

“Athletes new to the Games need to realize that until they attend, they will *never* know the fabulous connections they can make with other people. Lifelong friendships are built and bonds are formed that no one else can possibly understand.” She holds fast to those relationships and fosters them all year as a member of the Texas PVA Chapter’s Honor Guard (who are presenting the Colors at the 2006 Opening Ceremonies) and advocacy activities helping raise awareness about disability issues.

Not wasting any time preparing for the Games, Wilson-Sapp works out daily in the gym. An avid equestrian before her injury, she firmly believes in living life to its fullest. She owns ABC Home Medical, a bronze medal sponsor for the 2006 Games, and enjoys her many roles at the event, and looks forward to a post-Games cruise along the Alaskan waterways with her peers. Her many activities help confirm her belief that “I don’t live in a worse world than I did before, just a different one.” Now a counselor to recently injured veterans, Tricia Wilson-Sapp touts the benefits of the Games almost daily. “It’s changed my life. I wouldn’t be where I am without VA, PVA and the Games. It’s just the coolest thing in the world.”