



Rhode Island Lions Sight Foundation, Inc.

April 7, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Lions Sight Foundation (RILSF), I am writing to express our unanimous support of Veterans Rowing and Kayaking Inc. in their application to the VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program.

Our Mission is to provide assistance to the visually impaired persons in our communities by partnering with the RI Lions Clubs and other related organizations or individuals. The RILSF is composed of representatives from Lions Clubs around Rhode Island, and the assistance we provide can be financial, material, social and developmental.

We have been involved with the newly formed Rhode Island Division in supporting a program for Blind Veterans since 2015 and continue to support the program. The feed-back we have received from the Veterans, and the Volunteers that transport or train them, has been very positive in improving their strength, agility and endurance. Evidence of this is seen in their performance during the recent "Crash B" International Indoor Rowing competition where they earned several Gold & Silver medals!

We are also aware of the emotional benefits that the participants receive by building their self-esteem and in helping them to break out of their otherwise reclusive and sedentary life-style.

The program is currently limited to a bi-weekly schedule due to financial and transportation limitations but, with sufficient funding, it is poised to expand into a weekly program with more participants and an expanded participation in additional competitions. Our enthusiasm at the RILSF for the Veterans Rowing and Kayaking Program and for the continued benefit of our Veterans, has led to our commitment to promote and support the growth of the program. However, we can only offer limited financial help and the growth of the program will require more than we are able to provide.

We can only speak of our experience with the participating Blind Vets of Rhode Island, but we understand that the VR&K program is reaching into other parts of the country. To that end, we sincerely hope that your grant program can help them achieve those goals by awarding them the grant being requested from the VA Adaptive Sports Program.

Yours in Lionism,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Barthelmy".

Ken Barthelmy
Scituate RI Lion & RILSF Member