For Immediate Release

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CHALLENGED ATHLETES FOUNDATION® (CAF) AND YMCA OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY LEAD THE WAY TO PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH PERMANENT PHYSICAL DISABILITIES ACCESS TO YMCA MEMBERSHIPS

YMCA of San Diego County returns as CAF partner on Oct. 22, 2017 to La Jolla Cove for the Tiki Tour de Cove Stationary Cycling Event to Provide Access to Sports and Fitness for Physically Challenged Athletes

San Diego– Sept. 19, 2017 – The Challenged Athletes Foundation® (CAF) is honored to continue and expand its partnership with the YMCA of San Diego County (YMCA), awarding nearly 200 additional grants this year to local challenged athletes to excel through complimentary YMCA memberships.

Since 2013, the YMCA and CAF have built a strong foundation with shared commitment to improve the lives of others and make a difference in the community. Together the YMCA and CAF are creating a culture where all feel welcome and have access to a supportive fitness and

community environment. The YMCA offers all qualifying San Diego CAF grant recipients complimentary Lifetime Family Memberships to all branches in the county. Over the past four years, 577 physically challenged athletes and 1,571 immediate family members, for a total of 2,118 people, have received lifetime YMCA membership.

An exemplary individual who has taken full advantage of his complimentary YMCA membership is **U.S. Paralympian in Wheelchair Rugby, Lee Fredette**. As a freshman in college, Fredette was paralyzed from the chest down when he fell head-first from his dirt bike. While in recovery, he and his mother sat down and watched the documentary "Murderball." He was instantly inspired to play wheelchair rugby.... playing poker, water skiing, playing video games, weight lifting and boating. In 2014, he moved from New York to play Division 1 collegiate Wheelchair Rugby team in San Diego. It was then that he got involved with the YMCA as a CAF Grant Recipient.

Fredette said, "I put in hundreds of hours training at the **Rancho Family YMCA** to maximize my physical ability and the results paid off. In 2016, I was a major player on the starting line-up at the RIO Paralympics and our team won a silver medal. I'm now focused on 2020 and I'll continue my training at the YMCA to help my team bring home the gold."

CAF Executive Director Virginia Tinley stated, "We are incredibly proud of the growing relationship we have with the YMCA of San Diego County. Their support of our premiere fundraising event, Tour de Cove, helps CAF provide more grants for adaptive sports equipment, training and competition expenses to challenged athletes around the world. The YMCA of San Diego County is also leading the way for other YMCA's around the country. In the past year, we have expanded the membership grant program to include **YMCAs in Philadelphia, Boulder Valley, and Dallas/Arlington/Fort Worth**."

"Our CAF members are some of the most active members and athletes in our YMCA. Every time I'm in the wellness center with one of them, they are always so appreciative and thankful for their Y membership," said **Baron Herdelin-Doherty, President & CEO of the YMCA of San Diego County**. "They love our facilities, staff and how we care for their needs as we include them in everything we provide."

The ***2017 YMCA of San Diego County Tour de Cove,*** themed the "Tiki Tour," will feature a four-and-a-half hour stationary cycling marathon. There will be 100 bikes donated by Keiser at La Jolla Cove overlooking the Pacific Ocean. YMCA's top cycling instructors will take the stage to motivate the riders through a challenging workout alongside more than 50 challenged athletes. The event takes place in conjunction with the 24th annual ***Aspen Medical Products San Diego Triathlon Challenge.*** Partners SYCUAN Casino and Headsweats also contribute to this transformational day.

People interested in participating can register as an individual or as part of a three-person relay team. All participants receive great perks including a goody bag featuring custom *Tour de Cove* cycling jersey, event t-shirt, sweatshirt, visor, water bottle and more. To learn more about the event, click here.

About the Challenged Athletes Foundation

The Challenged Athletes Foundation® (CAF) is a world leader in helping people with physical challenges lead active, healthy lifestyles. CAF believes that participation in physical activity at any level increases self-esteem, encourages independence and enhances quality of life. Since 1994, more than $80 million has been raised and over 18,000 funding requests from people with physical challenges in all 50 states and dozens of countries have been satisfied. Additionally, CAF's outreach efforts reach another 60,000 individuals each year. Whether it's a $2,500 grant for a handcycle, helping underwrite a carbon fiber running foot not covered by insurance, or arranging enthusiastic encouragement from a mentor who has triumphed over a similar challenge, CAF's mission is clear: give opportunities and support to those with the desire to live active, athletic lifestyles To learn more, visit challengedathletes.org or call 858-866-0959.

About the YMCA of San Diego County

The YMCA of San Diego County is a non-profit dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to helping all people realize their fullest potential as children of God through development of the spirit, mind and body. It is the second largest Y in the nation serving more than 400,000 San Diego County residents and employing more than 5,000 people. Through a variety of programs and services focused on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y unites men, women and children - regardless of age, income or background - to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Visit www.ymca.org to find your local YMCA or call (858) 292-YMCA (9622).