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Record 2,448 Challenged Athletes Foundation Grants Awarded Worth Over \$3.7 Million to Individuals with Physical Challenges

Funds go towards adaptive sports equipment like Össur custom built running and mobility prosthetics, coaching expenses, YMCA memberships, training in preparation for the Paralympic Games, IRONMAN® races, and more.

San Diego, California — May 4, 2017 — The Challenged Athletes Foundation® (CAF) is proud to announce unprecedented financial support through its annual grant program, which provides financial assistance for sports equipment, sports prosthetics, coaching, mentoring, and competition expenses for athletes of all ages and abilities who wish to live active lifestyles and compete in sports at any level.

Through the 2017 distribution – the largest grant distribution to-date in the organization’s 24-year history – 2,448 grant recipients in 42 countries are receiving a variety of grants across 97 sports. These grants represent more than \$3.7 million in support and a 17% growth in the number of approved grants over the 2016 calendar year. The grants, which are one of the many ways CAF supports athletes with permanent physical challenges,



empower individuals to take part in life-affirming sports and fill an important void that otherwise can leave challenged athletes on the sidelines. CAF is a vital resource for the adaptive community, helping those born with a physical impairment unlock personal potential and helping those faced with a life-changing event with the resources they need to succeed in sports and in life.

Highlights of the 2017 Grant program:

- 17% growth in number of grants approved over prior year
- 37% of those approved are first time CAF grant recipients
- 307 are permanently injured military personnel and first responders (supported by CAF's Operation Rebound program) with a 27% increase in female military personnel over 2016
- All ages are represented (the youngest grantee is 5-years-old, the oldest is 83-years-old)
- 644 Grants to fund Sport Equipment Expenses
- 757 Grants to fund Competition Travel Expenses
- 254 Grants to fund Coaching and Training Expenses
- Age Breakdown
 - Youth under 18 – 28%
 - 18-35 – 38%
 - 36-55 – 27%
 - 55 up – 7%

Breakdown by physical disability

- Amputee – 20%
- Paraplegia – 17%
- Visual Impairment – 15%
- Spina Bifida – 11%
- Cerebral Palsy – 10%
- Other – 27%

Most popular sports by Grant Award

- Wheelchair basketball – 268
- Track and Field – 190
- Beep Baseball – 112
- Triathlon – 82
- Wheelchair Rugby – 79
- Running – 79
- Handcycling- 78



- Cycling – 78
- Swimming – 73
- Sled Hockey - 63

Highly technical, and in many cases customized, adaptive sports equipment is expensive and not typically covered by medical insurance, which means many athletes with a desire to be active and compete are not able to function at their highest ability.

“Any individual who has a physical challenge should never feel left out from participating in sports or physical activities,” said CAF Co-Founder and Chief Storyteller, Bob Babbitt. “At CAF, we believe sports can change lives. That’s why we’re so committed to our grant programs – they are unique in the world of adaptive sports. A single grant empowers challenged athletes which in turn creates positive change for individuals, families, communities, and society at large.”

Grantee Spotlights

First-time grant recipient, 11-year old Landis Sims from Indiana, is a bilateral below-knee and below-elbow amputee since birth. Landis is a starter on his school basketball team, honor roll student, and plays 12U rec baseball. Landis shared in his grant application, “I want to be a professional baseball player for the New York Yankees. My personal motto is *Just Watch Me*. I will use this travel grant to attend the Endeavor Games.”

First-time grant recipient from Idaho, Rachel Corey, was hit by a car in September, 2016 while training for the IRONMAN® World Championship race, resulting in a spinal cord injury “I treat my rehab like I treated my IRONMAN® training. I desire to get back to competing, not just to fuel my fire, but to show other people who are in my situation that we can tackle extreme challenges and accomplishments and lead a fulfilling life.” said Rachel.

Nine-time grant recipient, Adrian Broca from Los Angeles, whose blindness is the result of a genetic disorder, has run thirty-six marathons in the last fifteen years. “CAF has made it possible for me to compete at the Chicago and Boston Marathons multiple times. This year’s grant will pay for travel expenses for my guide and I to attend training camps,” said Adrian.

Get all the details and statistics on the 2017 CAF Grant Distribution sheet [HERE](#)

Read more about the 2017 Grant Recipients Profiles [HERE](#)



Follow 2017 grant recipients on social media through #TeamCAF on Facebook- Challenged Athletes Foundation, Twitter- @CAFoundation and Instagram- @CAFoundation.

San Diego Grant Night Presentation

When: Wednesday, May 10, 2017. 6pm-8pm. Media interviews with challenged athletes starting at 5pm.

Where: Deni and Jeff Jacobs Challenged Athletes Center
9591 Waples Street
San Diego, CA 92121

What: Special Presentations to local challenged athlete grant recipients. Participants include:

- 1) Parker Olenick - Age 13 - Cerebral Palsy - Sled Hockey Coaching Grant
- 2) Ivonne Mosquera-Schmidt - Age 40 - Visually Impaired Track & Field Athlete – 2016 Team USA Paralympian - Grant for Norma-Tec Compression Recovery System
- 3) Mary Cricchio - Age 52 - Surfer with Left-Sided Hemiplegia – Surfboard Grant
- 4) Zaphire Alonso - Age 22 – Above-Knee Amputee – Össur Flex-Run Running Foot
- 5) Lindsay Hood - Age 41 – Below-Knee Amputee - Össur Cheetah Running Foot
- 6) Angelo Tigershark Sanchez - Age 9 – Spina Bifida – Off-Road Handcycle Grant
- 7) Jose Estrada - Age 19 – Transverse Myelitis – Wheelchair Basketball Competition Grant
- 8) Pablo Villareal - Age 42 – Above-Knee Amputee - YMCA and Ossur grantee - Össur Cheetah Running Knee
- 9) Mike Johnston - Age 33 - Below-knee Amputee - Triathlete and Operation Rebound representative - Scott Bicycle Grant

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 13,000 funding requests from people with physical challenges in all 50 states and over 40 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.

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