



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:**  
Christy Fritts  
Phone: 858.442.9570  
[christy@challengedathletes.org](mailto:christy@challengedathletes.org)



**OVER 250 PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED ATHLETES AND 800 FUNDRAISING SUPPORTERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ASPEN MEDICAL PRODUCTS SAN DIEGO TRIATHLON CHALLENGE**

*Challenged Athletes Foundation® (CAF) hosts a Transformational Community Sports Weekend of Events where athletes of all ages and abilities participate together*

**SAN DIEGO, CA — October 9, 2019 – CAF announced today that** more than 5,000 supporters, spectators, volunteers and participants will flock to La Jolla for the **26<sup>th</sup> Annual Aspen Medical Products San Diego Triathlon Challenge on October 20<sup>th</sup>**. The triathlon is the culmination of a full line-up of fundraising and community building events including the Million Dollar Challenge seven-day coastal ride, adaptive sports clinics, the YMCA Tour de Cove stationary cyclethon, Kaiser Permanente Thrive Yoga by the Sea, a 5K walk, parade of athletes, the Philadelphia Insurance Challenged Athlete Kids Run and the Celebration of Abilities Awards Dinner. The unique “challenge” style triathlon features a one-mile ocean swim, a 44-mile bike ride, and a 10-mile run that attracts celebrities, legends, professionals and adaptive athletes from all over the country to raise funds to help individuals with physical challenges get the support needed to succeed in sports and in life.

CAF -- a world-leader in helping individuals with physical challenges pursue sports and physical fitness -- hosts the annual event which is designed to celebrate inspirational athletic spirit while building camaraderie amongst athletes of all abilities.

“It has been called the Best Day in Tri,” says **CAF Chief Executive Director Virginia Tinley**. “But this weekend has transcended far beyond triathlon. It really is one of the most inclusive sports environments where athletes of all ages and abilities experience first-hand the power of sport to pull people together.”

A star-studded line-up of Paralympians and challenged athlete legends like **Rudy Garcia-Tolson, Scout Bassett, Megan Blunk, Willie Stewart, Sarah Reinertsen, Carlos Moleda** and **Andre Kajlich** will also participate throughout the weekend. US Para Swim Champion Roderick Sewell and the first mother-daughter team Beth & Liza James are returning in time after racing the **IRONMAN® World Championships** in Kona. Hall of Fame triathlon legends Michellie Jones, Kathleen McCartney, Julie Moss and Scott Tinley will also be participating along with recent Ironman record holder and sensation, Cam Wurf. Also returning to the scene are Mayor Faulconer and San Diego’s former Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman, **NBA Hall of Famer Bill Walton**, the San Diego Padres’ Pad Squad and for the first time ever, ninja warriors from NBC’s action-packed series **American Ninja Warrior** will be on-site to fire up athletes and demonstrate their growing circle. Ninja Warriors include 2019 ANW Champion Drew Drechsel, Jesse “Flex” Labreck, Mathis “The Kid” Owahdi, Nate Burkhalter, Chris DiGangi and Tiana Webberley.

To kick off the weekend on Friday, October 18, CAF will welcome home over 120 cyclists from the **Million Dollar Challenge** who will have completed a seven-day bike ride from Palo Alto to San Diego to raise over a million dollars in support of CAF’s mission. Earlier that morning, CAF will also host the **Junior Seau Foundation Adaptive Surf Program Kids Clinic**. At the surf clinic, kids of all ages and abilities learn adaptive surfing skills from specialized coaches. Also featured will be the **XTERRA Wetsuits Ocean Water Swim Clinic** at La Jolla Shores.

On Friday evening, CAF will host its annual **Celebration of Abilities Awards Dinner** at Irwin M. Jacobs Qualcomm Hall to recognize partners and challenged athletes from around the country for their trailblazing and inspirational achievements in the prior year.

On Saturday, October 19, a series of adaptive sports clinics will be held at La Jolla Jewish Community Center to provide expert coaching and mentoring for over 250 challenged athletes from across the nation. The sports clinics include Össur Running and Mobility, Wheelchair Tennis and Adaptive Swimming.

On Sunday, October 20 at La Jolla Cove our signature event for the weekend the festivities kick off with the **Parade of Athletes**, where challenged athletes, sports legends, and celebrities walk together in preparation for the challenge-distance triathlon. Two hundred and fifty athletes with physical challenges and 800 fundraising supporters will participate in the **Aspen Medical Products San Diego Triathlon Challenge** with the option to compete as an individual or as part of a three-person swim/bike/run relay team. Another reason this event is referred to as “the best day in tri” is due to its unique “challenge” distance format that allows participants to complete in the events side by side.

“I was completely moved from the first-time I participated in this event,” says triathlete and long-time CAF supporter, Rosalind Jarrett Sepulveda. “Whether you’re a participant or spectator you will leave inspired to do the sports you love and make a difference in the lives of others.”

Other Sunday highlights include the **YMCA of San Diego County Tour de Cove Stationary Cyclethon, Philadelphia Insurance Kid’s Run, Kaiser Permanente THRIVE Yoga by the Sea, and 5K Fitness Walk**. New for 2019, will be an **American Ninja Warrior challenge** where athletes of all abilities can put their ninja skills to the test. There is something for everyone at the Cove during this packed day of events.

The Aspen Medical Products San Diego Triathlon Challenge weekend celebrates the power of sport to transform lives, build community and change perceptions of what people with permanent physical disabilities can accomplish. Funds raised from these events directly support CAF’s mission to provide opportunities and support to people with physical challenges so they can pursue active lifestyles through physical fitness and competitive athletics. CAF believes that involvement in sports at any level increases self-esteem, encourages independence, and enhances one’s quality of life and the San Diego Triathlon Challenge is every athlete’s chance to prove it.

Registration for these events is open. Please visit [www.challengedathletes.org/weekend](http://www.challengedathletes.org/weekend)  
Schedule of events

Every year, awards are presented to select CAF athletes and supporters who have demonstrated extraordinary amounts of strength, resilience, and commitment. 2019 Celebration of Abilities Award Winners are:

**Exceptional Athletic Performance Award** - Mark Barr, a single-leg amputee with an impressive three-time Olympic background in swimming. After being one of the first athletes to attend CAF’s paratriathlon camps, he has dominated the sport and gone undefeated in every ITU Race in 2019 and currently holds the ITU Champion Title in paratriathlon.

**Aspen Medical Products Most Inspirational Athlete Award:** The first CAF Women’s Handcycling Team has just been established and will create a vision to get more women involved in the growing sport of handcycling and competing at the highest level. These athletes are changing the face of women in the cycling world and sports in general. Alicia Dana, Oksana Masters, Velette Britt, Gabrielle Platt, Lera Doederlein, Edie Perkins, Danielle Watson. Coaches and Managers: Carlos Moleda, Sarah Moleda, Dr. Ralf Lindschulten.

**The Jim MacLaren Award:** J.A. and Kathryn Albertsons Family Foundation (JKAF) for investing in the vision launch and ongoing support of CAF-IDAHO – our statewide initiative. CAF-Idaho will fund individual grants to athletes residing in all corners of the state and who participate in a wide variety of sports from alpine skiing, wheelchair basketball and cycling, to rock climbing, track and field, triathlon and wheelchair rugby.

**Trailblazer Award:** Hoda Mohamed has lived with polio since childhood and is Egypt’s first female wheelchair athlete now breaking into the male-dominated sport of wheelchair

racing in her country. In April 2018, she became the first woman in Egypt to compete alongside men in a wheelchair race, where she took an impressive 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 800 meter and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 1500 meter races. She hopes to one day represent her country on the world stage of the Paralympics.

**Sam Day Rising Star Award/Male:** Tyler Jones has battled cancer since the age of 2. Now, as 17-year old, below knee amputee he is a passionate sprinter and long jumper who also competes in wheelchair basketball and wrestling. He has dreams of competing on Paralympic Team USA and becoming an orthopedic oncologist, so that he can help other kids like him. One of his most unique qualities is helping others feel better in their own skin and encouraging hope.

**Sam Day Rising Star Award/Female:** Liv Stone grew up living an active lifestyle as a congenital bilateral above elbow amputee. She excelled in soccer, rifle, power training and running. After surfing her first wave at an adaptive surfing retreat in Del Mar, she moved across the states to continue her newfound sport. She plans to continue surfing and wants to be able to join the USA National Adaptive Team. Because of being born with her limb difference, she doesn't know any other way but to quickly adapt to her challenges.

**Partner of the Year Award:** IRONMAN® will be recognized in recognition of the longstanding partnership and five million dollars raised through their participation. This support has allowed thousands of CAF supported athletes to compete around the world while creating some iconic moments crossing the finish line.

Sponsors of the weekend's events include: Aspen Medical Products, Össur, Nike, Converse, YMCA of San Diego County, XTERRA Wetsuits, Ashworth Awards, Philadelphia Insurance Companies, Lusardi Construction, VitalFitSR, LAZ Parking, Kaiser Permanente, Accenture, Sycuan Resort Casino, Toyota, Union Bank, Headsweats, Life Time Fitness, Zappos Adaptive, Watkins Wellness, Smoothie King, Wells Fargo Advisors and performance nutrition partners CLIF Bar and GU.

#### ***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 \$112 million has been raised and over 26,000 funding requests from people with physical challenges in all 50 states and dozens of countries have been satisfied. Additionally, CAF's outreach efforts impact 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](http://challengedathletes.org) or call 858-866-0959.*

#### ***About Aspen Medical Products***

*Aspen Medical Products is a leader in the design, development and marketing of upper and lower spinal orthotics. The Company is headquartered in Irvine, Calif. and has local sales representatives throughout the United States as well as representation worldwide. For more than 30 years, the management team and employees at Aspen have introduced a continuous flow of pioneering spinal bracing products and services to the healthcare marketplace. For more information, visit us online at [AspenMP.com](http://AspenMP.com).*

# # #