

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Media Contact:
Christy Fritts
Challenged Athletes Foundation
858.442.9570



Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) Distributes a Record-breaking 3,921 Individual Grants.

Individuals around the world with physical challenges to receive grants for adaptive sports equipment, training and competition expenses at a critical time

SAN DIEGO, CA – March 26, 2020 – Many lives are rapidly changing around the globe and the **Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF)** has remained committed and focused on positively impacting athletes with physical challenges. CAF proudly announced today a record-breaking 3,921 individual grants awarded to empower the dreams of athletes worldwide – making it the largest grant distribution to-date in the organization’s 26-year history. CAF is a world leader and has helped thousands of athletes with physical challenges improve their lives through sports and fitness.

“Our unique grant program brings a beacon of hope and positive impact to thousands of challenged athletes around the world. Over the past year, our supporters, grant funders, fundraisers and corporate partners have helped raise critical funds to make this possible,” said **Virginia Tinley**, CAF Chief Executive Director. “Our largest grant distribution in history comes at a critical time when these life-changing grants will be needed more than ever.”

Through the 2020 grant distribution, challenged athletes in 50 states and 42 countries are receiving a variety of grants representing \$5.9 million in support. Each individual has a unique

personal story, and without this critical funding, participation in sports would be unattainable due to the high cost of adaptive sports equipment and limited opportunities to practice and compete. From first-time applicants to elite athletes playing at the highest level of their sport, the 2020 grant recipients range from three to 95 years old.

CAF initiatives like the annual grant distribution are designed to help people realize their full potential. The Grant Program includes funding for adaptive sports equipment not covered by medical insurance such as running prosthetics, handcycles and sport wheelchairs, along with training and competition travel expenses. In the past year, CAF has increased awareness for transformational programs like **Operation Rebound** that supports injured military, veterans and first responders, as well as the first-ever **High School Adaptive Sports Program** in Northern and Southern California that supports and prepares student athletes for their school teams. Through CAF grants, camps, clinics, mentorship and community, athletes of all ages and abilities can enrich their lives through sport.

“Sports are the platform to help someone live their best life, and that’s why we are so committed to providing access to not only equipment, but a supportive athletic community.” said **Bob Babbitt**, CAF Co-Founder and Ambassador.

This year’s historic grant distribution spans across 103 different sports and activities including track & field, adaptive fitness training, blind surfing, wheelchair rugby, equestrian, sledge hockey and more.

2020 Grant Distribution Facts and Figures

103 sports

50 states + Puerto Rico

42 countries

Youngest grant recipient- Age 3

Oldest grant recipient- Age 95

30% of grant recipients under age of 18

39% are first-time grant recipients

35% are female

65% are male

Income Stats

36% of households earn under \$20K/year

26% of households earn income between \$20K-\$50K/year

Breakdown by Disability

21% Amputation

18% Paraplegia

13% Spina Bifida

13% Visual Impairment

11% Cerebral Palsy
5% Quadriplegia
5% Limb Difference
14% Other

2020 Grant Athlete Spotlights:

Name: Andrew Campbell – Santee, CA

Grant: Össur Cheetah Junior Running Prosthesis

Bio: Andy, natural athlete with a charismatic love for all things outdoors, was born with proximal femoral focal deficiency. After over a dozen surgical procedures to salvage his limb and several years in a wheelchair, it was decided that he could be more active with an amputation and a prosthetic. Now 10 years old, he enjoys football, basketball, baseball, tetherball, wallball, dodgeball, martial arts and gymnastics. A high-activity prosthesis will allow Andy more freedom, speed and agility on the sports field and running track. His courage in the face of adversity and positive outlook on life inspires those around him.

Physical Challenge: Single Below-Knee Amputation

Name: Maximus Wong – Flushing, NY

Grant: RGK Grand Slam Tennis Chair

Bio: Max is a rising wheelchair tennis player with goals of playing at an elite level. He became paralyzed from the waist down at two years old after a laminectomy was performed to remove a spinal cord tumor. Now 12 years old, Max is happiest when playing sports. He's quickly improving his wheelchair movement skills and reaction time as a more competitive athlete. With this CAF grant, he's aiming to improve his skills.

Physical Challenge: Paraplegia

Name: Kelly McMains – Garden City, ID

Grant: Össur Flex-Run Prosthesis and Spartan Training

Bio: In 2017, Kelly was in a car accident that resulted in a moderate traumatic brain injury and ultimately the loss of her right leg. A short two years later, Kelly accomplished a major athletic goal of completing her first Spartan Race. She was an athlete for years before the accident, mostly swimming and playing basketball and softball. Now with CAF's support, Kelly is excited to continue pursuing Spartan races and compete at a higher level.

Physical Challenge: Single Below-Knee Amputation

Name: Dianne "Leigh" Sumner – Newton Grove, NC

Grant: Handcycling Training

Bio: Leigh is a Marine veteran who was trained as a Russian linguist. She served as an Intelligence Officer and Foreign Area Officer until her retirement in 2006 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 1996, while responding to Hurricane Fran in North Carolina, Leigh sustained a spinal cord injury that left her partially paralyzed from the waist down. With aggressive therapy and fitness rehabilitation, Leigh was able to pass fitness standards and

remain on active duty. Upon retirement from her 23-year career in the service, she also operated a fitness training and rehabilitation business for 10 years. Leigh was introduced to adaptive sports in 2015 and has since become an avid rower and handcyclist. With the support of CAF's Operation Rebound, she's looking to advance as a handcyclist and reach her full potential as an athlete.

Physical Challenge: Paraplegia

Name: Shelby Baron – Tuscaloosa, AL

Grant: Travel/Competition Expenses

Bio: Shelby is a Paralympian with her sights set on the next Paralympic Games. She was born with spina bifida and felt free when she was introduced to wheelchair tennis. She represented Team USA in her first World Cup at 16 years old and six years later made it to the Paralympic Games in Rio in 2016. A CAF grant is helping Shelby compete in tournaments and setting her on the path to qualifying for the Paralympics.

Physical Challenge: Spina Bifida

Name: Avery Dauer – San Francisco, CA

Grant: RGK Elite Basketball Chair

Bio: Avery has always had a passion for wheelchair basketball and accomplishing common goals with a team. He was born with cerebral palsy and loves the freedom he feels when sailing down the court in a basketball wheelchair. The sport inspires Avery's creative process and also teaches him the discipline and commitment needed to sing and act. This CAF grant will help him develop his skills and ultimately feel free.

Sport: Wheelchair Basketball

Physical Challenge: Cerebral Palsy

Follow 2020 grant recipients on social media through #teamCAF or #CAFpowersthrough on Facebook - Challenged Athletes Foundation, Twitter - @CAFoundation and Instagram - @CAFoundation

Media Kit:

For highlight video of these incredible grant recipients, click here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/73z61opks4303uw/CAF_PowersThrough_VIDEO.mp4?dl=0

For images and bios of these and more grant recipients, click here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3480c69nwolrcey/AABYIX4hfVeuLF1f108DeeJza?dl=0>

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 \$123 million has been raised and over 30,000 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 or call 858-866-0959.