



# 2021 ANNUAL GRANT DISTRIBUTION

S T R O N G E R   T H R O U G H   S P O R T





CAF ENCOURAGES ATHLETES TO BE STRONGER THROUGH SPORT

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters during one of the most difficult years in recent history, CAF has awarded **3,038 grants totaling \$5.1 Million** in 2021 for individuals with physical challenges. Many of these grants provide critical support for coping with the impact of the pandemic. Despite the challenges of our times, we have been able to pivot our support to help athletes with their changing needs for living an athletic lifestyle.

In addition to our annual grant distribution, **CAF deferred over 450 grants from 2020** awarded to challenged athletes whose plans for travel, competition and training were abruptly put on hold due to the pandemic.



GENERAL FACTS & FIGURES

- ▶ 49 States + Puerto Rico
- ▶ 52 Countries
- ▶ 2 Years old - youngest
- ▶ 76 Years old - oldest
- ▶ 38% Female
- ▶ 62% Male

TOTAL # OF GRANTS

3,038

# OF SPORTS

94

YOUTH GRANTS

Under age of 18

22 %

FIRST-TIME GRANT RECIPIENTS

38 %

BREAKDOWN BY PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

21%	Amputation	11%	Spina Bifida
9%	Paraplegia	9%	Spinal Cord Injury
9%	Cerebral Palsy	3%	Retinitis Pigmentosa
3%	Polio	14%	Other

INCOME BREAKDOWN

66% Households earning less than \$50,000/year

Within that percentage, 40% of households earn less than \$20,000/year

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

KADENCE “KRISTIN” LONG, AGE 11

Broken Arrow, OK

Grant: Top End Preliminator Racing Wheelchair

Sport: Wheelchair Racing

Physical Challenge: Spina Bifida

Kadence was born with Spina Bifida but that didn’t stop her from competing in swimming and wheelchair racing at the Endeavor Games in 2018.

Before the pandemic she was just starting to find her competitive streak in the adaptive world. She was learning turns and increasing her speed racing her wheelchair. Kadence looks forward to being a part of a team soon.



SHELBY LEE, AGE 4

Gilbert, AZ

Grant: Össur Sports Foot

Sport: Gymnastics

Physical Challenge: Single Below Knee Amputation

Shelby was born with a rare condition in her left leg resulting in amputation before she was one. As a toddler, she participated in the Desert Challenge Games toddler run and her parents noticed that sports have built her confidence and helped form new friendships.

Shelby does not want to sit on the sidelines. She now has her eyes on joining a soccer league and returning to gymnastics when restrictions are lifted. She looks forward to keeping up with other children and gaining new experiences.

DOMINIC OZETA, AGE 15

Riverside, CA

Grant: Sport Expense Grant

Sport: Soccer

Physical Challenge: Limb Deficiency

Dominic has not let his congenital limb deficiency stop him from excelling in soccer. Sports has allowed him to travel and meet people that he has inspired, which he feels is very fulfilling.

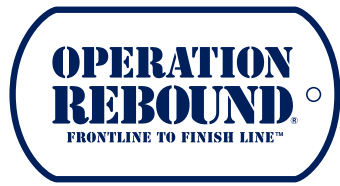
He has gained self-esteem, confidence and wants to inspire others to get out and play, regardless of their limb differential. Dominic is now on the Varsity soccer team at his high school - as a freshman.





GRANT PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT ▶ OPERATION REBOUND

Getting injured military and first responders back in the game and stronger through sport.



- ▶ 212 Grants given
- ▶ 39% First-time grant recipients
- ▶ \$438,464 in total funding
- ▶ 29 Purple Heart recipients

- ▶ 12% Air Force
- ▶ 44% Army
- ▶ 27% Marines
- ▶ 3% National Guard
- ▶ 14% Navy
- ▶ 1% Border Patrol
- ▶ 4% Fire Fighter
- ▶ 1% Paramedic
- ▶ 1% State Guard
- ▶ 7% Police



CANDICE CEASER

U.S. Army, Fresno, TX

Grant: Zwift membership and archery equipment

Sports: Handcycling and Archery

Physical Challenge: Right side hemiparesis and foot drop

Candice, a native Texan, comes from a line of Army war veterans. Her grandfather served in World War II and her father in Vietnam. In May 1994, after 4 years of college Candice enlisted in U.S. Army with hopes of being a drill sergeant like her father. Tragically, in December 1999 her military career ended suddenly with an accident. She sustained a TBI and Spinal cord injury which left her traumatized and paralyzed. Candice suffers from right side hemiplegia and Brown Sequard Syndrome; she is a walking quadriplegic and was medically retired from the military.

She found that being active in sports has changed her life. Faced by the fear of a short-lived distance running career she started to participate in triathlons and handcycling. She has since completed 13 marathons, 83 half marathons, 13 triathlons and 2 Duathlons in the physically challenged division.

Now, Candice is on a quest to complete a half marathon in all 50 states and DC. With her CAF grant she is able to continue training towards her goal throughout the pandemic.

IXCHEL PIRLO

U.S. Army Veteran, Morgantown, VA

Grant: GRIT Freedom Chair: Spartan

Sport: Hiking

Physical Challenge: No Abdominal Muscle

US Army Veteran, Ixchel Pirlo is a wife and mother of 3 children. After enduring nine unsuccessful ventral hernia repairs, she was left with no core abdominal muscle and severe pain with exertion.

She has always been active and the surgeries sidelined her both physically and mentally. With a great love for the outdoors, she longed to hike and return to an active lifestyle. She applied for and received a GRIT Freedom Chair from CAF Operation Rebound so that she could enjoy the beautiful West Virginia trails again.



JOHNNIE BAYLARK

Vietnam War Marine Combat Veteran, Downers Grove, IL

Grant: Bilateral Above Knee Amputation

Sport: Fitness

Physical Challenge: Bilateral Above Knee Amputation

Vietnam War Marine Combat Veteran, Johnnie Baylark is a Bronze Star and double Purple Heart recipient. Johnnie lost both of his legs when he stepped on an enemy landmine.

He has been active in his church for more than thirty-five years and served as Treasurer, member of the Trustee Board, Chairman of the Finance Committee, and Deacon. He works out daily on the rowing machine CAF Operation Rebound provided him and is active in wheelchair sports.



MOON "TONY" CHOE

Marine Corps Reserves, Manassas, VA

Grant: Quickie Match Point Tennis chair

Sport: Wheelchair Tennis

Physical Challenge: Paraplegia

Tony served in the Marine Corps Reserves from 1989-1993. After getting out of the Marine Corps, he became a victim of violent crime during a robbery attempt while managing a convenient store in Washington D.C. when he was robbed and shot in the back. The bullet severed his spinal cord resulting in complete paralysis. In 1995, he signed up for a local wheelchair sports clinic where they taught how to play wheelchair tennis. He had never played a game of tennis before this clinic and was immediately hooked on the sport. He played daily in the same chair for over 20 years. Tony applied for and received a new tennis wheelchair from CAF Operation Rebound.





TOP SPORTS AND EQUIPMENT PARTNERS

Thanks to our adaptive sports equipment partners, CAF is able to support athletes in a wide range of sports and help them achieve their athletic goals.

CAF has supported athletes in 94 different sports this year, from wheelchair basketball to sled hockey and everything in between.



THANK YOU TO OUR ADAPTIVE SPORTS EQUIPMENT PROVIDERS



ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

CHLOE JOHNSON, AGE 14

Posen, IL

Grant: Per4Max Thunder Basketball Wheelchair

Sport: Wheelchair Basketball

Physical Challenge: Sacral Agenesis

Chloe was born with missing part of her spine. When she discovered wheelchair basketball it gave her the opportunity to play with other like-minded kids and helped her emotional wellbeing.

She has enjoyed the sport for the last 7 years and is hoping to make her varsity high school team. Her goals don't end there, she can't wait to explore more opportunities and play in college and maybe in the Paralympics someday.



ISABEL HICKS, AGE 18

Kaysville, UT

Grant: Sports Expense Grant

Sport: Snowboarding

Physical Challenge: Single Below Elbow Amputee

Isabelle Hicks was born without a hand and only partially formed fingers. Due to pain and excessive nerve growth, years later, she had the undeveloped fingers and tissue removed.

In 2014, Isabelle learned how to snowboard and by the following year she had attended a Paralympic potential evaluation day. Since then, she has been competing in the US & Canada with goals to qualify for the national team and Paralympic Games. Isabelle also serves as an advocate while inspiring other young women to participate in adaptive sports.



MUNYARADZI "MUNYA" MAHIYA

San Leandro, CA

Grant: RGK Elite Basketball Wheelchair

Sport: Wheelchair Basketball

Physical Challenge: Single Above Knee Amputee

At 14, Munya was playing street soccer with his friends in Zimbabwe when he was attacked by a group of men. Kicked in his left knee, he tried to run away but fell in a ditch, ultimately saving his life. He was a victim of political violence and his father was a member of the opposition party.

His leg never healed and in 2009 he was diagnosed with osteosarcoma leading to an amputation. Munya received a scholarship to study Political Science and Disability Studies at Berkeley while playing in wheelchair basketball at a high level. Raised in a poor village, Munya's end goal is to be the hinge between developing communities and the US to guide other athletes who haven't had an opportunity to shine yet.





Meet the Sarich Family. 7 kids, 4 countries of origin, and a unifying love of sport. This year, CAF provided 5 of the Sarich kids with adaptive sports grants to help them become stronger through sport.



**SADEE, AGE 9**  
**Grant:** Sport Expense Grant  
**Sport:** Wheelchair Racing  
**Physical Challenge:** Cerebral Palsy



**KRASI, AGE 17**  
**Grant:** Sport Expense Grant  
**Sport:** Track & Field  
**Physical Challenge:** Cerebral Palsy



**KAIT, AGE 13**  
**Grant:** Top End Eliminator OSR Racing Wheelchair  
**Sport:** Track & Field  
**Physical Challenge:** Cerebral Palsy



**TRAY, AGE 10**  
**Grant:** Sport Expense Grant  
**Sport:** Swimming  
**Physical Challenge:** Single Above Knee Amputee



**LUCY, AGE 17**  
**Grant:** Sport Expense Grant  
**Sport:** Track & Field  
**Physical Challenge:** Cerebral Palsy

Together with GRIT, CAF wants to make it possible for kids and adults everywhere to be active, independent, and adventurous and enjoy all the outdoor sports and recreation available. CAF partnered with GRIT on the research and development of a custom all-terrain Freedom Chair just for kids, now called the GRIT Junior.

This year, CAF fulfilled 80 grant requests; 15 of which are for youth athletes. Today, riders across the country use the GRIT Freedom Chair and the GRIT Junior to enjoy the outdoors.



**TEDDY WALLACE, AGE 4**  
Boise, ID  
**Grant:** GRIT Junior  
**Sport:** Outdoor Activities  
**Physical Challenge:** Arthrogryposis



**DANIEL LOCKWOOD**  
Coarsegold, CA  
**Grant:** GRIT Junior  
**Sport:** Track & Field  
**Physical Challenge:** Cerebral Palsy



**KEVIN HOLTRY**  
Boise, ID  
**Grant:** GRIT Freedom Chair: Spartan  
**Sport:** Hiking, Hockey  
**Physical Challenge:** Paraplegia, Above Knee Amputee

**DIANNE VITKUS**  
Charlestown, MA  
**Grant:** GRIT Freedom Chair: Pro  
**Sport:** Hiking  
**Physical Challenge:** Quadriplegia



As if 2020 weren't cursed enough already, 28-year old physician assistant, Dianne Vitkus, was enjoying a relaxing sunset from her rooftop after a series of long work shifts. As she tried to descend the 15-foot ladder, she slipped on the first step and landed on her back, paralyzing her from her chest down. She was devastated for a number of reasons but mostly that she loved the outdoors and felt that would change.

While she was in rehabilitation she was able to try an adaptive road bike and the GRIT Freedom Chair. She immediately loved the accessibility both provided her and can't wait to explore the trails she once loved. Prior to her fall, she was a Division 1 collegiate lacrosse player, a marathon runner and avid hiker who enjoyed the beauty of upstate New York.





Investing in athletes on their quest for gold for the past 27 years, CAF has supported over 50% of Team USA somewhere along their journey through adaptive sports. Our grants, camps, clinics, community, and mentorship are vital to the overall progress of the Paralympic movement.



**JAMAL HILL**

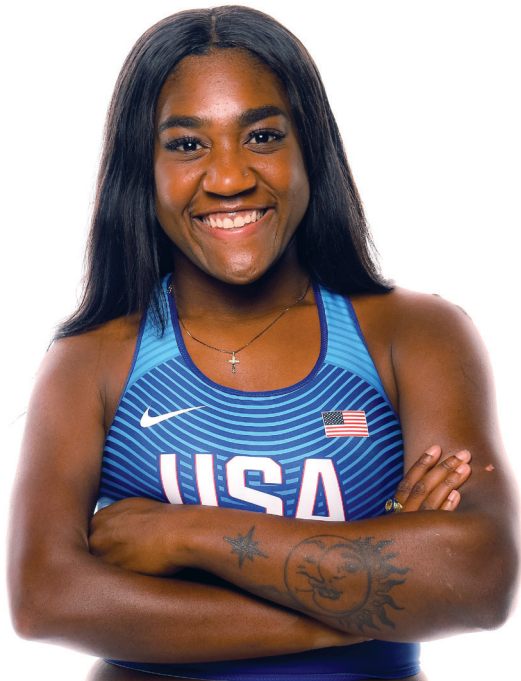
Inglewood, CA  
**Grant:** Sports Travel, Coaching, and Training Expenses  
**Sport:** Swimming  
**Physical Challenge:** Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT)

Born with a hereditary sight disability which was not present until he was 10, Jamal began alienating himself for fear of shame and judgement. He began swimming and learned that fulfillment of athletic performance is based off where he was yesterday and less about who is swimming a lane away. Through his training regimen, he discovered a competitive mindset which has propelled him to be the top-seeded Paralympic swimmer in the nation. Now, Jamal is focused to become #1 in the world at the 2021 Paralympic Games.

**DEJA YOUNG**

Chula Vista, CA  
**Grant:** Equipment Expenses  
**Sport:** Track & Field  
**Physical Challenge:** Brachial Plexus Injury

Born with Brachial Plexus that caused nerve damage and limited mobility to her right shoulder, Deja has excelled with her unique running form. A standout on her high school track team, she lettered all four years while also competing in volleyball and softball. Despite her athletic success, her journey hasn't been easy as she struggled with the pressures of being a pro athlete and full-time student. She earned a track scholarship to Wichita State University and quickly learned about Paralympic track and field, a path that would lead her to her first Paralympic titles at the Paralympic Games Rio 2016. Deja's upcoming goals are to compete on the 2021 Paralympic Track and Field team in the 100m, 200m, and the 400m while sharing her story of ups and downs that anything is possible.



**RAIN KELLEY**

North Richland Hills, TX  
**Grant:** Per4Max Thunder BB  
**Sport:** Wheelchair Basketball

**Physical Challenge:** Single Above Knee Amputation  
After four years of battling a bone infection acquired through a ligament reconstruction surgery, Rain lost her right leg above the knee. Her dreams of playing college basketball shifted to the discovery of adaptive sports. She has been an active member of the adaptive community for over a decade playing wheelchair basketball, swimming, kayaking, and sitting volleyball. Rain has played professionally overseas, she's a 2008 Paralympic Gold medalist and adaptive sports coach in Texas.



**BLAZE FOSTER**

Monroeville, PA  
**Grant:** Travel and training expenses  
**Sport:** Powerlifting

**Physical Challenge:** Achondroplasia or dwarfism  
For Blaze Foster, sports and being physically active have always been a part of his life. Blaze was born with a genetic disorder for bone growth called Achondroplasia, a form of Dwarfism. His involvement in sports has helped him acquire self-esteem and self-discipline which led him to his true passion for para powerlifting in 2017. By 2018, he officially made the Team USA Para Powerlifting team and is continuing to train towards his goals to medal at the 2021 Paralympic Games.



**KYM CROSBY-HIGHTOWER**

Murray, UT  
**Grant:** Sports expenses  
**Sport:** Track and Field  
**Physical Challenge:** Visually Impaired

Kym Crosby-Hightower is a professional track and field athlete for the USA Paralympic team and also coaches for CAF High School Adaptive Sports Program. Kym, born with albinism, has no pigment in her hair, skin or eyes and is legally blind with 20/400 vision. A Paralympic sprinter, she took home bronze in the 100m in the 2016 Rio Games and a gold medal in the 2019 Parapan Games.







## THANK YOU TO OUR GLOBAL SPONSORS + CAF ENDOWMENTS



CAF ENDOWMENT IN MEMORY OF ROBIN WILLIAMS | CAF ENDOWMENT IN MEMORY OF ROBERT SPOTSWOOD



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