

For Immediate Release

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Challenged Athletes Foundation Announces \$3.5 Million in Grants to Athletes with Physical Challenges Around the World

San Diego, Calif. – As individuals with physical challenges continue to breakdown stereotypes about ability, the Challenged Athletes Foundation® (CAF) is proud to announce unprecedented financial support through its annual Access for Athletes grant program, which provides financial assistance for adaptive sports equipment, sports prosthetics, coaching, mentoring and competition expenses for athletes of all ages and abilities who wish to live active lifestyles.

Through the 2015 distribution – the largest grant distribution to-date in the organization’s 21-year history – 1,709 challenged athletes in 32 countries are receiving a variety of grants representing more than \$3.5 million in support, and a 16 percent growth in the number of approved grants over the 2014 program. The grants, which are one of the many ways CAF supports athletes with 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.

“My legs were crushed and amputated in 2012 when a taxi plowed into me, and after many surgeries and physical therapy I have now become able to walk again — often fooling people who don’t realize that I have prosthetic legs,” says 38-year-old Ariel Fishman, a first-time grantee from New York, New York. “I’ve now started to run again, albeit on prosthetics that feel ski boots, but I know that with the proper time, focus and equipment I will be able to return to distance running and the New York Marathon thanks to the help from the Challenged Athletes Foundation.”

This year’s CAF grant program has shown record growth – from the number of applications received and the number of grants approved, to the number of sports supported.

Highlights of CAF’s Access for Athletes program growth include:

- 13% growth in number of applications received over 2014
- 16% growth in number of grants approved over 2014

Highlights of the 2015 grant distribution include:

- 56% of those approved are first time CAF grant recipients
- 13% are wounded military personnel and first responders (supported by CAF’s Operation Rebound program)

- All ages are represented (the youngest grantee is 3-years-old, the oldest is 77)

Most requested pieces of equipment are:

- Sports chairs (315), ranging in cost from \$2,000 - \$6,000
- Handcycles (187), ranging in cost from \$2,500 - \$6,500
- Sports prosthetics (105), with running prosthetics ranging in cost from \$12,000 - \$35,000
- Bicycles (56), ranging in cost from \$500 - \$15,000

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

“Physical fitness can have an important impact on one’s body, mind and soul, which is why CAF works so passionately with partners all over the world to overcome financial obstacles that may stand between challenged athletes and the ability to be active,” said Virginia Tinley, CAF’s executive director. “The determination and commitment of CAF’s donors, sponsors and fundraisers have enabled us to fund this historic number of grants and together we form Team CAF, proud to cheer on athletes around the world.”

“What’s exciting is that 56 percent of this year’s distribution are first-time recipients, and we’re thrilled to welcome them to Team CAF. Team CAF is a collaboration of challenged and able-bodied athletes, donors and sponsors who together are the Challenged Athletes Foundation family,” said Tinley.

Follow 2015 Access for Athletes grant recipients on social media through #TeamCAF.

Since 1994, CAF has raised more than \$64 million and provided direct financial assistance to more than 11,000 challenged athletes around the world. CAF’s other programs – Catch a Rising Star (no-cost sport and mobility clinics for challenged athletes), Operation Rebound (support for injured military personnel and first responders), Reach High (outreach to educate communities about “what is possible”) and Project N.Ex.T (a San Diego County mentoring program that provides one-on-one support and role models for challenged athletes) – combine to impact an additional 60,000 people each year. Learn more about CAF’s global impact at www.challengedathletes.org.

About the Challenged Athletes Foundation

The Challenged Athletes Foundation® (CAF) is a world leader in helping individuals with physical challenges get involved – and stay involved – in sports. CAF believes that participation in sports at any level increases self-esteem, encourages independence and enhances quality of life. Since 1994, more than \$64 million has been raised and over 11,000 funding requests from challenged athletes 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 those with the desire to live active, athletic lifestyles every opportunity to compete in the sports they love. To learn more, visit www.challengedathletes.org or call 858-866-0959.

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