

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**USC's Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund Celebrates
30th Anniversary**

- ◆ *\$757,000 dispersed to 42 students to attend university of choice*
- ◆ *Annual 'Swim With Mike' swim-a-thon raises funds for scholarships for disabled athletes*
 - ◆ *800 swimmers participate in fundraiser*

LOS ANGELES – February 12, 2010 – Nearly \$10 million has been raised over the last 30 years through USC's "Swim With Mike" swim-a-thon fundraiser benefitting 92 Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship recipients. The fund is the only one of its kind allowing students who have overcome life-challenging accidents or illnesses to pursue both undergraduate and graduate degrees at USC and beginning eight years ago, other college campuses.

To kick off its 30th year, USC has awarded \$757,000 collectively to 42 disabled athletes through its Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship. Paving the way for physically challenged athletes to overcome their disability and return to school, the scholarship will provide tuition and financial assistance toward housing and books at USC and 34 other universities.

Of the 42, a total of 12 are enrolled at USC, and 30 at universities spanning the nation. In order to qualify for a Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship, applicants must have suffered an illness or injury that resulted in a physical disability that substantially limits major life activity; have participated in organized high school or college athletics prior to the illness or injury; meet admissions requirements of the selected university, and maintain a 2.5 GPA while enrolled.

"Swim With Mike changed my life and allowed me to succeed despite my disability," said Tyler Warnock, USC Class of 2009 and currently enrolled in graduate school, paralyzed due to car accident. "It helped me to see my disability as a blessing rather than a burden and for that, I am forever grateful to the volunteers for the amazing work they do."

The scholarship fund is 100% volunteer-run, supported by corporate and private donations, and the annual Swim With Mike swim-a-thons (www.swimwithmike.org). Swim With Mike began as a fund-raiser, "Swim *FOR* Mike," to purchase a specially equipped van for three-time All-American USC swimmer, and past NCAA Inspiration Award winner Mike Nyeholt, who became paralyzed in a motorcycle accident in 1981. At Nyeholt's suggestion, the excess monies raised that year were used to aid other athletes overcome paralyzing or physically disabling injuries or illnesses, and return to school. With the help of Nyeholt's teammate and now USC Associate Athletic Director Ron Orr, "Swim *WITH* Mike" was born the following year when Nyeholt returned to swim laps. Last year, 800 participants swam laps and helped raise more than \$900,000.

“To not be able to play the sport you love can be devastating, but my friend Ron Orr started Swim With Mike to prove that there is a support system to moving on, especially when it comes to education,” said Nyeholt. “For the last 30 years, I’ve had the pleasure of watching our scholarship recipients overcome their tragedies, both physically and mentally. We have an impressive recipient and alumni list, pursuing careers from cinematography to medicine and law, and we have multiple athletes who have participated in the Paralympics, triathlons, and Iron Man.”

Orr adds, “Nearly all of our recipients played one or more sports before their accident. Now, we are seeing more of them doing competitive sports *after* their accident, often at an elite level. We have a recipient who gold medaled at the Paralympics, and another who set an American record. Those two are just a few examples. It has been gratifying that the funds are allowing us to do just what the mission of the Physically Challenged Athletes Fund is, and that is to help athletes overcome their tragedies. It’s our goal to continue growing for another 30-plus years, and to have more ‘Swim With Mike’ events at other universities.”

- **The 30th annual Swim With Mike swim-a-thon will be held at the University of Southern California’s swim stadium on April 17, 2010. For more information, visit www.swimwithmike.org.**

A satellite Swim With Mike Hawaii will take place for the sixth year at the University of Hawaii on April 24, 2010. Other satellite events include the 4th annual Swim With Mike at Stanford, and 3rd annual at UCONN, dates TBD.

2009 – 2010 Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund Recipients

NEW USC Students

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport	School/Major/Year
Michael Fritschner Bell Canyon, CA	Surfing accident during lesson Paraplegic	Football, basketball, swimming, soccer	USC – International Relations/Freshman
Molly Higley Long Beach, CA	Plane crash while vacationing Paraplegic	Soccer	USC – Social Work/Graduate School

NEW National Recipients

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport	School/Major/Year
Molly Bloom Denver, CO	Limo accident on prom night Amputee	Swimming, skiing, handcycling	University of Colorado – Psychology & Linguistics/Junior
Blake Browning Anaheim, CA	Football practice accident Quadriplegic	Football, volleyball, basketball	Cerritos Community College – Freshman
Lori Hammond San Diego, CA	Rare spinal arterial venous malformation Paralyzed at the T-5 T-7 level	Volleyball, basketball, soccer, gymnastics	UC Davis – Animal Science- Pre Vet/Senior
Matthew Howard Stanwood, WA	Tree fell on him in a storm causing spinal cord injury T-10 Paralysis	Cross country, track, wrestling	University of Oregon – Human Physiology/Freshman

Ben Hulin South Bend, IN	Motorcycle accident T 5-6 Paraplegic	Soccer, basketball, sit down sports such as handcycle, skiing	Bethel College – Graduate School Health & Physical Education
Elizabeth Kolbe Tiffin, OH	Car accident Paralyzed from the chest down C6-7 Spinal Cord Injury Quadraplegic	Gymnastics, soccer, softball, basketball, Swimming (2004 <i>ParaPanAmerican Games bronze, two silvers and gold medal winner</i>)	Stanford – Law School
Kevin Law Salt Lake City, UT	Skateboarding accident T-11 paraplegic	Baseball, football, skiing	University of Arizona – Computer Science/Freshman
Dana Mathewson San Diego, CA	Transverse Myelitis paralyzed at the T-10 Level	Tennis, basketball, soccer	University of Arizona – Undeclared/Freshman
John Morris Fort Collins, CO	Snowboarding accident C4- C5 Spinal Cord Injury/Quadriplegic	Basketball, baseball, volleyball, golf, Snowboarding, swimming	Colorado State – Marketing/Freshman
Therese Riedel San Diego, CA	Hit a sandbar while swimming C5 Quadriplegia; autonomic dysregulation	Basketball	Vanguard University – Kinesiology/Sophomore
Michael Roberts Wesley Hills, NY	Swimming accident C-4 tetraplegic	Karate, swimming, baseball, basketball	University of Illinois – History and Secondary Education Pre Law/Junior
Jacob Robinson San Diego, CA	Car accident T-9 paraplegia	Football, basketball, volleyball, rugby	UC San Diego – Pre-Med, Freshman
Joseph Seidman Granada Hills, CA	Car accident Left sided Hemiparalysis – traumatic brain injuries	Hockey, basketball, baseball, roller hockey	UC Santa Barbara – Psychology with a minor in Sports Management/Senior

Returning USC Students

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport	School/Major/Year
Chris Cantwell Chino Hills, CA	Diving accident Quadriplegic	Swimming, water polo	USC – PhD Engineering
Michael Dieringer Albion, MI	Motorcycle accident C5-6 quadriplegic	Golf, baseball, tennis, soccer	USC – Engineering /Senior
Alex Johnson Lake San Marcos, CA	Injury during rodeo competition Quadriplegic	Rodeo, football, wrestling, track, skiing	USC – Business/Senior
Brandon Johnson Colorado Springs, CO	Gym accident Suffered a C5-6 spinal	Football	USC –Political Science, Pre Law/Senior

	cord injury (quadriplegic with some limited movement in his shoulders and arms)		
Matt Oka Newport Beach, CA	Bodysurfing accident Paralyzed from neck down	Swimming, Surfing, water polo	USC – Business/Senior
Rocky Paneno Glendale, CA	Railing collapsed, fell six stories and was in a coma for two weeks Paraplegic	Football, gymnastics, track	USC – Graduate School of Education
Kristina Ripatti Los Angeles, CA	LAPD officer who was shot and paralyzed while patrolling with the Southwest Division's gang enforcement detail on June 3, 2006. Paraplegic	Soccer	USC – Graduate School
Tyler Warnock Lucerne Valley, CA	Car accident Paraplegic	Baseball, Basketball, Football	USC – Graduate School Annenberg School of Entertainment Management
Jeff Wood El Cajon, CA	Leber's Disease, a rare mitochondria disease. Blind 20/800 vision	Track, baseball- currently on the USC Track Team	USC – Kinesiology (Business Administration minor)/Senior

Returning National Students

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport	School/Major/Year
Joseph Broc Haleiwa, HI	Spina Bifida - myelomeningocele, below the knee paralysis, uses wheelchair	Outrigger canoe paddling	Hawaii Pacific Univ. – Communications/Senior
Andrew Donnellan Tucson, AZ	Gymnastics tumbling accident Quadriplegic	Gymnastics	University of Arizona – Media Arts, Psychology/Sophomore
Tricia Downing Denver, CO	Hit by a car while cycling training T-4 paralysis (paralyzed from the chest down)	Gymnastics, diving, cycling, triathlon	Regis University –Nonprofit Management/Graduate School
Thomas Everett Spokane, WA	Skiing accident T-9, Paraplegic	Cross country runner	Whitman College – Business, Political Science/ Sophomore
Maureen Fausone Wilmette, IL	Diving accident left her paralyzed from the chest down	Cross country, swimming, basketball, volleyball, tennis, golf, soccer, skiing, hockey	Stanford University – Human Biology/ Sophomore
Kenneth Gibson Diamond Bar, CA	Football accident Paralyzed and unable to walk or write	Football, track	CSU Fullerton – Business/Senior
Colin Heffern Cheyenne, WY	Accident – Belly flop from a tree into a pile of leaves C-4 Spinal Cord Injury	Tennis, golf, swimming, soccer	Colorado St. – Landscape Architecture/Senior-Year five of five

	no functional movement below shoulders		
Joseph Jackson Chandler, AZ	In 2005 Jackson was tackling while playing defense as a strong safety. He was airlifted off the field. C6 Spinal Cord Injury	Football, wrestling, track	Arizona State – Electrical engineering/Junior
Regan Linton Denver, CO	Car accident T-4, Paralyzed from chest down	Swimming, cross country, softball, soccer	University of Denver – Masters in Social Work, International Studies/2 nd Year (<i>USC undergrad recipient</i>)
Fulutusi Mailo Kahuku, HI	Beach accident Quadriplegic	Football	BYU Hawaii – Mathematics/Senior
Kyle Massey Ladera Ranch, CA	Fell 5 ½ stories off balcony T7-T9 Injury, Paraplegic	Football, baseball	Irvine Valley/Junior
Ryoko Nakajima Tokyo, Japan	Transverse Myelitis resulting in paralysis	Tennis, wheelchair basketball, swimming	USC – Senior Cinema
Taylor Price Ridgewood, NJ	Beach accident Quadriplegic	Tennis, golf	Georgetown – Marketing/Finance/Senior
Erick Stanton St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.	Injury from fall off a cliff C-6-7 Spinal Cord Injury/quadriplegic	Football, basketball, baseball	Barry University – Business/Senior
David Van Wagener Greenwood Village, CO	Skiing accident Quadriplegic	Skiing	University of Texas – Graduate school/Engineering
Austin Whitney San Juan Capistrano, CA	Car accident T12-L1 level, Paraplegic	Lacrosse, football, soccer	University of California at Berkeley – Pre-law/Senior
Ann Yoshida Mililani, HI	Car Accident Paraplegic	Gymnastics, swimming, hiking, surfing, running, golf	Utah State– Masters Program in Rehabilitation Counseling/Speech Pathology
Joseph Zinski Voorhees, NJ	Dove into shallow pool C-6 quadriplegic-Asia A, no sensation below chest, no movement waist down	Swimming, soccer, baseball	University of Connecticut – Chemical Engineering/Senior

Editor's Note: Recipients are available for interview

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