

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Anita Sen
Public Relations
310-422-7568
Anita@AnitaSenPR.net

ONSITE CONTACT: Natalie Buchoz
714-421-3778
natbuchoz@live.com

Nine New Students Awarded Scholarships Through USC Swim With Mike's Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund

- ◆ *\$920,000 dispersed to 57 students to attend university of choice*
- ◆ *Annual ‘Swim With Mike’ swim-a-thon fundraiser celebrates 36th year*

LOS ANGELES – March 24, 2016 – The University of Southern California's Swim With Mike has awarded \$920,000 collectively to 57 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, now in its 36th year, will provide tuition and financial assistance toward housing and books at USC and other universities.

The 36th annual Swim With Mike benefiting the Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund will be held April 2, 2016 at the University of Southern California Uytensu Aquatics Center.

Since 1981, the “Swim With Mike” swim-a-thon fundraiser has raised more than \$16.7 million for 187 Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarships for students who have overcome life-challenging accidents or illnesses. The fund is the only one of its kind allowing students to pursue both undergraduate and graduate degrees at USC and, beginning 14 years ago, at other sites around 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.

The scholarship fund is supported by corporate and private donations, and the annual Swim With Mike swim-a-thon (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 recent 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 Senior Associate Athletic Director Ron Orr, “Swim With Mike” was born the following year when Nyeholt returned to swim laps.

“To not be able to play the sport you love can be devastating, but my friend Ron Orr started the Swim With Mike swim-a-thon to prove that there is a support system to moving on, especially when it comes to education,” said Nyeholt. “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...no matter whether you’re a Trojan, a Buckeye or a Golden Bear”

“It’s exciting to be able to include new universities to our Swim With Mike family,” adds Orr. “We have a presence now at 91 schools across the nation, and we thank our sponsors and the tireless efforts of our volunteers who have helped our recipients return to their education.”

The Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund boasts an impressive recipient and alumni list, pursuing careers from cinematography to business, medicine and law. Athletes have represented 56 different sports on levels ranging from high school junior varsity to NCAA Division 1.

2016 Swim With Mike Events will be held:

- El Toro High School, Orange County -March 19 (Inaugural)
- Rose Bowl Aquatics Center – March 25-April 1 (6th annual)
- **University of Southern California – April 2 (36th Annual)**
- UC Berkeley Spieker Aquatics Complex – April 17 (6th annual)
- UC Santa Barbara Recreation Center - April 10 (2nd annual)
- Arizona, Tucson’s La Cocina Restaurant – June 7 (4th annual)
- Stanford Avery Aquatic Center – May (10th annual)
- University of Connecticut – (9th annual)
- UC San Diego Canyon View Aquatic Center – May 7 (6th annual)
- Roll With Cole Sport-a-Thon – June 4 (3rd annual)
- Waikiki, Hawaii - September 5 (12th annual)

2015-2016 Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund Recipients

NEW USC Students

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport (pre-accident/post-accident)	School/Major/Grad Year
Jake Olson Huntington Beach, CA	Blind, bilateral retinoblastoma, 2009 removal of eyes	Football, Golf	USC Business 2019

NEW National Students

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport (pre-accident/post-accident)	School/Major/Grad Year
Victoria Arlen Exeter, NH	T12 Spinal Cord Injury	Various	Southern New Hampshire University Liberal Arts 2018
Abigail Bennett Sandy, UT	T12/L1 Spinal Cord Injury, Skilling 2011	Ski, Soccer, Lacrosse	BYU Biology 2019
Christian Bonilla Los Angeles, CA	Spinal Cord Injury incomplete quad. C- 5, 6, 7, Diving Accident 2007	Baseball, Basketball, Flag Football, Cross Country, Track	Azusa Pacific Clinical Psychology, Marriage & Family Therapy 2017
Shane Mosko Southington, CT	Paraplegic, Single Car Accident	Soccer, Football	Florida International Business Administration & Marketing 2017

Kendra Muller Riverton, UT	C6 Quad, 2011 Bricks Crashed on Her	Soccer, Cross Country	BYU Health Management 2019
Ronan Nelson Encinitas, CA	C5, C6 Quad Spinal Cord Injury 2012 Rugby Accident	Rugby, Soccer, Football	UCLA Global Studies & International Business 2019
Marty O'Connor Orange, CA	C3-4 Tetraplegia, Quad 2012 Fall on Staircase	Football, Baseball, Snowboarding	Chapman University Masters in Business Administration 2017
Tyler Vitiello Saddle Brook, NJ	C4-6 Quad 2011 Football Accident	Golfing	Montclair University Psychology 2016

Returning USC Students

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport (pre-accident/post-accident)	School/Major Grad Year
Natalie Buchoz, Huntington Beach, CA	C5-6 SCI - Quadriplegia Skiing accident	Softball, Volleyball, Swimming	USC Public Relations – Annenberg 2015
Corben Brooks Mount Shasta, CA	C5-6 Quadriplegia Football Injury	Football, Basketball, Golf	USC Public Policy and Development 2018
Nick Ekbatani Santa Monica, CA	Below Knee Amputation Motor Cycle Accident	Football (UCLA)/ Boxing, Swimming, Rowing	USC Masters in Business Admin. 2016
Spencer Fox Cardiff, CA	C4-5 Quadriplegia Snowboarding accident	Basketball, Soccer, Football/ Surfing	USC Chemical Engineering 2018
Nate Higgins Richland, WA	T-4 complete Spinal Cord Injury Fell off a roof while painting	Cross country, Wrestling, Track, Swimming, Soccer/ Swimming	USC Masters in Business Admin. 2015
Patrick Ivison San Diego, CA	C-4-5 Incomplete Quadriplegia Run over by a car	Wheelchair Basketball, Soccer, Surfing	USC Film and TV Production 2016
Jack Jablonski Minneapolis, MN	Quadriplegia Hockey Accident	Hockey, Tennis	USC Communications 2018
Jennifer McCallson Carlsbad, CA	C5-6 Quadriplegia Gymnastics Accident	Gymnastics	USC Masters in Social Work 2017
Zachary Pickett Cameron Park, CA	C-7 Spinal Cord Injury Dove into a lake	Swimming, Water Polo/ Swimming	USC Business 2018
Scoba Rhodes East Falmouth, MA	T-10 Incomplete Spinal Cord Injury Surgical Complication	Football, Track, Baseball /Hand-cycle, Wheelchair Sports	USC Masters in Social Work 2016

Edgar Rico Rosemead, CA	C5-6 Quadriplegia Automobile Accident	Soccer, Softball	USC Masters in Social Work 2016
Ashley Schutz Santa Barbara, CA	C4-5 Incomplete Quadriplegia Auto Accident	Swimming	USC Masters in Social Work 2016
Zack Wentz Menlo Park, CA	T-1 Paraplegia Fall while Rock Climbing	Swimming, Tennis, Baseball, Basketball, Football, Golf /Wheelchair Tennis, Skiing	USC Math and Economics 2016
Stephen Wilson Redondo Beach, CA	L1 SCI Paraplegic Auto Accident	Soccer, Football	USC Mechanical Engineering 2017

Returning National Students

Name	Accident/Illness	Sport (pre-accident/post-accident)	School/Major Grad Year
Nicholas Balenger Burke, VA	C4-5 Tetraplegia, Incomplete Dove into a wave	Baseball	George Mason University Global Affairs & Criminology 2018
Justin Brasher Stockton, CA	C 4-5 Quadriplegic Auto accident	Wrestling, Football, Soccer, Baseball, Swimming, Tennis	University Nevada at Reno Biology 2017
Zackery Collie Yorba Linda, CA	C-4 Quadriplegic Diving accident	Wrestling, Basketball	CSU Fullerton Psychology & Criminal Justice 2018
Drew Delis Encinitas, CA	3 rd and 4 th Degree Burns over 23% of Body, Below Knee Amputation/ Automobile Accident and Fire	Soccer/Surfing, Paddleboard, Golf	Pepperdine University Law 2015
Robert Dudzisz Sanford, ME	C6-7 Quadriplegia Automobile Accident	Baseball, Ice Hockey, Soccer/ Quad Rugby	University of New Hampshire Sociology 2017
Cory Greenbaum Scarsdale, NY	Automobile Accident/ C4-5 Quadriplegia	Basketball, Tennis, Soccer / Handcycling	Stanford University/ Symbolic Systems 2017
Lori Hammond San Diego, CA	Paralysis Rare spinal arterial venous malformation compressed spinal cord/	Softball, Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, Gymnastics	UC Davis Veterinary Medicine 2017
Tyler Hoog Mead, CO	C 3-4 Quadriplegia Car accident	Baseball, Football, Basketball	University of North Carolina Communications 2017
Joseph Hunsaker Canby, OR	C5-6 Spinal Cord Injury Wrestling Injury	Wrestling, Football	Oregon State University Business 2018

Benjamin Johnson Grand Forks, ND	T-5 Paraplegia Motorcycle Accident	Football, Basketball, Golf, Track	University of North Dakota Psychology 2016
Luis Jovel Gaithersburg, MD	Quadriplegia Automobile Accident	Football, Bocce ball/Track	University of Illinois General Studies, Engineering 2018
Aaron Loy Carlsbad, CA	Meningococcal, Meningitis B Bilateral leg amputee	Lacrosse, Soccer	UC Santa Barbara Financial Math 2018
Jeff Mahlum Hartland, WI	C-7 Quadriplegia Diving Accident	Soccer, Tennis, Basketball	University of Wisconsin Medicine 2019
Ezra McPhail Antigo WI	T5-6 Inc SCI anterior cord syndrome Hockey Accident	Hockey, Football/Sled Hockey, Mono Ski, Handcycle	University of Minnesota Duluth/ Marketing 2016
Jorge Mendoza Los Angeles, CA	Right leg amputee	Basketball, Volleyball	Cal State Los Angeles Exercise Science 2016
Alex Pass Trabuco Canyon, CA	C6-C7 Quadriplegia Diving Accident	Soccer, Football, Basketball, Wrestling	Denver University Law 2016
Nicholas Picciolo Northridge, CA	C6-7 Spinal Cord Injury Bodysurf accident-Zuma Beach	Baseball, Football	Loyola Marymount Univ. Economics 2017
Ryan Porteus San Diego, CA	C-6 Spinal Cord Injury Diving Accident	Sailing, Swimming, Surfing, Basketball, Soccer	UC Santa Barbara Engineering 2018
Therese Riedel La Mesa, CA	C-5 Quadriplegia Body Surfing Accident	Basketball /JingShen Kuoshu	John Paul the Great Univ. Media Communications & New Evangelism 2016
Troy Russell Ellington, CT	Spinal Cord Injury Swimming Accident	Baseball, Basketball	Western New England Criminal Justice 2018
Tyler Schilhabel Bakersfield, CA	T-4 Complete Paraplegia 30 foot fall down a sand dune while riding an ATV	Football, Basketball, Wrestling, Baseball, Waterskiing, snowboarding	Utah Valley University Political Science 2016

Nichole Sheridan Eules, TX	Paraplegia Myelopathy and Transverse /Myelitis Onset in 2007	Soccer, Track	University of Texas Arlington Undeclared 2016
Amberley Snyder Elk Ridge, UT	T-12 Spinal Cord Injury	Rodeo	Utah State University Masters School of Counseling 2018
Cole Sydnor Mechanicsville, VA	C-5 Tetraplegia Diving accident	Soccer, Swimming, Gymnastics, LAX, Basketball	University of Richmond Psychology & Neuroscience 2017
Carlos Terrazas El Paso, TX	T6-7 Spinal Cord Injury Auto Accident	Basketball, Tennis/WC Basketball	University of Arizona Masters in Rehab Counseling 2015
Greg Thomas Middletown, CT	Paraplegia Transverse Myelitis Onset in 2004/	Soccer, Baseball, Basketball	Quinnipiac Finance 2016
Vijay Viswanathan Hilton Head, SC	T5 paraplegia complete Spinal Cord Injury Fall while rock climbing	Cross Country, Basketball/ Adaptive Rock Climb, Monoski, Kayak	University of Colorado Finance, Accounting, & Economics 2016
Matt Wesley St. John, IN	C-4-5 Quadriplegia Football Injury	Football, Soccer, Baseball, Basketball	Notre Dame Law 2017
Austin Whitney San Juan Capistrano, CA	T12/L1 Paraplegia Automobile accident	Lacrosse, football, soccer	UC Berkeley Law 2016
Jeff Wood El Cajon, CA	Legally Blind Lebers Hereditary optic neuropathy	Track, USC/USA Paralympic National Team 2010	San Diego State University Physical Therapy DPT 2016

Ann Yoshida Mililani, HI	SCI Paraplegia Automobile accident	Swimming, Golf, Track, Dance, Gymnastics/ Surfing, Tennis, Outrigger Canoe Paddling, Swimming, Skiing, Hand cycling	Pacific University PhD in Occupational Therapy 2017
-------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--	--

#