



2023

ANNUAL GRANT DISTRIBUTION

EMPOWERING LIVES THROUGH SPORT



The Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) is proud to announce this year’s grant distribution empowering 3,996 athletes with physical disabilities to achieve their goals and chase their dreams. Totalling \$7M in financial support given, CAF continues to make a life-changing impact.

Every athlete has their own story to tell — stories filled with joy, pain, triumph, struggle, friendship, and fulfillment, but the one thing they all have in common is hope through sport. The athletes receiving CAF grants this year are not only achieving great things in sports at all levels of recreation and competition, but they are also making a significant impact in the community, advocating for others with physical disabilities and moving us forward into a world where everyone has an equal chance to be active and thrive.

CAF began with one person, but from one came many. Over the past 30 years, we are honored to have been a part of each of their journeys. **This is our mission, and these are their stories.**

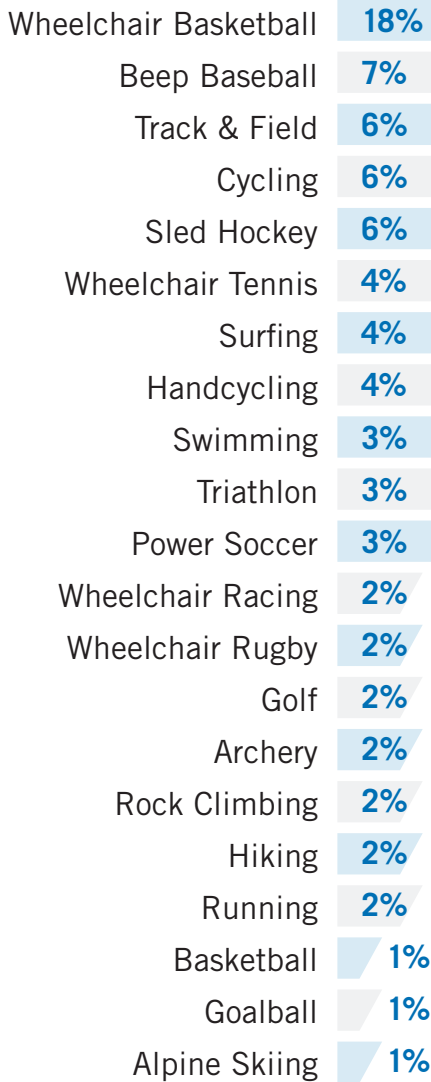
DISTRIBUTION FACTS AND FIGURES

- 50** States + Puerto Rico
- 39** Countries
- 2** Years Old – Youngest
- 88** Years Old – Oldest
- 35%** Female
- 64%** Male
- 28%** Youth Grants (under 18)
- 101** Different Sports
- 36%** First Time Grant Recipients

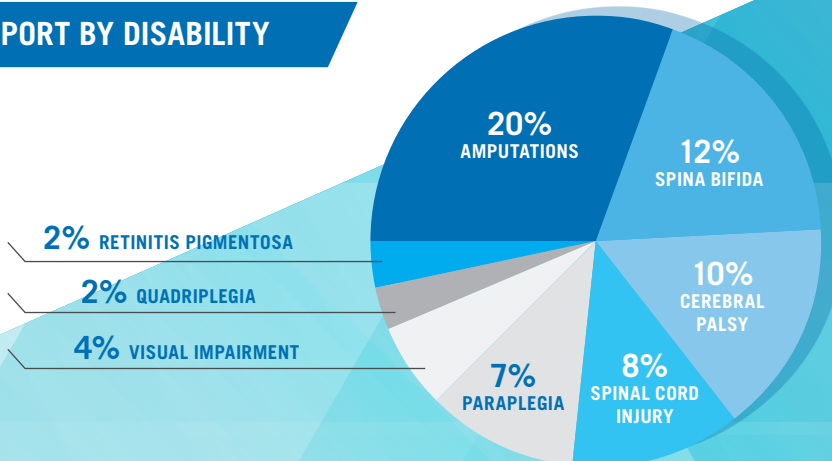
INCOME OVERVIEW

- 33%** Households earning under \$20,000/year
- 26%** Households earning between \$20,000 – \$50,000/year

TOP GRANT REQUESTS BY SPORT



SUPPORT BY DISABILITY



THE STORY THAT STARTED IT ALL

FROM ONE, CAME MANY



CAF's story began with Jim MacLaren, a former Yale offensive lineman who lost his leg below the knee after being struck by a bus in New York City. With the perseverance he was known for throughout his life, Jim reinvented himself as a renowned endurance athlete, changing perceptions about athletes with physical disabilities in sports. While participating in a triathlon almost eight years later, he was in a second accident which resulted in paraplegia.

In 1994, a group of friends held the San Diego Triathlon Challenge as a fundraiser to purchase an adaptive van for Jim to give him greater freedom and independence.

During this event, these friends learned more about the barriers to sports for people with physical disabilities and decided to start meeting the needs of others in the community. CAF may have begun by supporting just one person, but Jim's perseverance and memory live on through the thousands of athletes we have empowered through sport.



WARREN TANALEON
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Age: 33

Grant: Funding Toward Equipment - Cycling

Sport: Cycling

Physical Disability:
Single Below Knee Amputation



DIXIE MAE BARCLAY
PEOTONE, IL

Age: 3

Grant: GRIT Jr. All-Terrain Wheelchair

Sport: Hiking

Physical Disability:
Spina Bifida



DILLON MITCHELL
LANCASTER, TX

Age: 17

Grant: Sports Expense Grant – Wheelchair Basketball

Sport: Wheelchair Basketball

Physical Disability:
Spinal Cord Injury



KIANA GLANTON | NEW YORK CITY, NY

Age: 38

Grant: Sports Expense Grant – Beep Baseball

Sport: Beep Baseball

Physical Disability: Visual Impairment

“Since becoming a member of the baseball team, I have been able to travel to the Netherlands and compete for our international cup, yielding the United States first bronze medal. My upcoming goal is to spread awareness about our sport. We hope for our sport to grow across the United States and abroad.”



KATEE JOHNSON | COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

Age: 12

Grant: Sports Expense Grant - Swimming

Sport: Swimming

Physical Disability: Arthrogyrosis

Katee loves all types of sports, but after watching swimming in the Tokyo Games, she knew that was the sport for her. She soon found a local adaptive swim team and has since found immense joy in competition, earning three gold medals and one silver medal at Junior Nationals last year. Katee says swimming makes her feel fast and encourages her to keep moving, even during difficult moments. She will use her CAF grant to continue to compete at swim meets throughout the year ahead.



RYANN MASON | SAN DIEGO, CA

Age: 30

Grant: Funding Toward Equipment – Athletic Wheelchair

Sport: Dance

Physical Disability: Ehlers Danlos Syndrome

Ryann says that discovering adaptive sports through CAF has uncovered a part of herself she didn't know existed, allowing her to fully understand her body's capabilities. It brought her back to her love of dancing and gave her the confidence to continue to pursue her career as a nurse. A new athletic wheelchair that fits her properly means everything to Ryann, allowing her to thrive as a nurse and pursue her love of dance.



JUDAH SCARBROUGH | BRONX, NY

Age: 7

Grant: Sports Expense Grant – Wheelchair Basketball

Sport: Wheelchair Basketball

Physical Disability: Paralysis

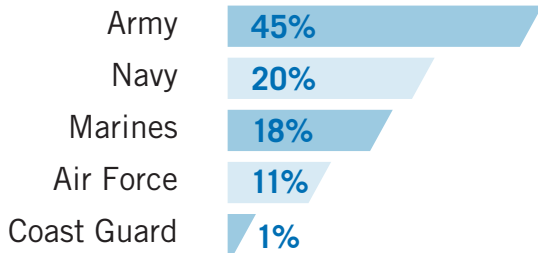
Judah cannot wait to use her CAF grant for a new custom basketball wheelchair to improve her skills, travel with her team, and begin to play competitively. When she was just ten months old, she experienced Guillain-Barré Syndrome, which resulted in the paralysis of both her legs and lower back. Her mom says that playing wheelchair basketball has introduced Judah to new friends, improved her health, and increased her self-esteem.

FROM FRONTLINE TO FINISHLINE

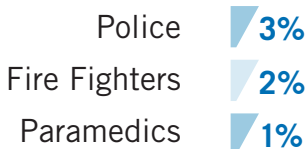


This year, CAF's Operation Rebound provided 448 veteran and first responder grants totaling \$656,481. Established in 2005, Operation Rebound is an exceptional program that uniquely answers the growing need for those looking to center their healing journey around healthy activities and building community. Led by Nico Marcolongo, a former Marine Officer and Iraq conflict veteran with over 20 years of professional experience supporting the needs of veterans with disabilities, Operation Rebound has supported 1,687 athletes since its inception. Our individualized support model has proven to help veterans and first responders feel like team members again – from the front line to the finish line.

VETERANS



FIRST RESPONDERS



448

Grants Distributed

\$656,481

in Funding Support

216

First-time Grant Recipients

46

Purple Heart Recipients



SHAWNTINA GIBSON | LAFAYETTE, LA

U.S. Army Veteran

Age: 39

Grant: Sports Expense Grant

Sport: Triathlon

Physical Disability: Visual Impairment

Shawntina is a U.S. Army veteran who enjoys being active and participating in sports. She was first introduced to Operation Rebound in 2022 through her blind rehabilitation services coordinator at the Alexandria VA Hospital in Louisiana. Shawntina, who participated in her first triathlon during CAF's San Diego Triathlon Challenge last October, will use her grant to continue training at her local gym and pursue her athletic goals.



NOOK GUSTAMENTE | SAN ANTONIO, TX

U.S. Army Veteran

Age: 62

Grant: Sports Expense Grant

Sport: Boccia

Physical Disability: Paraplegia

Nook believes that you are never too old to compete in wheelchair sports and at 62-years-old, he's doing just that in the U.S. National Boccia Championships thanks to his CAF grant. After serving five years in the U.S. Army, Nook experienced a gunshot wound that resulted in paralysis from the waist down. He has since found that participating in sports kept him healthy both physically and mentally and he wants to inspire others to live healthy, too.



LAURA ROOT | RIVERVIEW, FL

U.S. Navy Veteran

Age: 43

Grant: Ski Equipment

Sport: Skiing

Physical Disability: Bilateral Above-Knee Amputation

Laura was determined to remain active after her muscular dystrophy diagnosis, joining the Navy's Wounded Warrior team and eventually becoming a coach. She enjoys multiple sports but is eager to use her CAF grant for ski equipment to be outside enjoying the slopes.



ZACHARY STINSON | CHAMBERSBURG, PA

Marine Corps Veteran

Age: 33

Grant: Sports Expense Grant

Sport: Triathlon

Physical Disability: Bilateral Above-Knee Amputation

In 2010, Zachary was wounded in combat while deployed in Afghanistan. After 35+ surgeries and a year of rehabilitation, this Marine Corps veteran became active again through handcycling. It wasn't long before he began participating in triathlons and is now competing an elite level. Zachary will use his CAF grant to compete internationally.

MENTORSHIP + MOMENTUM

As the adaptive sports movement grows and gains momentum, CAF athletes are using their voices and talents to drive societal change, fighting for equality and inclusion. They also use their time to empower others generously sharing their experiences to offer valuable mentorship and encouragement. CAF is proud to support these athletes as they work to create a better tomorrow.



ELIJAH SCHULTZ | JOPLIN, MO

Age: 12

Grant: Össur Sports Prosthesis

Sport: Football, Baseball, Weight Training

Physical Disability: Single Below Knee Amputation

Twelve-year-old Elijah is leading his teammates on and off the field. He is the quarterback of an undefeated Super Bowl-winning team, encouraged four dozen friends to join him for workouts three times a week, was elected as a representative on the Vision Committee at his school, and uses each of these moments as opportunities to share his story. Born with a congenital limb deficiency, Elijah has always played sports; however, his recent dedication to training and the support of a great network of coaches and medical staff have taken his athleticism to a new level of success. He says a CAF grant for a new Össur Sports Prosthetic will tremendously impact his life and body mechanics when training, allowing him to continue to reach his goals.



ROBERT MENA | GLENDALE, CA

Age: 57

Grant: Sports Expense Grant – Wheelchair Basketball

Sport: Wheelchair Basketball

Physical Disability: Paraplegia

“The relationships I have established with younger players, both in California and in El Salvador, give me an opportunity to mentor and encourage others. Many of the athletes in El Salvador are young and recently injured, and they regularly contact me for a variety of advice and support. As a ‘seasoned’ athlete, and as an individual who has faced years of living with paraplegia, I feel that I have a lot to offer others.”



JANICE WALTH | LODI, CA

Age: 63

Grant: Sports Expense Grant - Archery

Sport: Archery

Physical Disability: Visual Impairment

Janice has built an impressive resume as a Para Archery athlete, competing throughout the year. The thrill of this competition and traveling to do so has been an enriching and fulfilling experience for which she is grateful. Janice wants others with visual impairments to know all that is possible through archery and inspire them to try the sport for themselves, creating a website and posting videos to YouTube with resources and tips for prospective athletes. Janice is excited to use her CAF grant to continue to compete this year internationally and increase awareness about the sport.



ARTHUR RENOWITZKY | HAYWARD, CA

Age: 35

Grant: Sports Expense Grant – Wheelchair Basketball

Sport: Wheelchair Basketball

Physical Disability: Paraplegia

Just one year after a gunshot wound to the chest outside a nightclub by an unknown assailant, Arthur began playing wheelchair basketball and found a new passion, strength, and confidence. He now plays point guard in the NWBA for the Golden State Road Warriors and has set a goal to make Team USA in the Paris 2024 Paralympics. He also shares his love of basketball as a Boys and Girls Club coach, all while running a teen leadership program for Bay Area inner-city students. Arthur says his goal is to be active in the community and to inspire and mentor newly injured and aspiring athletes.



TODD VOGT | PORTLAND, OR

Age: 48

Grant: Top End Force G Handcycle

Sport: Rowing

Grant Award: Sport Expense Grant

Physical Disability: Parkinson’s Disease

“Rowing has positively impacted my life in innumerable ways. I was a high school and collegiate rowing [coach] for almost 10 years and I loved sharing my passion and knowledge with others. As a Paralympic rower, I hope my situation inspires others with Parkinson’s to continue to stay active and live life to its fullest.”



ANNELISE WILLIAMS | WEST LAFAYETTE, IN

Age: 22

Grant: Top End Force G Handcycle

Sport: Cycling

Physical Disability: Spinal Cord Injury

Annelise says that participating in sports has given her a place to be her true, authentic self and taught her to have grit and determination in all aspects of her life. She is using that grit to achieve some impressive upcoming athletic goals and advocating to bring adaptive sports to her university’s campus as part of the student government’s Disability and Inclusion Committee.

EMPOWERING THE NEXT → GENERATION

CAF is proud of our role in positively impacting the physical and emotional well-being of the next generation of athletes by empowering them at an early age and providing a continuum of support throughout their lives. While CAF's work spans the globe, we have a strong presence in four key regions strategically located throughout the United States. As youth athletes in Southern California, Northern California, Idaho, and the Northeast continue to establish friendships, build community, and understand all that is possible through our adaptive sports clinic programming, the result was a significant increase in youth grants distributed this year.



LUCA SIMEONA | SAN DIEGO, CA

Age: 5

Grant: Sports Expense Grant - Surfing

Sport: Surfing

Physical Disability: Limb Deficiency

Five-year-old Luca has found stoke in the ocean. Having participated in the CAF + IRONMAN Foundation adaptive surf clinic last year, Luca applied for a CAF grant to purchase a new surfboard and start surfing lessons. His mom says that surfing has already taught him two very important life skills – respect and patience.



LEVI NIELSON | BOISE, ID

Age: 9

Grant: Mountain Bike

Sport: Mountain Biking

Physical Disability: Neuromuscular Disorder

Levi was first introduced to CAF in 2022 at CAF-Idaho's Mountain Biking Clinic. After experiencing all that is possible on trails with the right equipment, Levi applied for a CAF grant to receive his own mountain bike. Then, just a few months later, Levi's mom Kelly also applied for a CAF grant for a road bike. Now the entire family joyfully rides together while exploring the beauty of Idaho.



MALIYA EMORY | PARLIN, NJ

Age: 17

Grant: Sports Expense Grant – Track and Field

Sport: Track and Field

Physical Disability: Spina Bifida

Maliya first became involved with CAF in the Summer of 2021 at one of our adaptive surf clinics, where she made connections that eventually led to her athletic career. She would quickly go on to compete at Junior Nationals in July 2022 in track and field (earning 17 medals) and join the USAT 2022 Junior and U23 Paratriathlon Development Team. While Maliya plans to use her CAF grant to train and improve her endurance in both sports to reach the next level, she also credits sports with giving her a community of teammates and a peer group of support. She says, "I have a purpose and I dream of my future in sports with confidence that I can make my dreams come true."



AUDREY LOU | SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Age: 11

Grant: Sports Expense Grant - Dance

Sport: Dance

Audrey tries to attend as many CAF-Northern California adaptive sports clinics as possible, having already participated in golf, track and field, wheelchair curling, swimming, and adaptive surfing. She says she loves sports and movement because they keep her strong and allow her time with people who love doing the same things as she does. Audrey is excited to use her CAF grant this year to try another new sport - dancing.



PHILIP PROCTOR | VACAVILLE, CA

Age: 13

Grant: Travel Grant

Sport: WCMX + Track and Field

Phillip enjoys trying new sports through CAF's adaptive sports clinics in Northern California; however, he received travel grant funding from CAF to fly to Utah to participate in CAF-Idaho's Nordic Ski Clinic. Because access to professional adaptive Nordic ski coaches is limited in most areas, this was a unique and memorable experience. He says, "Sports have given me more confidence in myself. I have been able to show other people that anyone can do what they want to do."

CAF + SWITCHFOOT BRO-AM FOUNDATION SURF CLINIC

CAF provided travel grants to five female youth athletes to attend a surf clinic in San Diego in conjunction with the SWITCHFOOT BRO-AM, offering an enriching experience that combined sports, travel, friendships, and mentorship.



PARTNERSHIPS THAT MAKE AN IMPACT



For nearly 30 years, CAF and Össur have worked together to enhance life without limitations. During this time, we have distributed 1,500+ athletic prosthetics with a total value of over \$2M; this continued last year, with 108 athletes receiving Össur prosthetic grants. The prosthetist and clinician community surrounding this partnership is integral to connecting with athletes and sharing new opportunities to access Össur's innovations.



LINCOLN MCMANUS
CORVALLIS, OR

Age: 13

Sport: Sled Hockey

Physical Disability:
Single Below Knee
Amputation



LYNDA FISHER
TIFTON, GA

Age: 53

Sport: Running

Physical Disability:
Single Below Knee
Amputation



ETHAN MILLER
NORWALK, CA

Age: 13

Sport: Bike, Run, Playing
Catch with His Brothers

Physical Disability: Single
Below Knee Amputation



A partnership built on the shared commitment to making fitness inclusive and accessible to all, CAF and EoS Fitness granted 61 athletes with complimentary Platinum Plus gym memberships to athletes with physical disabilities across the United States.



CAF is grateful to the partners who help us provide athletes with opportunities to participate in the sports and activities they love. From the latest innovations in adaptive sports equipment and shoes to creating equal access to workout spaces, these companies are making an individual impact while generating a greater awareness and all that is possible for people with physical disabilities.



This year, Nike made CAF's grant application process even more rewarding by offering a free pair of FlyEase to 1,600 early applicants, which led to the fastest grant distribution review and approval in our organization's history. Nike is also fully funding equipment grants to empower more female athletes with physical disabilities, aiming to impact all 50 United States.



PAISLEY MINOR
STAFFORD, VA

Age: 5

Grant: Top End Li'l Exclerator Handcycle

Sport: Cycling

Physical Disability: Bilateral Above Knee Amputation



CAF was proud to join Toyota at three auto shows in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York over the last year. In addition to multiple inclusive adaptive sport activations, 18 grants were distributed in front of the show crowds, which introduced adaptive sports and adaptive sports equipment to new audiences.



ALEXIS ROMERO
LOS ANGELES, CA

Grant: Track and Field Racing Chair



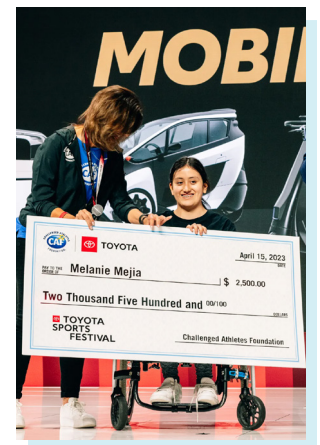
JADA HENDRICKS COX
CHICAGO, IL

Grant: Össur Running Prosthetic



MARLENE MORAN
LOS ANGELES, CA

Grant: Sports Expense Grant – Wheelchair Dance



MELANIE MEJIA
LODI, NJ

Grant: Sports Expense – Track & field, Swimming, and Archery

COMPETING ON THE WORLD'S STAGE

As the spotlight on professional adaptive sports continues to grow brighter, CAF is proud of our efforts to support the inclusion of athletes with physical disabilities worldwide. We are also excited about how this recognition is garnering the attention of National Governing Bodies and professional sports teams, encouraging more athletes to consider setting goals to compete at the highest levels, showcasing their talents on the world's stage.

ISA PARA SURF CHAMPIONSHIPS, PISMO BEACH, CA

CAF provided \$67,050 in travel grant funding to 50 athletes who competed in the Pismo Beach ISA Para Surf World Championships in December 2022. Approximately half of these grants supported athletes traveling internationally from the Czech Republic, South Africa, Jamaica, and the Netherlands.



CITY OF LOS ANGELES + LA28 GAMES, PLAYLA, LOS ANGELES, CA

Contracted by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks' PlayLA Youth Adaptive Sports Program to provide adaptive sports clinics leading into the LA28 Paralympic Games, CAF also provided two youth athletes in the region with sports expense grants so they can continue to train and chase their Paralympic dreams.



ANDREA CONTRERAS
LOS ANGELES, CA

Grant: Sports Expense Grant - Surfing

"I'm so grateful because I love surfing. I want to do this for the rest of my life."



DAMIAN MUÑOZ
LOS ANGELES, CA

Grant: Sports Expense Grant - Adaptive Skateboarding

"My goal is to do a backflip and my other goal is to become a professional. I want to go to the Paralympics in 2028 and try to win the gold medal."

PLAY WITH PURPOSE



CAF + SAN DIEGO LOYAL
+ TOYOTA
BECKETT BLACK

Grant: Össur Running
Prosthetic



CAF + DALLAS COWBOYS
+ SMOOTHIE KING
LILY BIAGINI

Grant: Össur Running
Prosthetics



CAF + GOLDEN STATE
WARRIORS
BRAULIO NORIEGA

Grant: Per4Max Basketball
Wheelchair



CAF + DREW BREES +
SMOOTHIE KING
ALBEE GRANILLO

Grant: WCMX Skate
Wheelchair



CAF + NEW ORLEANS
PELICANS
ADAM SILVA

Grant: Per4Max
Basketball Wheelchair



CAF + PHILADELPHIA 76ERS
**WILLIE ADAMES DE LARA AND
SAMUEL AKINFENWA**

Grant: Top End Basketball
Wheelchairs



THANK YOU TO OUR GRANT PROGRAM FUNDERS

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