



For more information contact:
Donna P. Tinoco, APR
donna.tinoco@evokad.com
407.341.1104

NMEDA KICKS OFF NATIONAL MOBILITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ***Local Heroes Contest to Award Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles***

TAMPA, Florida (February 26, 2014) – The National Mobility Equipment Dealers Associations (NMEDA) kicks off its National Mobility Awareness Month campaign today, and marks the third year for what has now become a successful annual contest in which three deserving “Local Heroes” will be awarded a wheelchair accessible vehicle tailored to meet their needs through an online contest.

The awareness movement and campaign designed to educate seniors, veterans, caregivers and people with disabilities about wheelchair accessible vehicles and adaptive mobility equipment options that enable them to live an active and mobile life, touched the lives of more than 4.4 million people across the United States and Canada through the Local Heroes Contest last year. Major Sponsors providing the vehicles for the 2014 contest are [Chrysler](#) and [Toyota](#). Toyota Motor Sales, USA will be providing two Sienna’s this year to be customized by NMEDA Members [BraunAbility](#) and [Vantage Mobility International](#) (VMI). Chrysler Group, LLC is providing a Dodge Caravan for Conversion.

“It is rewarding to work on such an important project each year that literally changes the lives of people with inspirational life stories. It is their contributions and triumphs we recognize and celebrate through our Local Heroes contest,” said Dave Hubbard, executive director and CEO of NMEDA. “We encourage caregivers, friends and family members to submit entries either written or videotaped stories of how they are triumphing over their mobility challenges,” said Hubbard. Story submissions began on February 25th and voting begins March 11th. Submission and votes will be accepted through May 9th. Winners for 2014 will be announced during National Mobility Awareness Month in May.

In 2013, 1,225 entries received more 2.3 million votes from across the country that resulted in three deserving Local Heroes in Lexington, Kentucky, Villa Park, Illinois and Victoria, British Columbia Canada being awarded fully customized wheelchair accessible vehicles.

The 2014 National Mobility Awareness Month is supported by prominent spokespersons and advocates for those with disabilities, Mike Savicki and Ashley Lauren Fisher. Here are their stories:

Mike Savicki

Biography

NMEDA selected Mike Savicki as a spokesperson for National Mobility Awareness Month for a third year. Savicki is a 46-year old, C6, 7 quadriplegic, who is a Navy veteran, multi-sport athlete, passionate advocate and small business entrepreneur. He is a 5-time Quad Division champion (and 18 time finisher) of the BAA Boston Marathon and, in 22 years of competition, has earned 79 gold medals in the National Wheelchair Veterans Games where he is also the 2013 Spirit of the Games award winner. Savicki manages his freelance writing, marketing, speaking and advocacy work through his company, Scratching Post Communications. He is also a husband and dad to a beautiful baby girl. Living more than half his life with a disability has not stopped him from achieving his goals. A self-proclaimed "car guy" with a love of antiques and classics, He drives a wheelchair accessible vehicle purchased from a NMEDA dealer. His personal website is www.mikesavicki.com

Ashley Lauren Fisher

Biography

NMEDA selected Ashley Lauren Fisher as a spokesperson for National Mobility Awareness Month for a second year. The 38-year-old is the restaurateur of four-star-rated, Pazzo Pazzo located in Morristown, New Jersey, and is the 2012 New Jersey Restaurant Association nominee for Restaurateur of the Year and the recipient of the prestigious Gold Plate Award. Fisher is a former student of The Lee Strasberg Theater Institute, and still regularly auditions for film and television. As a philanthropist, Fisher established Discovery Through Design and is responsible for raising more than a million dollars for spinal cord research. She has devoted time to organizations such as Bonnie Brae, NJ Aids Services, The Reeve Foundation, Same Sky and Community Soup Kitchen. Fisher was raised in New Jersey and has performed with the New Jersey Ballet, and at Carnegie Recital and Steinway Hall as a classical pianist. She also lettered four years Varsity as a First Team, All State Center Lacrosse player excelling in extreme sports. Ashley worked as a fashion model and MTV dancer. At twenty-three Fisher suffered a spinal cord injury.

About National Mobility Awareness Month: May is National Mobility Awareness Month and is the annual celebration that encourages seniors, veterans, caregivers and people with disabilities to enjoy active, mobile lifestyles. Founded in 1989 as a not-for-profit trade association, the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA) supports the awareness month with the assistance of approximately 600 mobility equipment dealers, manufacturers and driver rehabilitation specialists located in the United States and Canada dedicated to expanding opportunities for people with disabilities. For updates, please visit MobilityAwarenessMonth.com, as well as [Facebook](#), [Twitter \(@NMEDAcorn\)](#) and [Pinterest](#).

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