



E-NEWSLETTER

April News

A Victory Lap for All



Photo courtesy Dan Helrigel, IRL

On March 26, 2010 the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation teamed up with The Challenged Athletes Foundation of Florida and the Shoot For A Cure campaign in a race for recovery at the inaugural Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg 5K Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon event.

Although Sunday's IZOD IndyCar race was a washout and had to be postponed to Monday, on Saturday the sun shone on the more than 1200 participants who took advantage of the opportunity to run, walk or wheel their way to the finish line directly on the Honda Grand Prix racetrack and enjoy the victory party afterwards.



Gen. Petraeus, Sam Schmidt, Ida Cahill

Our honored guest was General David Petraeus, the Commander of U.S. Central Command in Tampa and former Commanding General of the Multi-National Force in Iraq, who joined Brian Brennan and other veterans to lend their competitive spirit. Members of running clubs from all around the state of Florida joined us for the race and after-party.

From 9 months old to 69 years old, everyone enjoyed the

Annual Racing to Recovery May Gala!

The 11th annual Racing to Recovery Gala will be held on Wednesday, May 19 in Carmel, IN. For the invitation and details of the event, click [here](#). Questions, call 317-236-9999 or email gala@samschmidt.org.

Proceeds from the annual Racing To Recovery galas have enabled us to fund scientific research, medical treatment, rehabilitation and technological advances to aid those who are fighting to overcome spinal cord injuries and other neurological disorders such as ALS, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.



Sam Schmidt with IRL drivers at 2010 Gala

Quality of Life Grants

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation provided funding for the diaphragm pacer program at St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in Lincoln, NE. We recently received a thank you note from Sue Carraher, Developmental Director of the Madonna Foundation,

day. Commented one participant: "The weather was beautiful and running the track was an experience, no doubt. Witnessing the very young children finish strong in their wheelchairs put a smile on my face. The after party was a nice touch. A big thank you to the coordinators and volunteers."

Said one of our race coordinators, Cindy Norton, "There was a little boy about 5 years old, in a wheelchair, who was racing against everyone, much bigger and older than himself. His dad was running step for step beside him. They finished the race in the last third of the pack, but to a large group of people applauding the boy's determination and stamina. As I went down to personally congratulate him I noticed he was rubbing the heels of his hands. I said, 'Great job, little buddy.' He looked up at me with a beaming smile that would have melted your heart and said, 'Thank you, ma'am.' I asked, 'Are you ok?'. His dad very quickly replied, patting his son on the back, 'He's fine; he's tough.' The youngster shook hands, grinned and said, 'I'm fine.'



Many families took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy the day together. It was great seeing a mom, dad, sister, brother; able bodied and disabled, running and walking side by side. This is what our Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon events are all about. ***It's not who wins, or comes in the top ten; it's about finishing the race: the Race to Recovery!***

Our sponsors for Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon St. Petersburg included Brighthouse, Raymond James, Pit Bull Energy Drink and Firestone, and we were proud to include the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Tampa Bay Lightning as event supporters. Visit our website <http://samschmidt.org> for more photos and also for information on upcoming Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon events.

People We Know

A few months ago, 11-year-old Phoenix resident Mackenzie Saunders injured her spinal cord while playing soccer and was unable to walk. To read about Mackenzie, click [here](#). To visit her Caring Bridge page, click [here](#).

Mackenzie's determination to succeed is surely an inspiration. At last report, she's already "ditched the wheelchair" during the school day.

the fundraising arm for Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, also in Lincoln. Two of Madonna's patients were recipients of the diaphragm pacer at St. Elizabeth. "This equipment truly epitomizes the phrase 'quality of life.' Thanks for supporting St. Elizabeth so others can take advantage of this technology," Sue said.

Madonna was also the recipient of a Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation grant for the Lokomat® robotic gait trainer. "The Lokomat® that you helped us fund is being used on a regular basis by patients in our therapy gym. It has been exciting to see so many patients with spinal cord injuries experience the sensation of walking and benefit from the cardiovascular exercise," Sue explained. Lokomat® is a robot-assisted treadmill that supports a patient in an upright position while moving the legs through a normal walking pattern – even if a patient is unable to move his or her legs independently. While similar treadmill technology has been in use for several years, the robotic assistance of the Lokomat® means patients with more severe injuries can benefit from gait therapy sooner in their recovery.

Although Mackenzie's future looks bright and her parents feel fortunate, there are still challenges ahead for them all. Faced with financial uncertainty and a still unknowable outcome, Mackenzie's dad Gary said he was impressed by the morale support offered by members of the SCI community. "Mackenzie had a visitor while she was hospitalized at Barrow Neurological Institute, an 18 yr. old girl (Maegan Clark), paralyzed in a diving accident from a year earlier. She made such a big difference to Mackenzie, the two talked about life in a wheelchair while going out to lunch across the street."



Maegan Clark

This e-newsletter article was originally conceived to focus on Mackenzie's story, but it has morphed (as these things do) into something more, because the girl who took the time to visit Mackenzie is also an inspiration. Maegan Clark, as a young person with a spinal cord injury, understood what Mackenzie needed right then. More than anything else, Mackenzie needed a little one-on-one time with someone who'd "been there". None of Mackenzie's school friends had gone through what she was going through. None could share experiences of life after a spinal cord injury. None could share stories of their detours on the road to a successful future.

Nobody will know exactly what Maegan and Mackenzie talked about during their lunch that day, but the visit meant enough to Mackenzie that it became a highlight of her hospital stay. The two keep in touch, and Mackenzie knows that in Maegan she has a friend and teen mentor with shared experiences as well as a shared interest in athletics.

Maegan went out of her way to "pay it forward" that day. An



Butch Bahe using Lokomat®

To view a Lokomat® in action, click [here](#).

Upcoming Events

April:

- 4/14: Parnelli Jones Private Museum, Torrance, CA
- 4/17: Day at the Races, Long Beach CA

May:

- 5/19: Annual May Gala, Indianapolis IN
- 5/21: Day at the Races, Indianapolis IN (tentative date)

June:

- 6/19: Day at the Races, Newton IA

July:

- 7/3: Day at the Races, Watkins Glen, NY
- 7/15: Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon, Honda Indy, Toronto Canada
- 7/17: Day at the Races, Toronto Canada (tentative)

August:

- 8/19: Run, Walk, 'N Wheelathon, Infineon Raceway, Sonoma CA
- 8/21: Day at the Races, Infineon Raceway, Sonoma CA
- 8/28: Day at the Races, Chicago, IL

September:

- 9/3: Day at the Races, Sparta KY

avid rugby player and college student, Maegan knows a healthy lifestyle is more than physical. A healthy sense of social responsibility led her to reach out and offer her own kind of help to Mackenzie when it was most needed.

We at SSPF wish all the best to these two special young people, Maegan and Mackenzie. We'd like to encourage everyone to live by Maegan's example. You, too, can "pay it forward" by giving others the benefit of your experiences, by sharing a common interest, or just by being there when you are needed.

October:

- 10/3: Day at the Races, Miami, FL
- 10/30: Run, Walk & Wheelathon, Las Vegas, NV

November:

- 11/1: 5th Annual Racing to Recovery Golf Tournament, Las Vegas, NV

Visit our website for information on how to register for any of these events, or call the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation at 317-236-9999.

Our mailing address is:

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