



## E-NEWSLETTER

### March News

#### Great Food, Great Chance to Help the Foundation in May



**Dawson's on Main**, a popular restaurant located at 1464 Main Street in Speedway Indiana, has offered to give 10% of the cost of your dining bill at Dawson's during the month of May to the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation.

Click [here](#) for a printable coupon. When you bring this coupon to dine at Dawson's you will receive a reusable card that is good through the end of May.

*Bonus: Each time you dine, you will also receive a registration form to sign up for an official autographed Alex Lloyd "HER" racing suit, worn during the Indy 500 in 2009!. Racing suit will be given away 5-31-2011.*

*Dawson's restaurant features an upscale, yet casual menu with a twist on classic dishes. They also have a lively bar and special events during race week. If you try Dawson's once you're sure to come back again and again. A great way to donate to the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation during the*

### 12th Annual Racing to Recovery Gala

*Event to be held on Wed. May 18, 2011 at D'Amore in downtown Indianapolis*



The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation's annual Racing to Recovery Gala will be held in Indianapolis on Wednesday, May 18, 2011.

This year the Foundation is pleased to honor **Roger Penske** with its Legends of Racing Award. Roger Penske is the owner of the automobile racing team Penske Racing, the Penske Corporation, and other automotive related businesses. A winning racer in the late 1950s, Penske was named 1961's Sports Car Club of America Driver of the Year by Sports Illustrated. Retiring from driving a few years later he created one of the most successful teams in IndyCar Series and NASCAR racing.

Past Legendary Driver award recipients have included Rick Mears, Parnelli Jones, Arie Luyendyk, Michael Andretti and Mario Andretti.

Now in its 12th year, the annual

*month of May.*

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## **Gettin' It Done**

At first it would seem that Jennifer Longdon and Mackenzie Saunders don't have much in common except their experience with spinal cord injury. But each had a great idea and the determination to Get It Done in her own way.

### ***Jennifer is helping the search for accessible housing make sense.***



This is the story of a woman in Arizona, Jennifer Longdon. Jennifer became spinal cord injured in a random drive-by shooting in 2004. Although complicated by the countless potholes faced by a person with physical challenges, the road of Jennifer's life has ultimately led her to entrepreneurship, athletics and activism.

With no sensation or function from the chest down and no muscle power in her stomach, Jennifer laughingly describes herself as a bowling ball perched on top of a limp noodle, struggling for balance. That self-deprecating humor, plus healthy doses of practicality, has helped her fashion her new life.

Jennifer's experiences since her injury have made her an expert on disability issues and an advocate for people in similar situations. I've learned a lot," she says, "although I would have preferred to learn it another way."

As she learned about life from a wheelchair user's

Racing to Recovery Gala attracts hundreds, including local business leaders and area residents, as well as IZOD IndyCar Series and Firestone IndyLights drivers and team owners who come out to support the Foundation's efforts on behalf of those living with paralysis.

The evening will include the opportunity for attendees to rub elbows with Indianapolis 500 greats from the past and present, bid on one-of-a-kind silent and live auction items, and enjoy delicious food and drinks.

The annual Gala is moving to a new location this year, D'Amore, Indianapolis' newest special events space. D'Amore is on the 48th floor of the Chase Tower, at 111 Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis.

For more information, please contact the Foundation office or e-mail [events@samschmidt.org](mailto:events@samschmidt.org).

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## **A Quality of Life Grant for the Kids at Blythedale Children's Hospital**



Thanks in part to the generosity of the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation, Blythedale Children's Hospital in Valhalla, New York was able to purchase a new Stand-Aid stroller.

perspective, Jennifer became an activist by default. When she decided to sell her accessible house, she was told by a realtor that her house was worth \$20,000 less than the identical house next door "because any buyer would need to make the house normal again". In Jennifer's words, "I let him live, but he was lucky." That instance of discrimination, among others, led this determined woman to decide to have a role in making the world more convenient for people with disabilities to live in, starting with their all-important search for an accessible living situation.

Jennifer became a Realtor, and with work partner Michael O'Donnell created the Mosaic Realty Group at Prudential Arizona Properties to help people with physical limitations find homes. Thanks to their efforts, potential buyers are now able to search the Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service for houses with any of 20 accessibility features, including widened doorways, roll-in showers and lowered cabinets. The partners' work earned them the 2010 Prudential National Diversity Award, and the idea is spreading quickly to the MLS listing services in other areas of the country.

Jennifer describes people with physical limitations as "the next untapped market". She's right. Throughout American history, as each minority group in turn has become recognized as consumers, that minority group loses its invisibility. In other words, to be taken seriously in our country a minority group needs to be recognized as people who buy things. Jennifer is doing her part to make that happen.

Jennifer also is chairwoman of the Phoenix Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues and volunteers as a peer mentor for ABIL (Arizona Bridge to Independent Living). She's participated in two half-marathons so far, raising money for spinal cord injury. We commend Jennifer Longdon for her Getting It Done philosophy and expect to

The stander helps their young patients with a wide range of serious medical challenges, from spinal cord injuries to cerebral palsy, engage in valuable weight-bearing activity and standing therapy as part of their comprehensive rehabilitation plans.

Standing therapy benefits the digestive and respiratory systems and has valuable psychosocial benefits, especially for children and adolescents, as they participate in school and recreational activities at Blythedale.

The weight-bearing element of standing therapy helps strengthen bones and skeletal development, which is so important for growing young patients.

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation helped Blythedale purchase a piece of equipment that has helped them improve the health and quality of life of many children with medical challenges.

One recent patient made wonderful gains using the Stand-Aid as part of her physical therapy program. "Tina" was recovering her mobility following a traumatic brain injury sustained during an accident. As Tina regained her strength, the Stand-Aid helped her improve her balance and increase her range of motion. Standing therapy, as part of a multidisciplinary care plan, helped her make steady progress and she was recently discharged from the hospital.

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### **Indiana Spinal Attorneys Recognize Foundation's Efforts**

*Excerpt from Young & Young, Attorneys at Law website, dated*

hear a lot more about her as time goes on.

To read Jennifer's blog entries on Voices of AZ, click [here](#).

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### ***Mackenzie is making good on a promise to herself.***



In April of 2010 we profiled a gallant young lady from Arizona named Mackenzie Saunders.

Teenager Mackenzie (nicknamed "Mack") suffered a spinal cord injury in December of 2009, while playing soccer. Local media covered the story extensively and followed her progress. Since that time Mackenzie has, thankfully, recovered to a great extent. She is out of the wheelchair, determined to avoid using a cane or walker "because it would make her look like an old lady". Such are the thoughts of a teenager! A return to sports is on hold for now, but there are plenty of other things she can do, and that's what Mackenzie and her family focus on.

Right now the real story about Mackenzie is her determination to, as she terms it, "Play It Forward". This is the heartwarming tale, in her father's words. "A girl named Hope came to Mack's hospital room before Christmas 2009 (Mack's 3rd night, unable to move her legs at all), and gave Mack her prized DS Nintendo player. Hope had asked for an upgraded game for Christmas and her mom told her she would have to donate her old player first. They went to two hospitals trying to give away Hope's game but were told you can drop the game off but can not give it personally to a kid in the hospital. The 3rd hospital, where Mack was, bent the rules and allowed Hope in to Mack's room. It was a

***3/9/2011:***

"We want to take this time to mention, again, our admiration for Sam Schmidt. As many of you may know Mr. Sam Schmidt suffered a spinal cord injury while driving his race car in 2001. He is paralyzed with quadriplegia. Sam has not let his physical injuries interfere with leading a full and productive life. Mr. Sam Schmidt founded the Sam Schmidt Foundation ([www.samschmidt.org](http://www.samschmidt.org)) to help find a cure to spinal cord injury. The foundation's mission is Leading the Charge to Cure Paralysis.

Sam Schmidt has made it his mission to help others overcome what they might, originally, believe are insurmountable obstacles.

We represented a young man with a family of four who suffered a spinal cord injury as a result of a failure of a climbing tree stand. Naturally this young man was terrified. He was depressed. He worried about how he was going to take care of his family. He was frightened and angry. He was considering giving up. It was painful to watch, and although everyone who came into contact with him helped, he was having great difficulty.

One day Sam Schmidt came to see this young man. They talked for an hour or more. After that conversation, everyone could see the strength rising in this young man. This young man spoke of Sam as a guide through his hardships. Mr. Sam Schmidt kept in contact with this young man by phone whenever the young man needed a lift. The young man returned to work and until his death ten years later, that young man took care of his family and was a proud Hoosier."

To read the complete article, click [here](#).

wonderful experience and Mack played that game for hours and hours while lying in her hospital bed.

“Mack decided to start a toy drive for used hand held video games. She named it ‘Sharing Hope’, after the girl who gave her a DS player while she was hospitalized. We never saw or heard from Hope again since that night in Dec 2009. All we knew was her first name. Mack’s Sharing Hope toy drive collected over 30 games and we delivered them to kids in two different hospitals before Christmas 2010. Mack and Hope were reunited after a local TV report in Jan 2011 about the toy drive. Since then, Mack and Hope have delivered even more games to kids at a local children’s hospital.”

To read Mackenzie’s story in the newspaper, Arizona Republic, click [here](#). To read the follow-up story in the Ahwatukee Foothills News, click [here](#).

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## 2011 Schedule of Events

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation will have a very busy schedule in 2011, including several Day at the Races quality of life events, Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon fundraisers, local fundraisers, the annual May Gala and the annual Racing to Recovery Golf Tournament.

To view the entire schedule as of today, click [here](#). The schedule will be updated as further information becomes available.

Our mailing address is:

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[www.samschmidt.org](http://www.samschmidt.org)

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