



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY

MEDICAL CENTER
EAST CAMPUS

PossAbilities & you

Winter 2011

www.teampossabilities.com

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Heat for Fun,
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PossAbilities

PRESENTED BY

SAN MANUEL
BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

Spina Bifida Supporters Brave the Heat for **Fun, Fellowship, Inspiration**



An enthusiastic crowd of 80 friends and supporters of Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Spina Bifida Team Center braves the sweltering heat of Sunday, July 25, 2010, for an afternoon of food, fun, and inspiration on the grounds of Loma Linda University Medical Center East Campus. As the event gets under way at 12:15 p.m., the mercury sits at 95 degrees, pushing participants out of the sun-drenched amphitheater in the center of East Campus Park to seek shelter under canopies, awnings, and trees.

After a warm welcome from Toyia Greene, M.S.W., clinical social worker at the LLU Children's Hospital Specialty Team Centers and organizer of the event, Ravindra Rao, M.D., takes the stage. He needs no introduction as the man who has been the personal pediatrician for some 1,000 to 1,500 spina bifida babies the last 26 years. As chief of general academic pediatrics at the LLU School of Medicine, Dr. Rao is widely known as an expert on the disorder.

Next up is PossAbilities member and former Oakland A's baseball player Kyle Massey. From his wheelchair, Massey tells the crowd his life took an unexpected turn on October 27, 2007, when a 60-foot fall from a fifth-story hotel window left him with broken legs, back, and ribs, and a punctured right lung. Before the accident, Massey was accustomed to a life of fitness and athletics. But now, after adjusting to the new reality of spinal cord injury, he actively continues his interests in sports and physical fitness. Currently, he's training for the 2012 Paralympics in London, England, by participating in wheelchair racing and hand-cycling competitions. "I believe the accident that changed my life actually made me a better person," he says. "It has changed my values and helped me see the importance of family, friends, and giving. If there were a magic pill that would completely restore my body, I wouldn't take it."

At the conclusion of the speakers, Robert Hicks takes the microphone. As he bounds onto the stage, Hicks presents himself as a robustly healthy young adult. Had Dr. Rao not pointed out that Hicks, a former patient of his, was born with spina bifida, it would have been impossible to diagnose the congenital disorder from Hicks' appearance or behavior. Before inviting guests to break for lunch, Hicks encourages them to try their hand at the two-player NASCAR race car simulator inside a hot-rod Toyota Camry brought to the event by Mayflower Transit. The simulator-equipped car, specially designed with hand controls for paraplegics to use, is making its debut at the event. There are cookies, popcorn, and

On Our Cover

Briana Walker: Long-time member of and speaker for PossAbilities






Facts About Spina Bifida

Spina bifida is a congenital condition that affects .06 babies out of every 1,000 born in the United States. Another way to look at it is that six out of every 10,000 babies are born with it. The cause is not known, but a folic acid deficiency has been suspected. However, Dr. Rao reports, some women who were taking supplemental folic acid have given birth to babies with spina bifida, so the jury is still out.

"Spina bifida babies are born with part of the spinal column exposed, usually in the low back, but sometimes higher up," Dr. Rao states. "We surgically place the spine back into the body." He notes that other issues, including muscle weakness, bowel and bladder incontinence, and some types of mental dysfunction, are often associated with the defect. Because of the weakness in their lower extremities, many people with the condition have trouble walking.

"The babies often require a shunt in the brain to allow fluids to drain," he adds. "Despite the fact that they frequently have varying degrees of cognitive impairment, they are not retarded. In fact, they're often quite bright. My goal is to help them become fully functioning adults, able to get a job and make their own way."

 **Save the date for the upcoming
Children's Christmas Party
December 12, 2010
4 to 7 p.m. at LLUMC East Campus Park**

refreshments. And kids of all ages—including Toyia Greene—enjoy getting their faces painted.

According to Toyia Greene, the gathering is the brainchild of Dr. Rao. "The summer event has been a vision of Dr. Rao's for quite some time," Greene shares. "So many of our patients are socially isolated and have little to no interaction with other individuals who have spina bifida except for when they come to their clinic appointments. It was our goal to create an opportunity for patients and families to network with each other and with spina bifida team members in a more casual setting." Greene concludes by noting that perhaps next year's event should take place at the beach. "It's a lot cooler there," she says, wiping the sweat from her face.

Thanks to everyone for coming, and thanks to the sponsors of the event:

- Dr. Rao
- David A. Chamberlin, M.D., FACS, chief of pediatric urology at Loma Linda University Health Care
- A-Med Health Care; CCS Medical
- Astra Tech
- Aqua Hydrate
- Mayflower Transit
- Total Transportation Logistics
- PossAbilities ●

Moms' Night Out

Mom's Night Out is a support group for moms of children with special needs to have social time with other moms going through similar challenges. Enjoy a good hot meal, share lots of chitchat, and laugh a lot. We welcome girlfriends, grandmothers, aunts, and any women who give you support. This is a social time for moms. Everyone pays for her own meal. No children please! For more information, please call Tina Schumacher at 909-864-7424.



Get Kayaking! Find Health, Healing Through Paddle Sports

Established in August 2004 by kayakers in the Washington, D.C., area, Team River Runner (TRR) is a primarily volunteer organization run by a council of kayakers and overseen by a board of directors. Working in partnership with the Wounded Warrior Project and Disabled Sports USA, TRR gives military veterans and their family members an opportunity to find health, healing, and new challenges through white-water boating and other paddle sports. The benefits of TRR have as much to do with social support, finding emotional strength, and re-creating personal identity as they do with athletic activity.

A local chapter was formed in early 2008 through the Jerry L. Pettis VA Hospital in collaboration with Loma Linda University Medical Center East

Campus' PossAbilities program.

The national TRR program has provided the local organization with white-water kayaks and associated equipment (paddles, helmets, personal flotation devices, and paddling jackets). The LLU PossAbilities program and the Student Activities program provide access to the Drayson Center's heated swimming pool and coordinate student volunteers and outside instructors. While preference is given to veterans, space and resources are available for other participants through the PossAbilities program. The paddling objectives of the program are to provide a safe and fun introduction to white-water kayaks and using them on the river and in the ocean.

Mid-September, a group of seven paddlers associated with the PossAbilities

and Team River Runner Kayaking program at Loma Linda University and the Loma Linda VA Medical Center took an excursion to La Jolla shores and out to the La Jolla sea caves. The swell was a little too large to permit the kayakers to enter the caves as planned, but on the paddle out, the group got to see seals, sea lions, cormorants, pelicans, and a few long-distance swimmers!

The typical La Jolla crowd was in place on a beautiful day, and the group got to witness not only a beach wedding but a Polynesian festival while they were loading their gear and getting ready to launch.

The outing was the culmination of a six-week ACA Introduction to Kayaking course that took place at the Drayson Center this summer. ●



PossAbilities
and Team River
Runner have been

offering kayaking courses quarterly for disabled athletes at the Drayson Center since January 2008. Each class ends with a field trip. If you're interested in participating, please contact Cotie Williams at cowilliams@llu.edu or Bruce Miller at Bruce.Miller@va.gov.



Sherman Indian High School Pipeline at LLU

History was made August 1 through 13, 2010. In response to a funding request from our Loma Linda University (LLU) Office of Community Partnerships and Diversity, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) approved the request from LLU to organize an on-campus orientation to health care professions for Native American students from Sherman Indian High School in Riverside, Calif. This marks the start of an official partnership between LLU and the BIE. Community Academic Partners in Service (CAPS) Director Julie Schaepper brought the students of Sherman Indian High School for an informational session about PossAbilities. After learning about the many opportunities for volunteering, the students were anxious to get involved and connected with the program. Thanks to CAPS and the Sherman students for coming!



There are many opportunities to volunteer with PossAbilities.
Call **909-558-6384** to find out more.



PossAbilities SUPPORT GROUPS

THE AMPUTEE CONNECTION

For program information or to request a visit by one of our volunteers, call:
Bert—Norco **951-735-7963**
Bill—Grand Terrace/LLUMC **909-423-0562**
www.theamputeeconnection.org

Redlands Support Group

Third Sunday of the month, 2 to 4 p.m.
Wiesser Education Pavilion, Redlands
Community Hospital
350 Terracina Blvd.
Redlands, CA 92373

Corona/Riverside Support Group

Third Saturday of the month, 10 a.m. to noon
Riverside Medical Clinic
7117 Brockton Ave.
Riverside, CA 92506

BRAINSTORMING 4 US

Brain injury support group for all ages.
Held at the Sterling Inn Commons, 17738
Francesca Road, Victorville, CA 92395.
For more information, call **760-244-1600** or
e-mail info@brainstorming4us.com.
For more information, visit
www.brainstorming4us.com.

FREE WHEELERS

SPINAL CORD INJURY CLUB

First Monday of the month,
5 to 7 p.m.
Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP)
303 East Vanderbilt Way
San Bernardino, CA 92408
Family is welcome. Food will be provided.
RSVP to Dennis at **909-890-3438**,
or **909-890-1623** (TTY), or e-mail
Kaney-D@iehp.org.

HITSS: HEAD INJURY AND TRAUMA SPINAL SUPPORT GROUP ADULT AND PEDIATRICS GROUP MEETING

Fourth Monday of the month, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Ambulatory Services Building, Conference
Room 129A (the old library)
11406 Loma Linda Drive
Loma Linda, CA 92354
Enter the south driveway and go to the end
of the building. Survivors or family members
welcome. Call **1-800-986-HITSS** or
1-800-986-4487, ext. 42401.

MENDED HEARTS: CHAPTER 34

A support group for all heart patients and
their families.
Last Friday of the month, 11 a.m.
Loma Linda University Medical Center
Cafeteria, Room A
11234 Anderson St.
Loma Linda, CA 92354
For more information, call **909-558-8180**.

MOMS' NIGHT OUT

Third Thursday of the month, 6 p.m.
Mimi's Café
395 East Hospitality Lane
San Bernardino, CA 92408
Support group for moms of children with
special needs to have social time with other
moms going through similar challenges. Enjoy
a good hot meal, share lots of chitchat, and
laugh a lot. We welcome girlfriends,
grandmothers, aunts, and other women who
give you support. This is a social time for
moms. Everyone pays for her own meal. No
children, please! For more information, call
Tina Schumacher at **909-864-7424**.

*For Medicare Health Plan comparison and enrollment, call Sarah
Welsh, **909-520-8482**.*

Join a Winning Team ... Team PossAbilities!



For more information about joining the team go to www.teampossabilities.com or call **909-558-6384**.



Resource Guide

AMPUTEES

Amputee Coalition of America (ACA)
1-888-267-5669 or TTY 1-865-525-4512
www.amputee-coalition.org

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis Foundation
1-800-283-7800
www.arthritis.org

Juvenile Arthritis Alliance (JA Alliance)
1-800-283-7800
www.arthritis.org/ja-alliance-main.php

BLINDNESS

American Foundation for the Blind
1-800-232-5463
Addresses critical issues facing people with visual disabilities, including employment, independent living, literacy, and technology
www.afb.org

Blindness Support Services, Inc.
951-341-9244

Information, referral, housing support, counseling, braille tape transcription, speakers' bureau, transportation assistance, and prevocational training
www.blindnesssupport.com

Braille Institute
714-821-5000
www.brailleinstitute.org

National Federation of the Blind
410-659-9314
Resources include publications, aids and appliances, conventions, employment, and training
www.nfb.org

BRAIN INJURY

Brain Injury Association of America, National Brain Injury Information Center
1-800-444-6443
Creating a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education, and advocacy
www.biausa.org

CEREBRAL PALSY

United Cerebral Palsy
1-800-USA-5UCP (872-5827)
e-mail: national@ucp.org
www.ucp.org

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

National Multiple Sclerosis Society/ Southern California Chapter
1-800-FIGHT-MS (344-4867)
Provides resources regarding clinical centers, equipment loans, therapies, aquatics, social services, education, lending library, speakers' bureau, peer counseling, respite care, advocacy, self-help groups, and employment services

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular Dystrophy Association
1-800-572-1717
www.mda.org

SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI)

California Paralyzed Veterans Association
562-826-5713 or 1-800-497-0565
Provides resources for veterans
www.calpva.org

STROKE

Stroke Association of Southern California
310-575-1699
Free education and tools for patients and caregivers
www.strokesocal.org

American Brain Tumor Association
1-800-886-2282
www.abta.org

Amputee Rehabilitation Clinic

Each Wednesday every month,
1 p.m.
Held in Room 407,
North Entrance
11406 Loma Linda Drive
Loma Linda, CA 92354
For more information,
please call 909-558-6272.

An appointment is required.

About the PossAbilities Program

PossAbilities is an outreach program whose goal is to offer disabled individuals a sense of community and provide activities and practical help. To find out more about PossAbilities, call our office at 909-558-6384 or visit us on the Web at www.teampossabilities.com.

PossAbilities & You is published by Loma Linda University Medical Center East Campus to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a physician.

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cotie's corner

On October 23, the Inland Empire Disabilities Collaborative (IEDC), in partnership with PossAbilities, hosted the 2nd Disabilities Expo at the Riverside Convention Center. The Expo consisted of over 100 community partners that serve the disabled and senior communities including service providers and regional organizations. Those vendors provided information, resources, and give-a-ways promoting their services to over 500 attendees. The day was filled with amazing opportunities to network, advocate, and promote equal opportunities, universal access, and full participation of people with disabilities and seniors in our community. Thank you to all of the organizations, volunteers, and sponsors that made this event a success. For more information about the Inland Empire Disabilities Collaborative go to www.iedisabilitiescollaborative.org.

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

PossAbilities

9th Annual
TRIATHLON

Presented by

SAN MANUEL
BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

PossAbilities provides
resources and
opportunities
for people with
diverse disabilities.

Sunday, April 17, 2011
Drayson Center, Loma Linda

Triathlon 3.1 mile run • 11 mile bike • 150 yard swim
5K Run/Walk/Roll • Kiddie Triathlon (including tricycles)

For more information, call 909-558-6384

Registration Starts at 5:30 a.m. • Race Begins at 7:00 a.m.



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