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2017



# Your Impact Report

Every day here at the National Ability Center, I am inspired by the sheer number of individuals who come together to bring our mission to life. **Thank you for being a part of our team.**

This past year has been a historic one. In January, we joined with Splore, with a consensus from both organizations that the only reason to come together was to provide more programs to more kids, veterans and families. Just over six months later, we have launched more NAC and Splore families into new adventures across the state of Utah! And, summer 2017 will go down as our busiest season in history. Considering we now have 70+ combined years of experience, that's quite a statement!

For the past three years, a growing demand for our programs has had us all thinking differently. And, we would love to have you join us on September 8th at the National Ability Center's Bronfman Family Ranch Recreation and Education Center to see for yourself the innovative steps we are taking and the exciting future we have planned together.

I also invite you to get more deeply connected to the possibilities your support turns into realities. Join us for a tour, challenge your abilities at our Summit Challenge bike ride on August 27<sup>th</sup> or lend your energy and expertise as a member of our 1,500-strong volunteer team.

Sincerely,

Gail Loveland  
Executive Director, National Ability Center



## Your generosity helped the Mathis family be more than burn survivors.

An October camping trip turned into a nightmare for the Mathis family when a portable heater exploded inside their trailer, raining blue flames on the just awakening family. Every family member – father Michael, mother Amie, 13-year-old Mason, 10-year-old Marshal and 7-year-old Abbie – suffered painful burns on feet, legs, arms, hands and face, along with singed and burned hair. They were flown to the University of Utah Burn Center where the healing began.

Eventually, Burn Center Psychosocial Program Coordinator Kristen Quinn partnered with RockOn, part of NAC's Splore adventure programs, to create a 6 week rock climbing program, for their burn survivors.

"At first my kids were hesitant to climb, but by the end, they were doing four, five and six routes," said Amie Mathis. "It also really helped my husband," she continued. **It was helpful for him to see others who had been there. They're still living and still doing."**

Says Amie, **"They say we will always have our pain, but now it's up to us to see how far we go and what we do."**

## Your gifts helped Veteran Michael reconnect with his family.

When Air Force Pararescue specialist Michael Jones watched innocent Haitian citizens being shot and dragged from a car without the ability to intervene, it went against his professional training and mission, and his deepest personal values.

"It was the darkest moment of my time in the service. It just haunts me that we didn't intervene," he said. For a decade he suffered a crushing sense of obligation, putting a barrier between him and the wife and daughter he loved and making it impossible for him to enjoy them in his life.

Then he discovered the National Ability Center at a Health and Wellness Retreat sponsored by the University of Utah's National Center for Veterans Study. Through the unique recreational opportunities of the NAC, combined with the specialized psychological treatments of the University's PTSD program, Michael rebuilt his connection with his family.

"I was able to put my fear behind me and I now had a clearer vision of what right could feel like," said Michael. Michael's wife Dianna noticed the change. **"He smiled again, he laughed with us again,"** she said. Says Michael, **"I tell other veterans all the time about the NAC. I want them to feel like I feel."**

Watch more of Michael's story at [www.discovernac.org/michael](http://www.discovernac.org/michael)



## Your support enabled Melinda to regain her freedom.

If you missed hearing Melinda speak at Red, White and Snow, here's a quick recap of her powerful story.

In 1999, skier, snowboarder and hair stylist Melinda Crandall's life was drastically altered when a distracted driver rear ended her, breaking her neck and injuring her spinal cord.

Over the next nine years, Melinda suffered two more rear end collisions, resulting in quadriplegia and a massive stroke. But with love and support from her husband Ben, inspiration from her family and your support, Melinda battled back each time to regain her quality of life.

In 2008, Melinda found the National Ability Center, which enabled her to rediscover the joy of skiing and reclaim some of her independence. Melinda has an infectious positive attitude and, in her words, **"No one can tell me I can't do something... the word 'no' is not in my vocabulary."**

Even with her positive attitude, Melinda did not believe she could come back from the third accident. Finding the National Ability Center and skiing coach Patricia was a critical component to her ability to heal mentally and physically. Says Melinda, **"Thanks to the NAC I found my freedom again."**

Watch more of Melinda's story at [www.discovernac.org/melinda](http://www.discovernac.org/melinda)

Your support of our mission helps individuals of all abilities to thrive.  
**Thank You!** [www.discovernac.org/ways-to-give](http://www.discovernac.org/ways-to-give)

#IamNAC



I am  
Gratitude



I am  NATIONAL  
ABILITY  
CENTER®

Join us in discovering the possibilities

- August 19 Summer Field Day
- August 28 Summit Challenge
- September 8 The Future of Possibilities NAC Insider Announcement
- September 16 Splore 40th Anniversary Celebration
- September 30 MOFO Mountain Bike Ride
- October 1 Winter Registration Opens
- November (date TBD) Saluting Our Heroes (Salt Lake City, UT)
- March 1-3 Red, White & Snow, 2018

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ELEVATED