

# PossAbilities & you

Winter 2009

[www.possabilities.com](http://www.possabilities.com)



## Disability Rights Expanded

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**Stories of Perseverance, Joy, and Opportunity**

Members of PossAbilities inspire us with their stories of courage and determination. See pages 2, 3, and 5 inside for details.



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER EAST CAMPUS

**PossAbilities**

PRESENTED BY **SAN MANUEL**  
BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

# Malek's Perseverance and Determination Shine Through

**M**alek Mohammed lived in Afghanistan his whole life. One day just like any other, 16-year-old Malek was gathering firewood for his family, when unexpectedly he stepped on a land mine. It blew off his right leg and threw him into the air. As he came back down he hit another land mine, which ripped off his other leg.

Thankfully, soldiers and security officials heard the blasts and came running to help. They took him to a hospital where they amputated both his legs below the knees. Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC) was notified about Malek and wanted to help and arranged for him to come have surgery.

He has undergone extensive surgeries and treatment for burns on his chest and arms. He currently is doing his physical therapy at Loma Linda University Medical Center East Campus.

Not only has Malek learned how to walk with the help of prosthetics, but he now can play his favorite sport again—soccer—and he's taken up hand cycling as well. Through Loma Linda University Medical Center and PossAbilities, Malek has stayed involved in all his favorite activities. He has competed in



“Malek has a drive that is very special,” says Michael Davidson, clinical manager of the medical center’s Rehabilitation Institute. “When he first got his legs, he walked home pushing his wheelchair.”

two triathlons. Malek loves to swim, lift weights, and play tennis. He loves to play wheelchair basketball, volleyball, tennis, and wheelchair rugby.

Malek’s physical recovery has been remarkable and his determination shows through in his love for studying and

learning new things. He is now attending school, learning English, and living independently. His mind is strong and his determination inspires everyone who crosses his path.

Malek is expected to return to Kabul soon, where he lives with his parents and seven siblings in a small cinder block house. He will continue his journey of recovery as his newfound friends provide encouragement from afar. ●

## On Our Cover

Antonio Steward (left), Malek Mohammed (center), and David DeMello are all PossAbilities members who continually inspire those around them with their courage and determination. Amputation of their limbs does not hinder them from achieving their dreams and goals.



*Narrated by Bailey Navarro, age 15, PossAbilities support member and volunteer*



# Antonio's Courage, Strength Touch the Lives of the Community

In September 2006, after finishing a snack and a break from video games, Antonio Steward stepped outside of his house when a man opened fire on the then 17-year-old. The shooter apparently asked him what his gang affiliation was, and when Antonio said he didn't gangbang, the man shot him with a semiautomatic handgun nine times.

Antonio sustained injuries to his shoulder, chest, groin, back, stomach, foot, and both legs. He died in the ambulance on his way to the hospital, but the paramedics brought him back to life. Due to the extent of his injuries, Antonio lost both of his legs above the knees. To this day, he has undergone more than 56 surgeries. No one knew if he was going to survive, but he did.

Antonio fought his way through recovery, struggles through rehabilitation, and now takes on every day of his life with courage and determination. Antonio continues his rigorous rehabilitation while finishing high school. He uses a wheelchair, but hopes that once he is fitted with new prosthetics he will be able to leave his wheelchair behind.

Antonio just competed with his mom in his first 5K race at the Redlands Bulldog Triathlon where he rolled over

Antonio lives by these words: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."

3 miles in his wheelchair and took first place in his division after finishing in 33 minutes. His mom finished in 61 minutes. The excitement of the audience when Antonio crossed that finish line was talked about for days. One person said, "I will never look at life the same. Whenever I think I've got it tough, I will always think of him. What a heart that kid has!"

When Antonio isn't training for a race, he enjoys lifting weights and playing baseball. Antonio recently completed training and is now a Certified Peer Visitor through the Amputee Coalition of America and Loma Linda University Medical Center. He takes time out of his busy schedule to visit with other hospital patients in the hospital experiencing traumatic injuries, and shares his hope and encouragement with them. He is a member of the speaker's bureau for PossAbilities, which allows him the opportunity to share his life experiences with students and other community members.

His courage, strength, and tenacity continue to touch the lives of everyone he comes in contact with. As said by Antonio's mom, Annie Camp, "Antonio hasn't even begun to live." ●



Antonio Steward's perseverance through recovery taught him a whole new way of life full of joy.

## PossAbilities Speaker's Bureau

The PossAbilities Speaker's Bureau consists of our members and community advocates that represent the program at a variety of speaking engagements. By sharing their stories and unique perspective on life, they are role models and inspire each of us to do our part to make the world a better place. To learn more about the PossAbilities Speaker's Bureau call 909-558-6384.



## Staying Active with Multiple Sclerosis

Why is it important for you to exercise? Staying active is important for everyone. Exercise may help reduce the risk for heart disease and other long-term health problems. When you have multiple sclerosis (MS), getting exercise is even more important for your mind, body, and overall quality of life.

Research suggests that regular moderate exercise can do the following for people with MS:

- Increase arm and leg strength
- Improve bladder and bowel control
- Reduce depression, fatigue, and anger
- Help combat symptoms such as spasticity (continuously contracted muscles) and poor balance
- Build a reserve of muscle strength in the event of a flare-up
- Increase social interaction and engagement

What kinds of activities are best? Talk with your physician or a physical trainer who has worked with people with MS. You can come up with an individual fitness plan for your lifestyle and ability level. You can adjust your plan when you have ups and downs. Here are a few ideas for exercise:

- Swimming
- Walking on an indoor track or in a shopping center
- Going to regular aerobic classes or playing in a golf league
- Doing yoga or other stretching techniques
- Using weight machines and strength-training techniques

Always talk with your physician before beginning an exercise program.

# Disability Rights **Expanded**

## New law will cover more people under the Americans with Disabilities Act



At PossAbilities, we want you to feel connected. Our goal is to provide you the opportunities and tools you need to succeed.

**R**ecently, Congress passed a law that may give you more legal rights. The new law updates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Passed in 1990, the ADA protects people with disabilities from being treated unfairly, especially by employers. Companies can't fire or choose not to hire you because of your disability. But since then, courts changed the meaning of "disabled" to exclude certain people.

The updated law—which takes effect in January 2009—has broadened its definition of who is considered disabled. It doesn't matter what an impairment is from—as long as the impairment substantially limits a major life activity, it's a disability. Under the law, other conditions now considered disabilities include epilepsy, cancer, cerebral palsy,

and diabetes. For example, foot problems from diabetes are covered under the new ADA rule. Or an employer can't fire you if you have cancer or diabetes.

You might take medications or use devices to help with your condition. But you still are protected by the ADA. You are also covered by the ADA if your condition is in remission or if you go through periods of improvement. ●



For more information about the ADA, or for help filing a complaint if you think you've been discriminated against, call the ADA information line at **1-800-514-0301** or **1-800-514-0383 (TTY)**.



# Joe's Journey Brings Wholeness to Others

**F**ourteen years ago, Joe Tinker slipped and fell while working in a walk-in freezer. The femoral artery in one of his legs was destroyed, and he would undergo more than 30 arterial bypass surgeries in an attempt to save his leg. But tragically, both legs had to be amputated.

Twelve years after his accident, Joe joined the PossAbilities program at Loma Linda University's East Campus Hospital. In 2003, Joe cheered other PossAbilities members at the Rudy's Braveheart Triathlon, named in honor of Rudy Tolson-Garcia, a teenage double-amputee athlete. Seeing his friends racing alongside everyone else encouraged Joe to get in shape himself. Nine months later, he entered—and completed—the 2004 PossAbilities Triathlon in Loma Linda.

Less than a year later, at age 38 and just two months after his wedding, Joe died in his sleep. Joe's parents decided to donate his three pairs of prosthetic legs, including a high-tech computerized pair, to the Orthotics & Prosthetics Department at Loma Linda University Medical Center.

Alcino Neto is from Brazil. He lost his leg above the knee 20 years ago in a motorcycle accident. But that does not stop him. Like Joe, he is a member of team PossAbilities, and he is a prolific surfer. Because of his love for the ocean, his friends call him Pirate. Alcino visits the U.S. often to teach amputee soldiers and Marines to surf. What also makes Alcino unique is that he is walking on a prosthesis that uses some of the components that once belonged to Joe.

Malek Mohammed came to Loma Linda last year to be rehabilitated from an encounter with a land mine that resulted in the loss of both of his legs

above the knee. Parts from some of Joe's prosthetic legs were retooled into prosthetics that fit Malek. With his new prosthetics, Malek was soon back up and walking. Malek will return home to Afghanistan and, in a sense, take a part of Joe with him.

Joe came to Loma Linda to become whole again. But Joe's journey brought wholeness to others and continues Joe's quest for a better world. ●

*Written by Michael Davidson, PossAbilities support member*

Joe Tinker's journey continues his quest for a better world.



The Loma Linda University Medical Center East Campus Outpatient Rehabilitation Services Center is located at: Ambulatory Services Building, 11406 Loma Linda Drive, Loma Linda, CA 92354, 909-558-6144.



## Live Better with a Brain Injury

If you have a brain injury from a car accident, fall, or other cause, you might have more trouble remembering or understanding things than you used to. Fortunately, these challenges often become easier within months.

Try these steps to help you jog your memory:

- Find a rehabilitation program. Ask your doctor or local hospital to refer you. Rehab teams include nurses, speech and occupational therapists, psychologists, and social workers. They'll help you regain skills, teach you to work around memory troubles, and provide social support.
- Make a memory book or wallet with pictures of people and places you see often. Flip through it to jog your memory during conversations and other daily activities.
- Set your cell phone, pager, or computer to remind you to take medicine or do other tasks.
- Take care of your body. Eating right and exercising fuel your brain, too. Physical activity has been shown to help with memory.

HITSS: Head Injury & Trauma Spinal Support Group can help you face challenges after a brain injury. See the calendar on page 6 for details.



# PossAbilities CALENDAR

## FREE WHEELERS

### SPINAL CORD INJURY CLUB

1st Monday of every month

5 to 7 p.m. at Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP)

303 E. Vanderbilt Way

San Bernardino, CA 92408

Family is welcome. Food will be provided.

Please RSVP to Dennis at 909-890-3438,

909-890-1623 (TTY)

Kaney-D@iehp.org

## THE AMPUTEE CONNECTIONS

For program information or to request a visit by one of our volunteers, call:

Bert—Norco 951-735-7963

Tom—Cherry Valley 951-845-6543

Bill—Grand Terrace/LLUMC 909-423-0562

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

## Redlands Support Group

3rd 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

3rd Saturday of the month, 10 a.m. to noon

Riverside Medical Clinic

7117 Brockton Ave.

Riverside, CA 92506

## HITSS: HEAD INJURY & TRAUMA SPINAL SUPPORT GROUP ADULT & PEDIATRICS GROUP MEETING

4th Monday of every 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.

For information, 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 every 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.

## MOM'S NIGHT OUT

3rd Thursday of every month, 6 p.m.

Mimi's Café

395 E. 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

chit-chat, and laugh a lot. We welcome girlfriends, grandmothers, aunts, and any women who give you support. This is a social time out for moms. Everyone pays for her own meal. No children please!

For more information, call Tina Schumacher at 909-864-7424.

**Attitude Is  
Everything!**

Contact the Amputee  
Connection today.

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

## Join a Winning Team ... Team PossAbilities!



Reap the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through Team PossAbilities. Our team members participate in road cycling, mountain biking, triathlons, and wheelchair, walking, and running events. The team members are active on a social, recreational, intermediate, and elite level. In addition to increasing awareness for the PossAbilities program, our goal is to promote the benefits of a healthy and productive lifestyle through peer support, training, teamwork, and competition. Students, faculty, staff, and community members are all part of Team PossAbilities. Visit [www.teampossabilities.org](http://www.teampossabilities.org) or call 909-558-6384 to join.



# resource guide

## **AMPUTEES**

**Amputee Coalition of America (ACA)**

1-888-267-5669;

TTY: 1-865-525-4512

[www.amputee-coalition.org](http://www.amputee-coalition.org)

## **Amputee Rehabilitation Support Group**

Date: Third Monday of each month

Time: 10 to 11 a.m.

Call David Moore at **909-427-7148** for more information.

## **ARTHRITIS**

**Arthritis Foundation**

951-320-1540 or

1-800-954-2873

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

## **Juvenile Arthritis Alliance (JA Alliance)**

951-320-1540 or

1-800-954-2873

[www.arthritis.org/ja-alliance-main](http://www.arthritis.org/ja-alliance-main)

## **BLINDNESS**

**Blindness Support Services**

951-341-9244

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

[www.blindnesssupport.com](http://www.blindnesssupport.com)

## **Braille Institute**

714-821-5000

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

## **National Federation of the Blind**

410-659-9314

Resources include publications, aids and appliances, conventions, employment, and training.

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

## **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](http://www.afb.org)

## **BRAIN INJURY**

**Brain Injury Association of America, National Brain Injury Information Center**

1-800-444-NHIF (6443)

Creating a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education, and advocacy

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

## **CEREBRAL PALSY**

**United Cerebral Palsy**

[national@ucp.org](mailto:national@ucp.org)

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

1-800-USA-5UCP (872-5827)

## **MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY**

**Muscular Dystrophy Association**

951-369-0720

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

## **MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS**

**National Multiple Sclerosis Society/ Southern California Chapter**

310-479-4436 or

1-800-FIGHT-MS (344-4867)

Provides resources regarding clinical centers, equipment loan, therapies, aquatics, social services, education, lending library, speakers' bureau, peer counseling, respite care, advocacy, self-help groups, and employment services

## **SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI)**

**California Paralyzed Veterans Association**

562-826-5713 or

1-800-497-0565

Provides resources for veterans

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

## **STROKE**

**Stroke Association of Southern California**

310-575-1699 or

1-800-STROKES (787-6537)

Free education and tools for patients and caregivers

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

## **American Brain Tumor Association**

1-800-886-2282

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

## 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.possabilities.com](http://www.possabilities.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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Printed in the U.S.A.

 Printed on Recyclable Paper

6056M

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER  
11234 Anderson St.  
Loma Linda, CA 92354-2804

Postmaster: Please deliver between December 22 and 26.

Nonprofit Org  
U.S. Postage  
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## willie's corner



**Willie's Corner is about participation, training tips, and just being involved in all aspects in life.** The Inland Empire Disabilities Expo on October 23 was a huge success! The PossAbilities-sponsored event had more than 1,800 attendees, 106 exhibitors, and more than 100 volunteers. Antonio Steward, double amputee, muscled his way up the climbing wall provided by Mark Wellman, two-time Paralympian. Also known for his historic climb of El Capitan and Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, Mark, along with a sea of onlookers, chanted and cheered Antonio on as he reached the top of the wall. Antonio later said, "I knew I could do it!" The Expo provided information and resources. It also offered an exciting opportunity for many to see that with determination, anything is possible! Thanks to everyone who helped us further our mission to promote equal opportunity, universal access, and full participation in all aspects of life.

**Willie "One-Arm Willie" Stewart is a four-time Ironman finisher, Paralympics silver medalist, kayaker, and Olympic torchbearer.**



# Sunday, April 26, 2009

## Drayson Center, Loma Linda

Triathlon 3.1 mile run • 11 mile bike • 150 yard swim • 5K Run/Walk/Roll  
Kids Triathlon • Tiny Tots Tricycle Triathlon

### TRY the POSSABILITIES

For more information, call 909-558-6384 or visit [possabilities.com](http://possabilities.com)  
Register online at [active.com](http://active.com)

Registration Starts at 5:30 am • Race Begins at 7:00 am