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## **NMEDA KICKS OFF NATIONAL MOBILITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN** ***Local Heroes Contest to Award Four Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles***

TAMPA, Florida (April 15, 2015) – The [National Mobility Equipment Dealers Associations](#) (NMEDA) kicks off its [National Mobility Awareness Month](#) campaign today, and marks the fourth year for its highly anticipated and successful annual contest in which four deserving “Local Heroes” will be awarded a wheelchair accessible vehicle tailored to their needs through an online contest.

The awareness movement and campaign designed to educate seniors, veterans, caregivers and people with disabilities about wheelchair accessible vehicles and adaptive mobility equipment options that enable them to live an active and mobile life, touched the lives of more than 3.9 million people across the United States and Canada through the Local Heroes Contest last year. Major Sponsors providing the vehicles for the 2015 contest are [Chrysler](#), [Toyota Mobility](#), [Chairiot Mobility](#), and [Valley Honda Dealers](#) that will be customized by NMEDA Members [BraunAbility](#) and [Vantage Mobility International](#) (VMI) and [EIDorado Mobility](#).

“It is rewarding to work on such an important project each year that literally changes the lives of people with inspirational life stories. It is their contributions and triumphs we recognize and celebrate through our Local Heroes contest,” said Dave Hubbard, Executive Director and CEO of NMEDA. “We encourage caregivers, friends and family members to submit written or video stories of how they are triumphing over their mobility challenges and positively impacting the lives of the people around them,” said Hubbard. Story submissions begin on April 15<sup>th</sup> and voting begins May 1<sup>st</sup>. Submission and votes will be accepted through May 31<sup>st</sup>. Winners for 2015 will be announced in mid June immediately following National Mobility Awareness Month in May.

In 2014, 1,425 entries received more than 4 million votes from across the country that resulted in four deserving Local Heroes in Riverview, Florida, Moulton, Alabama, Oak Lawn, Illinois and Val Therese, Ontario, Canada being awarded fully customized wheelchair accessible vehicles, and an additional two dozen Local Heroes contestants whose communities rallied to provide them with vehicles when they learned they had not been a contest winner through NMEDA.

If you are interested in entering the contest visit [www.mobilityawarenessmonth.com](http://www.mobilityawarenessmonth.com). If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, contact Cheryl Parker at [Cheryl.Parker@evokad.com](mailto:Cheryl.Parker@evokad.com)

The 2015 National Mobility Awareness Month is supported by prominent spokespersons and advocates for those with disabilities, Mike Savicki and Ashley Lauren Fisher. Here are their stories:

### **Mike Savicki**

#### **Biography**

NMEDA has selected Mike Savicki as a spokesperson for National Mobility Awareness Month for a fourth year. Mike is a 47-year old, C6, 7 quadriplegic, a Navy veteran, multi-sport athlete, small business entrepreneur and disability advocate. He is a 5-time Quad Division champion (and 18 time finisher) of the BAA Boston Marathon who hopes to someday finish two more to make it an even 20. He has earned 85 gold medals in more than two decades competing at the National Wheelchair Veterans Games and he is also the 2013 Spirit of the Games award winner. Mike manages his freelance writing, marketing, speaking and advocacy work through his company, Scratching Post Communications. He is also a husband and dad to a beautiful toddler. A self-proclaimed "car guy" with a love of antiques, classics and old Woodies, Mike drives a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle purchased from a NMEDA dealer. Living more than half his life with a disability has not stopped him from achieving his goals and dreams. His personal website is [www.mikesavicki.com](http://www.mikesavicki.com)

### **Ashley Lauren Fisher**

#### **Biography**

NMEDA selected Ashley Lauren Fisher as a spokesperson for National Mobility Awareness Month for a second year. The 39-year-old is the restaurateur of four-star-rated, Pazzo Pazzo located in Morristown, New Jersey, and is the 2012 New Jersey Restaurant Association nominee for Restaurateur of the Year and the recipient of the prestigious Gold Plate Award. Fisher is a former student of The Lee Strasberg Theater Institute, and still regularly auditions for film and television. As a philanthropist, Fisher established Discovery Through Design and is responsible for raising more than a million dollars for spinal cord research. She has devoted time to organizations such as Bonnie Brae, NJ Aids Services, The Reeve Foundation, Same Sky and Community Soup Kitchen. Fisher was raised in New Jersey and has performed with the New Jersey Ballet, and at Carnegie Recital and Steinway Hall as a classical pianist. She also lettered four years Varsity as a First Team, All State Center Lacrosse player excelling in extreme sports. Ashley worked as a fashion model and MTV dancer. At twenty-three Fisher suffered a spinal cord injury.

**About National Mobility Awareness Month:** May is National Mobility Awareness Month and is the annual celebration that encourages seniors, veterans, caregivers and people with disabilities to enjoy active, mobile lifestyles. Founded in 1989 as a not-for-profit trade association, the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA) supports the awareness month with the assistance of approximately 600 mobility equipment dealers, manufacturers and driver rehabilitation specialists located in the United States and Canada dedicated to expanding opportunities for people with disabilities. For updates, please visit [MobilityAwarenessMonth.com](http://MobilityAwarenessMonth.com), as well as [Facebook](#), [Twitter \(@NMEDAcorn\)](#) and [Pinterest](#).

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