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I was excited to hear about the grand opening of the DRIVEN NeuroRecovery Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. DRIVEN is a multidisciplinary accessible fitness center where individuals with disabilities can enhance their quality of life using a holistic approach to wellness. DRIVEN was started by former Indy race car driver, Sam Schmidt. Sam, a quadriplegic, was injured in 2000 at the age of 35 when his vehicle hit a retaining wall at the Walt Disney World Speedway.

Sam visited us here at Ability360 when he was designing a fitness center of his own. We were thrilled to share what we did to make our facility accessible and inclusive of all disabilities. He has not been the first to visit. Many others from around the country and even the world have done so, paying our facility and staff a visit. Each has come to see our best practice model for designing a universally-accessible adaptive sports and fitness facility.

We love that this is happening. In fact, our hope is that every large city in America will build one of its own. While DRIVEN is not quite the same as what we have built here at Ability360, it is proof that the disability community wants and needs more opportunities to access health and fitness.

Would you like to see an Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center type of facility in your city? If this is something of interest, give us a call or come for a visit. We are building a template to help other cities replicate what we do at Ability360. We want to share our knowledge about how we did it and how you can too. We look forward to hearing from you!

Photo by Christian Guerithault

“...the disability community wants and needs more opportunities to access health and fitness.”
Welcome to another edition of LivAbility.

We're ecstatic to share Edition 16 with our readers. This edition follows the suit of all other LivAbility releases, telling the stories of ordinary people, doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways.

Have you ever pondered the lifestyle of a Youtuber with hundreds of thousands of subscribers? Have you ever pondered that same career choice without limbs? Kade Garner takes a deep-dive into the arduous life of a social media influencer with a twist, in Lake Tahoe, CA.

We continue to push onward past the friendly confines of Arizona with stories about a new universally-accessible adaptive sports and fitness facility in Las Vegas. As President & CEO, Phil Pangrazi expresses, it’s a welcomed trend.

Kelly Beaubien walks us through a woman’s journey from a Guillain-Barre diagnosis to preparation for a 5K marathon.

In what is perhaps the most poignant story we’ve told, Yvette Mallari writes an incredible story of the life of a cowboy, K.J. Jones, who never left the rodeo scene despite it changing his life forever. Or maybe it didn’t, but as with all of her stories, Yvette captures so much more than just his journey. Even if cowboys and rodeos aren’t your style, you’ll enjoy reading about how even a bucking bronco can’t stomp the passion out of so many people who happen to live with a disability. Hats off (cowboy lingo) to our intern from Mexico, Estafania Cavazos for the great photos in this cover story. Bravo!

Steve Norton takes us through his radical lifestyle change following a stroke and shares some insider tips on eating healthy with a disability. Tony Jackson triumphantly returns to Ability360’s Sports & Fitness Center with some hot takes on those “damn” scooters that clutter our sidewalks.

Finally, as we continue to expand, we hope you continue to share your stories in the Southwest with us. We want to hear from you, and we want to tell your stories to our readers. We strive to find unique stories that speak to the diversity of people, places and things that make up our community. Please feel free to reach out to the editor, Kasey, with story ideas at Editor@Ability360.org.
Welcome to the newest edition of LivAbility

LivAbility is a quarterly lifestyle magazine for people with disabilities. Each edition contains articles that promote an active, fulfilling lifestyle for every ability.

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Steph Amaya

Steph Amaya is an Arizona native of Central American descent. Steph is a non-binary person, using the pronouns they/them. They’re currently a student at Arizona State University, studying journalism with a focus in videography.

Kelly Beaubien

Kelly Beaubien has been a member of the Ability360 family for over five years as a caregiver. Kelly has a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Arizona State University and teaches English to ESL students. She is the mother of two boys and wife to Ability360 graphic designer, John Beaubien. In her free time, she enjoys crafting and the occasional live 5k or virtual race.

Jacqueline Benson

Jacqueline Benson is a student at the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Sports and Media Studies and a minor in Media Analysis. Jacqueline is passionate about using the power of sports to make a lasting impact on individuals and society.

Estefanía Cavazos

Estefanía Cavazos (Steph) is a senior at The Autonomous University of Nuevo León, studying visual arts and graphic design. She has a passion for motion graphics and photography. She is on a mission to visit every country on earth. Outside of Ability360, Steph enjoys singing, noodles and drag queen shows.

Karam Gafsi

Karam Gafsi is a multimedia journalist with a love for all things video, as well as magazine writing. He is a soon to be a graduate of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Through his videos and his writing, Karam strives to keep his audience not only informed, but entertained.

Kade Garner

Kade Garner is a Northern Arizona native. When he is not hooked up to an IV filled with diet soda, he is probably filming an event, taking pictures of his dog, or binge-watching a new series. He’s an okay writer.

Tony Jackson

Tony Jackson is a graduate of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. He started playing power soccer in 2009 and has no plans to stop anytime soon. In addition to being an athlete, he puts his journalism skills to use as a broadcaster of power soccer tournaments around the world.

Aitana Yvette Mallari

Aitana Yvette Mallari is an online media journalist who runs on caffeine and WiFi. She’s lived in the Middle East, Asia, and both coasts of the U.S., and writes about health, tech, and amazing people doing amazing things. She is a graduate of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication and probably has a deadline to get to.
Steve Norton

A native of Santa Ana, CA, Steve Norton has been in the hospitality industry for the past 30 years. He attended New York’s prestigious Culinary Institute of America and has worked as a private chef. Steve loves to share his knowledge and expertise in healthy eating, including menu planning, managing a food budget, and cooking with fresh ingredients.

Arlette Yousif

@arletteyousif

Arlette Yousif is an honor student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She will be graduating in May of 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and a minor in Film. In addition to her writing and broadcast skills, Arlette is also experienced in the music industry and works comfortably with high-profile entertainers.
Kaitlyn Dobrow Builds a Social Media Career

Story by Kade Garner
Photos by Daniel Cewinski
Like, share, comment, subscribe and follow. Words that bombard internet-users every day. In 2019, one can make a name for themselves without ever leaving the comforts of their home. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and YouTube give any one of us the opportunity to become an influencer, but what exactly does that mean?

With more than 240,000 subscribers on YouTube and more than 157,000 followers on Instagram, Kaitlyn Dobrow is just that, an influencer. By creating authentic content that catches the attention of makeup-lovers from around the country, Dobrow has established a community of avid fans, or friends as she refers to them.

YouTube is home to hundreds of self-taught makeup artists. Each artist creates looks and styles that keep their viewers coming back. While other users may struggle to find uniqueness, it's easy to see how Dobrow differs from her fellow makeup artists.

"After I got sick, that's when I became obsessed with it ... the first thing I held without an arm was a makeup brush. I made this contraption and put mascara on."

With the help of Dobrow's physical therapist, a contraption that looked like a large, blue tube with knobs in multiple locations was put together. The tube was fastened to Dobrow's arm. It had many joints that allowed Dobrow to position the makeshift prosthetic at different angles. The tip of the tube had a piece of Velcro. Velcro was also fastened to Dobrow's mascara. With the mascara firmly Velcroed into position, Dobrow taught herself how to apply makeup.

When Dobrow was 18, she contracted bacterial meningitis. Meningitis is an infection of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The infection stopped blood from reaching her skin and soft tissues, and Dobrow suffered the equivalent of third-degree burns. Within hours, the illness became serious, and physicians amputated her arms and the lower halves of her legs.

Dobrow wasn't a makeup aficionado before she became ill, but as she prepared to leave the hospital, she realized makeup was something she'd be able to master.

"The fear that I might not be able to work a regular job, like ever, that was a thought in my head and I was like, I can do this ... It sounds crazy, like let's just do YouTube, but I think people might be interested in seeing someone put makeup on without arms and legs."

Dobrow taught herself how to use a hook to apply mascara, foundation, highlighter and every other type of makeup imaginable. The hook isn't dexterous which means Dobrow has to be creative in application. This creativity takes time; it can take Dobrow more than three hours to complete a look.

With time came serious skills. As Dobrow mastered different styles, viewers began asking her for tips and tricks. Soon, her tutorials were going viral.

"A lot of them [makeup looks] are fierce. A lot of them are daring ... I love watching them and like I've told her, 'I want you to do my makeup,'" said Dobrow's lifelong friend, Vanessa Gomez.

Dobrow was cautious about venturing into the YouTube world, and she wasn't alone.
"I was a little nervous because I was not really that familiar with YouTube," said Don Dobrow, Kaitlyn’s dad.

While Dobrow and her parents may have been nervous about her future on YouTube, her friend Gomez was not. "The fact that she is so confident and the fact that she is so determined to do exactly what people are probably thinking, no, she can't do that. She will prove you 100 percent wrong. She can do it."

While the end goal is to make a living from YouTube, Dobrow loves the connections and friends she has made since she started sharing her makeup looks on different platforms. She and her family see it as a productive outlet for her creativity.

"I like the reaction she gets … people can see something in her … it's just a great thing that she is sharing that [kind of] love with people," said Don.

Dobrow hopes that the something people see in her is authenticity. That authenticity has led to two different posts going viral. One Instagram video garnered over one million views while a YouTube video gained more than 10 million.

Her mom is proud of the authenticity she sees in her daughter's online content.

When Dobrow went viral, it was confirmation that YouTube is something she could indeed pursue and be successful. Her posts weren't just for fun anymore. They were for her followers, for the community she'd created.

"It [the mindset] went to maybe I should post another makeup tutorial and try to be seen more," Dobrow said.

To keep up with the demand for new content, Dobrow often spends 40 hours a week creating new videos. Filming can take her up to 12 hours for one video and editing often takes just as long. From beginning to end, Dobrow is a one-woman band.

Dobrow's audience continues to grow and so does her status as an influencer. It takes a couple of virtues to create an internet influencer. A large audience and the power of persuasion. This persuasion often comes via the influencer's authenticity and ability to connect with their following. Dobrow has an enormous online presence and according to those closest to her, she is as authentic as it gets both on screen and off. She's a bonafide influencer. With every new subscriber, Dobrow gets one step closer to supporting herself financially with a career she loves.
Saguaro cactuses tower over the mesquite and paloverde trees, wild poppies and other plants that spring up in the desert landscape. In the background, the Catalina Mountains stretch upward toward an overcast and gray sky. White domes bubble up from the red-clay earth as blue glass glistens on a giant pyramid. What looks like it should belong in a science-fiction movie stands juxtaposed against the Tucson desert. A surprise hides in a small valley at the foot of the mountain.

It’s Biosphere 2.

The Biosphere 2 was created in the early 1990s as a science experiment to see if mankind could one day colonize another planet; it no longer serves this purpose. In 2011, the University of Arizona assumed ownership, and it’s now the world’s largest earth science experiment.

“It is a way for us to learn how to better manage our natural resources,” said John R. Adams, deputy director at University of Arizona Biosphere 2. “We know the climate changes. It has before and is continuing to do so now. We need to understand how the different ecosystems adapt.”

This is Biosphere 2’s focus today, reaction to change. Here, scientists from around the world come together to study things like drought effects on plants, soil compositions and even selective breeding of coral.

Biosphere 2 has many different ecosystems, open to the public for 90-minute tours. These ecosystems include a desert, an ocean, rainforest and even mangroves.

For those needing special accommodations, specialized tours are offered. The facility asks that those who may need an adaptive tour call at least five days in advance to ensure that sufficient educational specialists (tour guides) be on campus during the visit.

Kasey Kaler is the editor of LivAbility magazine. Kaler uses a power wheelchair and took the specialized tour of Biosphere 2.

“If we were going up ramps, or anything like that, most of the areas had grab bars. So again, you could pull yourself up if you were in a manual wheelchair,” Kaler said.
The tour is about a mile and a half in total. To begin the tour, guests have to make their way down a series of ramps. To someone who uses a manual wheelchair, it would be a good idea to bring someone along to help push on the way back up.

If a person is able to walk, but not for extended periods, the center offers manual wheelchairs.

The facility has worked incredibly hard to make sure it is up to ADA standards. However, there are a few ecosystems within the biosphere that are not accessible. The university is working on a solution to overcome this problem.

Adams confirmed that VR tours will soon be part of the ADA version of the trip so that visitors with limited mobility will be able to fully experience the tour. Biosphere 2 employees aim to ensure that everyone who wishes to learn about the different ecosystems of Biosphere 1 (Earth) will be able to do so during a tour.

Every ecosystem and even the mechanics that control the airflow of one of the ecosystems are open to the public. Guests feel the humidity of the rainforest, smell the salt of the ocean, or catch a glimpse of a giant mechanical lung. All of this to help people of all abilities learn how they can help preserve the world we call home.

“You start to look around at the species here [in the Biosphere 2] and we don’t have things like that [in Arizona]. These trees and these plants, we don’t have that, so it was a really cool experience,” said Kaler.

So, if you are looking to get out of the desert for the day, while not actually leaving the desert, take a day trip to the Biosphere 2. To learn more about the history of the structure, or to book your ADA-approved tour, visit www.biosphere2.org.

“THE PARTS OF THE TOUR THAT HAVEN’T BEEN MADE TO BE ACCESSIBLE YET. THEY’RE GOING TO BE INTRODUCING VIRTUAL REALITY TOURS,” KALER SAID.
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Within just the past couple of decades, technological advancements and savvy entrepreneurs have brought an unimaginable level of convenience to the world. Our mobile devices place the world at our fingertips, semi-autonomous vehicles roam the streets and home automation systems allow you to flick on the lights and TV with only your voice. Another modern product is the proliferation of electric-scooter rental services.
Although many people can walk around, or move the scooters, this is not feasible for those who use mobility devices. This is especially problematic for wheelchair users, who are forced to either knock the scooters out of the way—using their own wheelchair—or find another route.

In San Diego, a lawsuit has been filed against the city and rental companies due to the dangers that riders impose on pedestrians. Because of the sheer number of scooters and the multitude of problems they have caused in such a short period of time, many cities have enacted regulations with the hope of alleviating the issues.

Some companies, like Lime, have found the new rules to be too restrictive. In late-February, Lime pulled out of Tempe, Arizona, and RazorUSA is considering similar action.

Lime took exception to the Tempe’s liability requirements, which it characterized as an “unprecedented overreach” and “go beyond those in other cities by forcing operators to take on risk well beyond and outside their scope of its business operations.”

Although not a problem directly caused by scooters and the rental companies, there is also a complete absence of accessible rental options for manual wheelchair users or

For as little as $1 to rent and 15 cents per minute, companies like Bird, RazorUSA and Lime give pedestrians an affordable and easy way to make quick trips around the city. With top speeds reaching 15 mph, people can rent a scooter through their mobile device and zip around.

In addition to the convenience, a selling point for these scooter-share services is that people can rely less on cars and public transportation, reducing our carbon footprint and our dependence on fossil fuels.

However, this wildly popular mode of transportation is not without its issues. One of the most prevalent is that scooters are overtaking sidewalks. Not only are people weaving in and out of pedestrian traffic at high speeds, but riders are often leaving scooters strewn across walkways, obstructing paths.
those who can walk with the use of mobility aids. While manual wheelchair users can propel themselves, long distances can take a toll on the upper body. For some people who walk with mobility aids, the process can be slow, and accessible scooter options could help make traveling short distances safer and more efficient.

Currently, there are products, such as FreeWheel, that are available and mount to a manual wheelchair. The FreeWheel lifts the casters off the ground, allowing the wheelchair to roll over most obstacles; e.g., curbs, gravel, or sand.

While no scooter-share services offer accessible options right now, a Lime spokesperson, Taylor Bennett, said, “Lime is committed to creating a meaningful transportation ecosystem that works for everyone ... The onus is on us to innovate and educate.”

“That’s why we’ve engaged disability advocates and continue to educate riders and the community about proper riding etiquette to ensure scooters are parked in an orderly, respectful way. We’re eager to hear from the disability community on ways we can best support and collaborate and look forward to continuing to build those partnerships.”

The electric-scooter craze is not going away anytime soon. Neither are pedestrians or those living with disabilities. Scooter-share companies and the cities in which they operate must continue working together to create realistic, workable solutions to ensure the safety of everyone, while still allowing riders to enjoy the convenience and freedom given by our new electric scooter overlords electric scooters.

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NEW EMOJIS UPDATE

5 FACTS TO KNOW:

The final emoji list for 2019 has been approved by the Unicode Consortium and includes a total of 230 new emoji. The Unicode Consortium is a nonprofit that has devoted itself “to developing, maintaining and promoting software internationalization standards and data, particularly the Unicode Standard, which specifies the representation of text in all modern software products and standards.”

1. A person with a cane, a person sitting in a power wheelchair, a prosthetic arm and a person signing the word “deaf” are new additions.

2. Emoji are ideograms and smiley faces used in electronic messages and webpages.

3. The word of emoji comes from Japanese e (絵, “picture”) + moji (文字, “character”).

4. In March of 2018, Apple proposed the addition of the disability-related emoji to represent people with disabilities better.

5. All of the emojis will be hitting your devices in the second half of the year!
Austin Cuaderno was an integral part of the community, serving as Ability360 FC’s power soccer captain, coach for MaxInMotion Youth Adaptive Sports clinics, and a student. Austin’s enthusiasm, kindness and passion touched everyone around him.
Larry Fitzgerald knows empowerment and its perfect companion, personal responsibility. Not just because of the sport the future Hall of Famer plays, although that’s undeniable. He learned it from his mother.

“To empower someone is to give them strength they didn’t realize they possess and the power to achieve beyond what they thought they could,” the Arizona Cardinals’ iconic receiver told a crowd of nearly 400 people at the Ability360 Breakfast on March 21.

“Personal responsibility is the perfect companion to empowerment. When a person discovers the strength and power they possess, the natural reaction is to take more responsibility for the future. They become the masters of their own lives. That’s a beautiful thing.”

He shared the message and the source of its heartfelt inspiration to an engaged and embracing crowd.

“My mother had cerebral palsy, and her childhood years were particularly difficult. She didn’t allow anyone to feel sorry for her and wouldn’t accept the victim mentality. She never made excuses. She lived a life of inspiration and was a source of empowerment. My mother would have fit in very well here.”

The annual fundraising breakfast event on the floor of the Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center raised more than $80,000 to support programs and services for men, women and children who “are changing the landscape of the Phoenix community and telling the story that needs to be told,” Fitzgerald said.

“Your journey has been an uphill battle. Your mantra, your mission, is not to blame or complain but one of
empowerment and responsibility,” he said. “Empowerment is evident everywhere I looked on my tour of this incredible facility from the equipment to the culture you have created. When somebody walks through the doors of Ability360, they are immediately empowered.”

The event featured a video with interviews of Ability360 athletes underscoring the day’s theme, “Why Sports Matter.” Among them were Ryan Pinney (a veteran and Paralympic hand cyclist), Stephen Hernandez (varsity Wheelchair Suns and Stand-Up Amputee basketball player), Ernie Chun (Ability360 Phoenix Heat and Paralympic wheelchair rugby player), and Olympic gold medalist Amy Van Dyken.

The Ability360 Breakfast was presented by Valley Metro and sponsored by Nothing But NET; Position Sports, Inc.; Stacy and Witbeck, Inc.; and Waymo. Honorary co-chairs were Mike McQuaid Sr. and Jim Whitehead. Catering sponsors were Vincent on Camelback and Café Cultivate.

Ability360 Donation Information

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Arizona Complete Health is proud to sponsor the Ability360 Health and Wellness Fair, offering mammograms to women without insurance.

“Transforming the health of the community, one person at a time.”
Las Vegas is home to DRIVE...a Las Vegas road to recovery

by Arlette Yousif

Las Vegas is home to DRIVE, a new neurological recovery center. The rehabilitation facility, loosely modeled after Ability360’s Sports & Fitness Center, is tailored to physical, mental and spiritual health improvement and helps people regain their independence.

Founder, Sam Schmidt, who was injured in an IndyCar crash, is passionate about the recovery center and providing others the tools they need in their own recovery.

“My accident ... was obviously the turning point of all of this,” Schmidt said in an email. “But it was a series of micro and macro moments of the medical and logistics process thereafter that made me realize how badly [a facility like] DRIVE was needed.

“After the necessary healing process from having a spinal cord injury, insurance only covers just about six weeks of inpatient rehabilitation. Certainly, six weeks is not enough to conquer paralysis or neurological impairments, which is really the ultimate goal here.”

Doors officially opened December of 2018, but the DRIVE team had been preparing for the grand opening long before.

Cesar Robledo has been with the team since the very beginning. Robledo, who uses a wheelchair following a gunshot wound that left him with a spinal cord injury, has been coming to DRIVE since its inception, utilizing the experienced professionals and wheelchair-compatible state-of-the-art equipment.

“I noticed that the more you push yourself out of your limits, the better off you are at recovering,” explained Robledo. “So, these guys really help a lot with keeping you pushing and pushing your hardest, and they’re really good at adapting to your physical capabilities.”

Robledo is proof of DRIVE’s successful model, having taken integral steps using the facility’s G-EO System—a powered gait rehabilitation exoskeleton with a fixed frame—in his recovery, that allowed him to take his first steps since his 2014 injury.

While Robledo was determined in his recovery, DRIVE has nurtured that determination by providing a safe and knowledgeable environment.

“We serve those that insurance won’t, and/or need more attention than what therapy centers are able to offer. We have very few limitations on who we serve. Our facility and trainers are equipped to work with those at nearly all levels of spinal cord injury and other disabilities,” Schmidt said.

Physical therapy is a major factor in regaining mobility; however, so much more contributes to it. Downtown Yoga & Wellness Co-op is one of a handful of other companies within DRIVE that provides counseling, Reiki healing services and even wheelchair yoga, making DRIVE a full-service recovery facility.

The future of DRIVE is promising, as Schmidt plans to expand in order to keep up with the high-demand of the services offered. If you are driven to succeed, the DRIVE team wants to help you achieve your goals.
A DRIVEN consumer uses a G-EO System, a robotic-assisted device used in gait rehabilitation.
My Saturday night starts in the parking lot of the Hitching Post Saloon, my car the lone hatchback in a sea of Ford F-150s, steeped in the dark of Apache Junction, Arizona. I read over a text that Kerry Jones, a bull-riding judge, sent me the day before:

“Make sure you dress warm, as it’s outside and will be cold.”

I counted my layers (three, to be exact) and shrugged. I was here for a rodeo, not a hike. How cold could it be?

In classic Phoenician fashion, I underestimated.

Jones, who goes by K.J., meets me at the front gate as he’s transferring from his truck to a manual wheelchair. He has granite-colored eyes and a voice that feels familiar, like a long-lost grandfather.

Born in Wichita, Kansas, Jones moved to Arizona at six years old and grew up hunting, fishing and camping with his brother, sister and dad. Thanks to a couple of friends in Paradise Valley and an affinity for adrenaline, Jones started to rodeo when he was nine, getting on anything that
bucked just to see if he could stay on. Even after a rodeo accident caused him to start using a wheelchair at 18, his love for the sport remained, leading to him to become a bull-riding judge.

But at the moment, he scrutinizes my attempt at layering. “You read my text? It’s gonna be cold.”

When I affirm, he just smirks, “Mhm,” and leads me through the gate.

The rodeo arena, a circular expanse of dirt ringed by metal fencing, was still getting set up. Livestock milled nearby, shielding themselves from the blinding white floodlights above.

“There’s a few hundred every weekend,” Jones says, weaving through the crowd, stopping once in a while to shake a hand or say hi to someone. “There’ll be more next week—there’s gonna be a memorial deal for a bullfighter friend of mine who died a couple [of] weeks ago.”

“Did he die during a rodeo?” I ask.

Jones shook his head.

A deep voice announced the rodeo was starting.

At a vantage point between the arena and the crowd, Jones opens a stopwatch on his iPhone and rests it beside a score sheet. Spectators break into whoops and cheers behind us.
Competitions of the night spanned from toddlers to teens, and the rides were one after another. Pint-sized cowboys and cowgirls riding sheep turned to pre-teens on steers.

In the thick of it were two bullfighters, Scott Hawkins and E.J. Pinkerton, tasked with keeping the riders safe (and entertaining the audience in between rides).

"Alright, so all the bloodthirsty fans that are out there, we know what you want. Who's ready for a little bull riding?" the announcer goads.

Jones gives me a crash course on competitive bull riding: two judges can award a total of 50 points each, 25 points for the rider and 25 points for the bull. The two are paired up at random; bulls' names are put on poker chips and drawn out of a hat before the rodeo starts. After the ride, the judges add up the scores. A perfect ride of 100 points, he says, is "a bull that's got a lot of kick or a lot of spin or a combination of both, and the rider matching the bull's moves with countermoves to keep him in perfect position."

The ride is done one-handed, and for only eight seconds, to ensure it qualifies.

A couple of bull riders stretch a few feet away from us. They were boys at the cusp of adulthood, sporting plaid, trucker hats and scraths of facial hair.

They ready themselves in the chutes on bulls with names like "Casino", "GoPro", "Red Velvet" and my personal favorite, "Baby Shark."

K.J. Jones is bucked off a bareback horse during a March 7, 1982 ride.
With a nod, the gates swing open, and bulls shoot into the arena, kicking their hind legs like they’re trying to knock the moon out of the sky.

Jones writes his marks and compares them with the other judge immediately after every ride. Their scores are almost always the same—the mark of a good team.

At one point he motions to baseball-size divots in the ground in front of us, courtesy of a previous bull, hinting at the danger we weren’t immune to.

Jones told stories of times he was judging and a horn gored him through the fence, so when a bull came too close for comfort, I flinched. Jones laughed.

“GETS YOUR ADRENALINE PUMPING, DOESN’T IT?”

Riders cheered for their fellow competitors and reserved the harshest curses under their breath for themselves. There was an unmistakable rhythm, the rise and fall and return to the chutes.

Then a 16-year-old rider, clad in royal purple, mounted a bull named Ferdinand.

EIGHT SECONDS.

The first half starts fine. Tense concentration, a hand flared to the sky. The bull slams against the gate and the rider falters. He’s thrown underneath the bull and stomped on. The audience gasps as the bull’s led out of the arena.

People rush into the arena. Both bullfighters, kneel in prayer.

“Are you ever reminded of what happened to you?” I ask.

“Every now and then, yeah. I’ve seen some accidents every now and then that…” Jones trails off.

“I won’t say that there are flashbacks, but yeah. You think about it,” Jones says.

“We all know that those possibilities are there. But a lot of times it reminds me of my accident.”

March 7, 1982.

In Scottsdale, thousands packed into an arena for a high school rodeo. Jones, 18 at the time, was among the young men who zigzagged across the state, hungry for competition but above all for mastery, rarely leaving home without their boots and gear bag in the truck, just in case. You were always ready to ride, whether that was bulls or horses (bareback).

Bareback horses don’t move the same as bulls do. They don’t spin so much as buck straight up and down. Falling from a bucking horse was like falling from a roof if the roof could also kick you while you’re down.

Jones was preparing to ride bareback. The weekend had been rife with accidents, which was unusual.

Just that morning his friend, Troy Martell, had been whipped underneath a bull, which then stepped on his head and neck.

When Jones came to the arena to see Martell, he knew it was bad. Blood darkened the dirt around him. Martell was taken to the hospital nearby.

By the time it was Jones’ turn, his friend’s blood had been raked over, indistinguishable from dirt.
By that point, Jones had been bucked off animals more times than he could count. He’d dislocated ribs punctured lungs and broken fingers. There were only a few times he finished a ride and something didn’t hurt.

But this ride was different.

In front of thousands of people, Jones’ legs tangled with his horse’s, driving him straight to the ground.

Dirt filled his mouth. But when he tried to move his right arm, it stopped.

“I knew something was wrong because everything was kind of tingly, like when your foot falls asleep and you go to move it—that’s the way it was,” Jones says.

Jones had broken C6 in his neck, dislocated C7 and pinched his spinal cord. He later learned that Martell, only 15, had lost his life.

That was 37 years ago.

As red and blue lights flood the arena, I ask, “How do you deal with that?”

“I know it’s part of the sport and accidents can still happen no matter what. You’re dealing with an animal that you have no control over,” Jones says with a sigh. “I never wanna see any of these guys get hurt ever. And it bothers me when they do, because I know they’re giving 100 percent to something they love to do, just like I did.”

The stretcher disappears into the ambulance.

“But I also know that in accidents like this, they’ll be back in a couple weeks or however long it takes to heal up,” Jones says. “They’ll be back.”

The cry of the siren fades into the distance.

After the remaining riders compete, winners are announced inside the saloon.

The honky-tonk bar is bursting with twanged music and dancing bodies silhouetted in neon lights.

Jones stays outside. I join with others. They share their stories of injuries. There are echoes of C6, C7, a wrong move at a wrong time. Some managed to walk away. Some didn’t. Every precaution and safety measure in the world couldn’t erase the risk.

It was a lot for eight seconds of glory. But the love of rodeo, with all its dirt, sweat, blood and tears, remained constant. Even after his injury, Jones watched rodeo VHS tapes and kept close to the rodeo scene. If life is always fragile, you might as well be passionate about it.

When the conversation turned toward the upcoming memorial, Jones turns to me.

“You asked if he died in a rodeo accident,” he says. “It was a car accident.”

Jones pulls out his iPhone. He shows me drawings of memorials he’s made for bull riders, all done with a mechanical pencil and .5 lead. Making art takes him longer than it used to, but it’s a labor of love. They’ll be celebrating.

“It’ll be packed next week,” Jones says.

He takes another look at his work before putting his phone away, smiling.

“I’m almost done.”
The Spirit of Ability Award is presented in recognition of actions that promote and personify the independent living philosophy of consumer control, self-advocacy and peer support. The deeds of the awardee will forever empower people with disabilities to achieve or continue independent lifestyles within the community.

For nearly three decades, Michele Stokes has devoted her life to making our community more inclusive, accepting and compliant with the letter of the law and the spirit of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) law. No matter the role, behind the scenes or in front, Stokes’ passion has always been apparent.

Stokes runs a nonprofit that facilitates independent living and specifically works with housing developments to accommodate people with functional needs. In addition, Stokes has worked in various capacities for the City of Phoenix. For 13 years, she worked with City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation, rotating through multiple roles, including clear path job training program and clear path to Daring Adventures, tribal outreach and Asian and Pacific Islander outreach programs.

Stokes also worked as the compliance & enforcement equal opportunity specialist for the Phoenix Mayor’s Commission on Disability Issues and various other commissions tasked with employment of people with disabilities. She served as ADA Title II Coordinator and implemented ADA throughout the city by establishing a network of liaisons, community supporters and commission contacts. On top of all this, Stokes has presented numerous times to various groups on the ADA law, the benefits of compliance and disability awareness sensitivity training.

Stokes has been a role model, an advocate, an educator, a leader and a friend of Ability360.

We are so thrilled to announce the 2018 Spirit of Ability Award to Michele Stokes.
For more information and pictures of each winner, please visit www.Ability360.org/LivAbility

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Volunteer of the Year 2018
Kathryn Reichert

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In 2017, the United States experienced one of the most devastating series of natural disasters on record. According to www.climate.gov, natural disasters caused more than $300 billion in damage that year. Much of this cost resulted from the loss of private, family homes.

Government programs and agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are in place to reduce lost lives and property from any hazard or disaster, “by leading and supporting the nation in a comprehensive, risk-based emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.” Preparing for disasters, however, is the responsibility of the individual.

LivAbility is committed to ensuring our consumers are ready to make those few minutes they need to evacuate their homes as efficient as possible.

From first-hand advice to emergency-preparedness checklists, we want to make sure you are ready when disaster reaches your doorstep.

The following information is first-hand, word-for-word advice from people of all different positions and perspectives designed to inform all readers.

Shelsey Silva – In 2017, tens of thousands of homes were destroyed
in wildfires across California. Silva and her family lost their home in the middle of the night. The Silva family wasn’t prepared for an emergency and lost nearly everything in the fire, with just minutes to evacuate. Silva uses a wheelchair and had to stay in temporary housing that was not adapted to her needs. She now gives advice to others in the disability community on preparing for disasters:

“I would have had a ready-to-go kit with important papers because they’re hard to get back.”

“Now [I’d include] a change of clothes and probably necessary stuff that girls need [feminine hygiene products].”

“Try to be more aware and pay more attention [to the news and weather reports] cause we didn’t get much of an evacuation notice.”

April Reed – Reed is the Vice President of Advocacy at Ability360 (Center for Independent Living). Reed works with community leaders regularly to help them provide better emergency care to their local disability communities. While there are agencies and programs that may provide help in emergencies, Reed stresses the importance of each individual being prepared to take care of him or herself in these situations:

“We’ll help you find those resources ... We’ll brainstorm with you ... Do that with us now, don’t wait.”

Independent Living Skills advocates can help you locate those resources you need to be ready.

“We work with community leaders and legislators to help them identify the needs of the disability community in their jurisdiction.”

Gillian Aitken – Aitken is an advocate for the disability community. She has used a wheelchair since she was young and has been advocating for accessibility everywhere she has been. She volunteers as a Red Cross disaster-relief nurse and has seen first-hand how the disability community is affected by disasters. She wants the disability community to be more prepared for any emergency:

Knowing your disability ... knowing if you need accommodations [in shelters after a disaster] is crucial.

“Know FEMA’s language. ‘Functional Needs’ is a term that will be used to categorize you in post-disaster care.”

Do your best to know the basics. A physician to contact, your basic meds, etc.

Sara Ann Joehnk – Joehnk works as a disability-integration specialist for the Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council. Joehnk helps those in the disability community to become more independent by teaching life skills. For Joehnk, being prepared for an emergency is an independent-living skill. She has some advice to make emergency preparedness a little easier:

Knowing where your alert [for disasters] is coming from is key.

Cloud storage [for personal documents] is really useful. You don’t have to worry about taking anything physical with you.

“If you need to buy that one extra water bottle ... That’s fine ... keep it small to fit your lifestyle ... You don’t need to get it all now.”

Know your ability, your needs, your plan. Preparedness is up to you. While there are agencies, groups and individuals willing to help, you are your first line of defense.

Remember that, for the first few days after a disaster, help may not be available.

You have to be prepared to take care of yourself.

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Emergency Checklist:

- First Aid kit
- Prescriptions
- Important Documents
- Money
- Radio
- Flashlight
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   Subject to some limitations

Enroll online at AZ-ABLE.com
Today, many colleges are seeing the value in interprofessional education (IPE) programs and implementing these practices into their curriculum. Students are teaching each other about their field within the healthcare system and working toward a better overall analysis of a patient’s health. One program has decided to take this practice a step further by centering the needs of folks with disabilities.

The Community Health Mentor Program is a working partnership between Northern Arizona University’s (NAU) Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program, their Physical Therapy Doctoral Program and the Physician Assistant Program; Arizona State University’s (ASU) Nutrition Program; and the University of Arizona’s (UA) College of Medicine – Phoenix’s Doctor of Medicine Program with a mission of promoting, encouraging and supporting efforts to prepare future health professionals to enter the workforce ready to serve all populations.

Dr. Oaklee Rogers, who is the occupational therapy department chair of NAU as well as founder and co-director of the Community Health Mentor Program, states that besides implementing an interprofessional learning process, it gives students a new perspective on approaching patients.

The mentors are selected after meeting necessary requirements in their application process. If selected, they are given the opportunity to collaborate with student healthcare professionals about their own experiences within the healthcare system.

“Students can hear that from a human perspective and understand what they need to do better,” said Co-director, Dr. LeeAnne Denny, of the UA College of Medicine.

Jane Solomon considers herself fortunate, having survived a pancreatic tumor, and currently living with diabetes, osteoarthritis and gastroparesis. She feels the amount of knowledge she was able to share about her medical history, and her history of self-advocating for her medical needs with her mentees, meant she could form bonds with the future of the field.

Solomon described the importance of self-advocacy. For her, it was about knowing something wasn’t right and speaking up about it in order to have a better quality of life and be proactive in your own health.

“I taught my mentees how I ‘binder-ize’ by compartmentalizing important
aspects of my life into organized binders with my medical history,” Solomon said.

For other mentors, like Joseph and Valerie Jensen, their experiences were just as valuable. The Jensens have been in the program since it was first introduced in 2015.

“THE PROGRAM OPENED MY MIND TO WHAT A PATIENT AND HEALTHCARE PHYSICIAN RELATIONSHIP CAN BE,” JOSEPH JENSEN SAID.

After performing a home assessment, the mentees gave the Jensens recommendations to improve their home safety and overall quality of life.

“For years, we felt that our primary care physician didn’t fit our needs, and the group gave us recommendations for a new physician, and we actually have an appointment coming up with them soon,” Joseph Jensen said.

The program bridges a gap between different healthcare professions as well as the gap between patients and their physicians. Solomon and the Jensens expressed that their biggest takeaway from this experience was the bonds they formed with the students.

“I have become truly and personally invested in each one of their successes,” Solomon said. “It grew to be much more than just a clinical-health program.”

Photo by Adam Brooks
In 2006, I was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. Despite both of my parents and two of my siblings diagnosed with diabetes years earlier, I didn’t really pay much attention to it.

Two years later, I began managing four estates for a family in northern California. One of my main duties was working as a private chef. I was able to share my knowledge and expertise in healthy eating, which included menu planning, managing a food budget and cooking with fresh ingredients. Even though I was cooking healthy foods for others, I was not following those same healthy eating habits. I was working long hours and rewarding myself with unhealthy choices: i.e. fast foods, highly-processed foods, sugar-filled foods, eating late and overindulging.

In November 2012, my unhealthy eating habits and lifestyle led to a life-changing hemorrhagic stroke. I was paralyzed on my left side and now use a wheelchair for mobility. Part of my recovery regimen included taking insulin to control my sugar levels. During rehab, I was determined to control my diabetes and change my lifestyle. I became obsessed with learning more about menu planning, portion control and sensible shopping.

It was then that I really took charge of my health. With these changes, I was able to stop taking insulin altogether, lose 70 pounds and reduce the number of medications I was taking. I was also able to manage my A1C (blood sugar) levels. My doctor even told me my blood work is that of a 35-year-old triathlete.

I credit all of these changes to my approach of using food as medicine. While the way I cook has been altered since my stroke, my desire and passion to prepare great-tasting food have not wavered, even slightly. I had to reinvent the way that I prepare my meals and the tools that I use. I learned to simplify my cooking methods.

When it came to finding these methods and overcoming challenges along the way, I found encouragement and support in the Living Well with a Disability (LWD) course at Ability360.

In 2013, I graduated from the LWD class, and I’ve been a mentor in the program ever since. I strongly believe in this program, as it provided me with a safe environment in which to give and receive feedback. I rediscovered my purpose is to help people learn how to achieve their best in life and live the life they want. Though I now use a wheelchair for mobility, it has never defined who I am or what I do. When I was offered the position of the LWD coordinator in 2017, I welcomed the opportunity with open arms. I approached the position with the same vigor as I approached my pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

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Creating culinary art with food was my first love, it has always been an escape and a way to make people happy.

by Steve Norton
One of my favorite quotes is “Life’s a banquet and most people are starving to death!”

Today my diet is 80 percent vegetarian, consisting of plant-based whole foods, wild-caught fish and organic poultry. Of the fish, one of my favorites is wild-caught salmon. Salmon is high in protein and omega-3 fatty acids. Protein-rich foods require more calories (energy) to break them down in the body, which helps us feel full for longer. Omega-3 fatty acids are key nutrients that help in the prevention of heart disease and assist in lowering blood pressure. Fresh, organic produce does not contain pesticides or preservatives, so not only is it fresh, it retains more of its natural nutrients.

With the arrival of Spring, a fresh bounty of vegetables is available and makes a great accompaniment to salmon. One of my favorite, easy-to-prepare recipes is a Spring pan-seared salmon atop a bed of asparagus, English sweet peas, zucchini and yellow squash.

I hope you take some time to prepare this and share it with those you love. I look forward to sharing more about my passion and hearing more about your experiences with this recipe! 😊

All my best,

Steve
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rinse salmon filets, then thoroughly pat dry with a paper towel; lightly brush both sides of filets with olive oil, then season both sides with sea salt and coarse black pepper; set aside.

2. Cut bottom 1/3 of asparagus spear and discard; cut the remaining spear in ½.

3. Cut zucchini and yellow squash into coin-sized slices, then cut the slices in ½.

4. Wash and drain spinach leaves, then set aside.

5. Place a 10-12” sauté pan on the stovetop; add remaining olive oil to sauté pan on medium-high; when oil is hot, place salmon filets into pan skin-side down using tongs or a spatula to avoid splattering hot oil; lower heat to medium and cook for 3 minutes or until skin is golden brown; using tongs or a spatula, turn salmon filets over and cook for an additional 2 minutes or until the desired temperature is reached.

6. Using tongs or a spatula, remove salmon filets and place on a plate; cover to keep warm and set aside.

7. Return sauté pan to stovetop; add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to pan; add asparagus, zucchini and yellow squash, season with salt and pepper, then sauté for 2 minutes; add peas and spinach plus ¼ cup of water; cover the pan with a lid and cook another 45 seconds; remove pan from stove top, add 1 tablespoon of pesto sauce and mix well.

8. Spoon a serving of vegetables onto each plate, then place a salmon filet on top; squeeze ½ a lemon on top of each filet; sprinkle with fresh parsley and thyme as desired; spoon remaining pesto sauce on top of each salmon filet.
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Health and Wellness for All Arizonans
2019 Wheelchair Bonspiel Recap

by Jacqueline Benson

In late February, Ability360 hosted its yearly Wheelchair Curling Bonspiel at the Coyotes Curling Club in Phoenix, Arizona. Six teams, with participants from across the United States and Canada, gathered to compete for the championship. Seasoned curlers from the paralympic team played alongside newcomers in a competitive display that captured the true essence of the sport. Team Pierce won the championship, with the USA Veterans finishing in second and Team Ability360 finishing in third.

“MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD VICTORY AND IMPROVEMENT,” IS HOFFMEISTER’S FAVORITE PART OF THE SPORT.

Curling is a sport where teamwork and friendship are what separates a good team from a great team. Heather Hoffmeister, a member of the Wheaton Warriors team, based out of the Coyotes Curling Club, participated in her first bonspiel. Hoffmeister joined the Ability360 Wednesday night curling league this year after being referred by a friend.

Veteran curler, Tim Surry, a member of the Ability360 Team and one of the organizers of the Wednesday league, shares this same sentiment. After finishing in third place, Surry said, “The spirit of curling is where everybody helps each other. You hear a lot of ‘good shots’ and encouragement, even when you throw a bad one. This positivity is about much more than what happens on the ice.”

Surry’s love for curling has been influential in creating Ability360’s curling league. With his assistance, many beginner curlers have gotten training that culminated in the bonspiel.
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Josh Wheeler moves with the ball as the Wildcats defeated the Denver Harlequins 50-45 in Rockford, Illinois.
Soft creaks and shuffles emanate from the living room. Maybe a priceless vase shatters, followed by a frantic pitter-patter that echoes through the halls as you try to pinpoint the cause of this disturbance. Perhaps you live alone, and there shouldn’t be another soul in the house.

Immediately, a gut reaction would be that something is wrong. The appropriate response would be to alert the authorities. Maybe even confront the intruder if said person happened to feel a wind of courage.

However, take a moment to imagine that the soundscape most of us rely on to be wary of any incoming danger has suddenly been cut off. Those contextual clues that alert us to something amiss have now gone silent.

The vase shattering, the footsteps of those that shouldn’t be there and any other clues of intrusion would all go unnoticed. Situations of intense vulnerability like these are a reality for those who are hearing-impaired, many of whom have to seek specifically-tailored methods of security and protection to be prepared for any potential peril.

Several police departments across the Southwest operate under different procedures regarding protection and cooperation with people who have hearing impairments, whether they are victims, callers, witnesses or criminal suspects. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act,
departments are required, by federal law, to make it possible for people with disabilities to benefit from services, programs and activities. For instance, the Denver Police Department enforces that their officers must offer aides and services, such as qualified interpreters, computer-aided note-taking and written notes for people with hearing impairments. These protocols must be followed, whether someone who is hearing-impaired is given a speeding ticket or read their Miranda rights. This translates into investigations, interrogations and more.

Just as police departments have made efforts to ensure the safety and fair treatment of those with disabilities, home-security suppliers are also making a conscious effort to provide those with hearing impairments security systems that can circumvent their disability and keep them safe.

One such system is the ADT Pulse, developed by ADT Security, which is a home security system that offers features such as remote-video surveillance of both the indoors and outdoors – all viewable through its companion app for smartphones and computers. The app also allows the user to control Smart Locks which would enable control of the locks in their home remotely. The app can be set to alert the user any time someone enters or attempts to enter their home.

While the ADT Pulse is advanced in its range of features, its installment comes with pricey monthly fees and long-term contracts that vary based on the scale of protection and the size of the home. Many features of the ADT Pulse can be viewed as superfluous or even overkill. Perhaps someone who is hearing-impaired is looking for a way to keep their home safe without so many expensive installations.

A cheaper option would be the SkyBell HD, a smart doorbell that can be self-installed and streams high-definition footage saveable to a phone, computer or cloud. The SkyBell HD is $199 and offers live monitoring, customizable alerts, motion sensors and a “hear and speak” option which allows the user to have a conversation with whoever is at their door. The device is compatible with Amazon’s Alexa. Many users have praised the SkyBell HD for its easy installation and picture quality; however, some have complained that the built-in motion-sensor can be inconsistent and too sensitive. One user wrote that the sensor would snap pictures of passing cars that were 40 feet away, but have difficulty detecting cars pulling into their driveway at a much closer range. Despite this, the SkyBell HD seems like a valuable option for people with a hearing impairment who are looking for a cheap security option that has a wide range of features.

Developments like the ADT Pulse or the SkyBell HD are crucial in ensuring that those with any disability can stay protected in their homes. This technology offers a method to combat intruders. Wielding these safety precautions can go a long way in helping people live a more comfortable, safer lifestyle.
WARRIOR WOMAN

by Kelly Beaubien

Photo by Estefanía Cavazos

WOW!
If you were to ask Teresa Begay three years ago if she would ever run in a 5K, you probably would have heard a colorful version of “No way!” from this fiery woman. “I was a lazy git,” she said. “I was not active at all. I was an overworked registrar who sat at a desk for 8-10 hours a day. I never took care of my body.”

However, just three years after a devastating diagnosis and recovery of Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS), Begay is doing just that. GBS is a rare neurological disorder in which the body’s immune system mistakenly attacks part of its peripheral nervous system.

She plans to complete her first-ever 5K in the DC Wonder Woman Run series in late March.

Begay’s journey with GBS started in mid-February of 2015. What began as half of her body going numb, was followed by three different hospitals dismissing her symptoms as a mental breakdown and prescribing her numerous psychiatric medications. “My sister was sure it was GBS. But the doctors kept telling her ‘No, we aren’t seeing the proper protein appear.’ But she kept researching and trying to help any way she could.”

For three years, Begay went through physical therapy, aquatic therapy and started to exercise at the Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center. Begay says working out came naturally.

During her rehabilitation, she began working in the Project Independence and Empowerment program (PIE). The program is for people who have gone through rehabilitation at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center or any other Barrow program. She was introduced to the Sports & Fitness Center through PIE, and as soon as she entered, she fell in love. Now, she is there four times a week.

Begay’s Workout Routine:

Day 1: Upper body and core
Day 2: Legs and core
Day 3: Training for the walk with the combination of her walker and wheelchair
Day 4: Full-body

Finally, after 46 days, Teresa was diagnosed. However, by then, the damage was done and was severe. “Most people are diagnosed within a few hours to a few weeks. Not over a month,” she said.

It had been over a month, and Begay’s nervous system had taken a serious hit. She was unable to sit up, hold anything, roll over or stand. She was constantly in pain but numb at the same time. It took months of doctors visits for Begay to find her neurologist and recovery team.

What helped her most through recovery was her family. “My family has been with me every step of the way. I think the people at the Sports & Fitness Center know their names better than mine,” she said with a grin. She was excited that her family would be joining her to complete the 5K.

“My family has been with me every step of the way. I think the people at the Sports & Fitness Center know their names better than mine.”
Begay scoured the internet for different therapies that would push her out of her comfort zone. One afternoon, while scrolling through Facebook, she saw an ad for the DC Wonder Woman Run series. The ad kept showing up, and her curiosity got the best of her. So she followed the link to a picture of a group of women holding their medals. In the middle, was a lady sitting in her wheelchair, holding her walker.

“And my thought was, ‘Begay there is your darn sign!’ So I signed up.”

Begay’s goal is to complete the 5K under the hour and a half time limit, using her walker and wheelchair. She will have her team by her side the whole way.

“The most difficult part was feeling defeated and losing my independence,” she said.

But with patience, self-love and teamwork, she says anyone can meet their goals. When asked what words of advice she would give to someone starting their journey to recovery, she said, “Relearn the new you. Make friends who are going through the same ordeals. Be ok with slightly letting go of your independence,” Begay said.

Once she’s completed the race, Begay’s next goal is to try the rock-climbing wall at the Sports & Fitness Center. “I used to climb in college and would love to do it again.”

She knows with the support of her family and team, she will be able to work toward any goal she sets her mind to.

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Editor’s Note: Teresa finished her 5K race in 1 hour and 29 minutes.
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