

Disabled Sports USA and Adaptive Sports USA join forces to become Move United, the nation's leading community-based adaptive sports organization

A movement bringing inclusion through the power of sports to communities across America

May 4, 2020 (ROCKVILLE, MD) Leveraging more than 110 years of combined adaptive sports experience, Disabled Sports USA and Adaptive Sports USA are merging to become Move United. This new organization will lead the movement to fully include people with disabilities in American society, using sport to challenge perceptions and redefine ability for youth and adults with disabilities.

Move United's network will launch across more than 200 chapters in 43 states offering 100,000 youth and adults with disabilities opportunities to participate and compete in more than 50 different adaptive sports. This merger delivers a robust platform for growth, fostering expansion to more communities, with a goal to be locally available to 90% of the U.S. population by 2028, when the Olympics and Paralympics return to the U.S.

To learn more about this merger and movement, please join Move United's Facebook Live announcement on Thursday, May 7 at 3:00 p.m. ET.

"There is nothing like the power of sport. Sport makes us more; physically, mentally and socially. That is true for people with and without disabilities, but often today's youth and adults with disabilities have few opportunities to participate." said Glenn Merry, executive director of Move United. "Move United intends to change that by growing our network of 200+ community-based adaptive programs and challenging limits. Our vision is to redefine how society views ability."

Bringing together the expertise of the two leading organizations in community-based adaptive sports will mean greater growth and more support to local, community-based adaptive sports programs, which often provide the only means of sports participation for youth and adults with disabilities. Move United's mission is to help these organizations grow and thrive.

As a Member of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), Move United will provide a wide range of nationwide programming including recreational and competitive adaptive sports, staff, volunteer and instructor training, and services including risk management, outreach and adaptive sport grants. Move United is a 2019 USOPC *Rings of Gold* awardee.

"The merger makes Move United the pipeline for athletes with disabilities to not only learn adaptive sports, but to compete at the highest levels," said Susan Rossi, former executive director of Adaptive Sports USA and now Director of Competition at Move United. "The nation's best and most prominent adaptive sports competitions, including the Move United Junior Nationals, will be supported through Move United and these competitions will provide greater opportunities for athletes aspiring to compete at the state, regional, national, and international

levels. With the heart and soul, history, and expertise of this network, we are thrilled to have a unified voice and collective goal moving forward.”

The Move United Junior Nationals is the oldest and largest continuously held competitive multi-sport event for youth athletes with physical disabilities ages 6 to 22 in North America. Started in 1984, the event commonly gathers over 300 athletes, their coaches, and family members from across the U.S. and has served as the developmental training ground for many U.S. Paralympic athletes.

“Beginning as an eleven-year old with no athletic experience, I found a welcoming community of athletes with disabilities to learn from, grow, and share experiences with - first locally, then nationally, all the way up to my Paralympic career” said Amanda McGrory, 3-time U.S. Paralympian and 7-time medalist. “Without assistance, it can be intimidating to start the journey on one’s own. Combining missions and forming Move United will help athletes at all levels, as well as offer more opportunities for people with disabilities to find a sport they love.”

Disabled Sports USA and Adaptive Sports USA were both originally formed by military veterans during the Korean and Vietnam wars. Move United will be the largest nonprofit provider of adaptive sports to injured veterans, annually providing adaptive sports opportunities to 2,000 injured veterans and family members at no cost through its Move United Warfighters program. In a 2015 research paper funded by the VA, researchers noted that often for veterans “adapted sports, recreation, and social programs acted as a facilitator of community reintegration as well as the only community activities in which they participated.”

“Sports have played a very important part in my rehabilitation since being injured in Iraq” said retired Army Captain Matt Staton. I was demoralized after my injury, but adaptive sports gave me the confidence and motivation to get back to living life. Today, I am a certified adaptive ski and scuba instructor and help other injured warfighters rebuild their lives through sports. Move United will help 2,000 injured veterans and family members each year, and I look forward to supporting their important mission.”

Move United’s name reflects the vision of the organization to lead a united movement creating opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities to move, by being included in sports and recreation. Move United’s unique logo typeface is based on the deconstruction and reconstruction of the word “disability.” The unique look and feel of Move United’s brand is based on a patchwork design, reflecting the patchwork of community-based adaptive sports organizations that are the heart of Move United. The various patterns in the patchwork reflect the many types of disabilities served by Move United. Brand work was done in partnership with Superunion, the world’s most awarded global brand agency.

For more information, please go to: moveunitedsport.org.