



PRESS RELEASE

NO BARRIERS FESTIVAL 2009 AT SHAKE-A-LEG MIAMI SEA BASE

This will be the first Festival of its kind to combine land and water-based adaptive sports, cutting-edge techniques and technology that enable people with challenges to live as actively as possible.

For Immediate Release

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(Minneapolis, MN – November 25, 2008) - The No Barriers USA Board of Directors is excited to announce the No Barriers Festival 2009 at Shake-A-Leg Miami Sea Base on June 4-7, 2009. The Festival will take place primarily on the campus of Shake-A-Leg Miami, in Miami, Florida, and will also include events on Biscayne Bay, in the Everglades and at various other locations within Dade County, the City of Miami and the Florida Keys. The Festival will also include music, art, film and cultural programs. Over 650 participants are expected to attend.

Erik Weihenmayer, President of the Board of Directors, says, “Our fourth Festival is well on its way to becoming our most successful event to date. Growing in popularity, our four day event will focus on shattering barriers through water-based activities, an incredible science symposium and a host of other special events to show what is possible. Imagine quadriplegics using a puff and sip method to sail independently, arm and leg amputees learning systems for kayaking, paraplegics water skiing, and blind people SCUBA diving.”

Director, Hugh Herr, Ph. D., adds, “We believe the message of No Barriers is universal. The Festival will bring together the inventors, scientists, technologists, athletes, teachers, outdoor enthusiasts and seekers -- people who are pushing the envelope and shifting the paradigm of possibility in their chosen fields. During the Festival, ideas and technologies will be presented and applied through clinics, demonstrations and networking. The attendees will leave empowered not only with exposure to particular equipment and techniques that work for them but also with the knowledge of what they need to be active participants in developing the solutions that will help them realize their potential. In addition, developers and end-users will learn from each other, and this interaction will shape the next wave of innovation.”

The No Barriers Festivals are unique, international, multi-day events that showcase and share the cutting-edge techniques and technologies that enable people with challenges to live as actively as possible and to break through their own personal barriers. The bulk of participants are paraplegics, amputees, blind people and those with traumatic brain injuries - many of whom are injured veterans returning from the current conflicts - but the audience goes beyond more traditional disabilities to include those who feel they are too old, too heavy or too disadvantaged in any way.

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After three successful international festivals held in mountain settings, the Board of Directors made the decision to shift venues in 2009. Director Mark Wellman explains, “We selected a marine location to show the diversity of our mission and to illustrate how breaking through barriers is more than about climbing mountains and succeeding in the rugged outdoors. There is a wave of innovation and outdoor education on the water and there are very few organizations like Shake-A-Leg Miami who are making things happen. Our partnership will help us make our 2009 Festival more incredible than any of our previous three.”

The No Barriers festivals in 2004 and 2005 were held in Cortina d’Ampezzo, Italy, in the heart of the Dolomites, and NO BARRIERS FESTIVAL 2007 was held at Squaw Valley USA, near Lake Tahoe, California. NO BARRIERS FESTIVAL 2007 brought together over 600 scientists, inventors, artists, athletes, outdoor enthusiasts and pioneers – most with disabilities – as well as approximately 50 disabled veterans from the recent conflicts.

Conceived by a group of friends with a passion for the beautiful natural places of the world, No Barriers USA is a not-for-profit organization which assumes that each person, regardless of age, state of mind or physical condition, has a thirst for adventure and a hope for the future which is worthy of igniting. No Barriers is more than a name; it is the attitude of reaching out and finding ways to accomplish one's dreams, no matter what it takes. No Barriers is for all people, regardless of age, state of mind or physical condition.

Shake-A-Leg Miami is a unique, community-based aquatic activities center that serves children and adults with physical, developmental and economic challenges. As one of the largest public facilities in Southern Florida, and one of the most inclusive community-based organizations in the nation, Shake-A-Leg Miami serves as the “Gateway to Biscayne Bay” and offers opportunities for visitors from around the world to enjoy water-based sports and recreation activities such as sailing, kayaking, paddling and fishing. The goal of Shake-A-Leg Miami is to empower and energize people by developing self-confidence and fostering a sense of independence that improves quality of life.

To learn more about No Barriers USA, please visit www.nobarriersusa.org

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