



Inclusion by Design Impact Awards Launch on International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Innovation Challenge to Fuel International Commit to Inclusion Campaign

Press Release

(New York, USA) December 3, 2015: On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Physical Activity and Sport Task Force of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities (GPcwd) is launching the Inclusion by Design Impact Awards. The goal of this award is to inspire and share best practices that demonstrate excellence and innovation in their approach to achieving more inclusion for children and adolescents with disabilities around the world.

The GPcwd Task Force on Physical Activity and Sport, led by UNICEF, the Lakeshore Foundation, the Institute for Human Centered Design and the American College of Sports Medicine, is engaging a worldwide search for innovative approaches to adapt the rules, equipment, teaching approaches and environment in all areas related to physical activity and sport that foster greater diversity and inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities.

The overall winner, with the ‘most innovative approach’, will receive \$1000, second place will receive \$500 and third place will receive \$250. The money is intended to further promote and spread the use or implementation of the innovation. To help decide on the most innovative approaches, along set criteria, we have recruited an excellent panel of judges that will help facilitate a fair process. They include representatives from IFAPA, IPC, Special Olympics, UNICEF, UNESCO as well as a member of the GPcwd Youth Council, a famous model/advocate with disability, and a global leader in inclusive design.

One billion people in the world today experience disability, or about 15% of the world’s population.¹ At all stages of childhood and adolescence, participation in physical activity and sport has profound impact on overall growth and development and is an essential element of quality of life in childhood.² However, children with disabilities are 4.5 times less likely to engage in physical activity³ and have a

¹ WHO and World Bank, World Report on Disability, 2011.

² Rimmer, J. H. and Rowland, J.L. (2008) Physical activity for youth with disabilities: A critical need in an underserved population, *Developmental Neurorehabilitation*, 11:2, 141-148; Allen J. et al. Strength training can be enjoyable and beneficial for adults with cerebral palsy. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 2004, 26:1121-1127.

³ Rimmer, J. H. and Rowland, J.L. (2008) Physical activity for youth with disabilities: A critical need in an underserved population, *Developmental Neurorehabilitation*, 11:2, 141-148; Allen J. et al. Strength training can be enjoyable and beneficial for adults with cerebral palsy. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 2004, 26:1121-1127.

higher prevalence of obesity compared to their peers without disabilities, increasing their risk of life-altering secondary conditions.⁴⁵

The launch of the Inclusion by Design Impact Awards is intended to fuel the international reach of the Commit to Inclusion campaign that advocates for an end to the exclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities from all forms of physical activity and associated areas (physical education, sport, recreation, play). It encourages individuals, organizations and key stakeholders to make a ‘commitment to inclusion’ stating how they will work to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are realized and ensure their work is inclusive of everyone. “We are thrilled to be able to launch the Inclusion by Design Awards and to further the platform of the international Commit to Inclusion campaign. We are looking forward to seeing all of the powerful and empowering innovations being developed around the world,” says Jeff Underwood, President of the Lakeshore Foundation.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) has been commemorated since 1992 to promote awareness and mobilize support for critical issues related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development. The Day works to promote action to raise awareness about disability issues and draw attention to the benefits of an inclusive and accessible society for all.

Eli Wolff, Director of Inclusive Sports Initiative at the Institute for Human Centered Design, says, “Sport is a unique platform for innovation, creativity and imagination for inclusion and universal design. The Inclusion by Design Awards innovation challenge is an incredible opportunity. It is very significant that we are launching on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, reinforcing the right to sport and physical activity for all people, including all people with disabilities.”

Jim Whitehead, CEO of the American College of Sports Medicine, remarks, “We see the Inclusion by Design Awards as a transformational initiative to promote the essential connection between sport, physical activity and developing healthy communities for all. We see this initiative having lasting impact to further mobilize the inclusion of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity.”

Individuals and organizations wishing to submit an application for the Inclusion by Design Impact Awards visit <http://committoinclusion.org/innovation-challenge/>. If you have any questions email help@committoinclusion.org. Applications must be received by January 31, 2016 at 12 pm GMT.

⁴ Rimmer, J.H. & Rowland, Jennifer L. (2007) Obesity and Secondary Conditions in Adolescents with Disabilities: Addressing the Needs of an Underserved Population, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, 224-229.

⁵ Lin J.D., Yen CF, Wu JL, Patterns of obesity among children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities in Taiwan. *Journal of Applied Research Intellectual Disabilities* 2005; 18, 123-9.