



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance Announces the 2010 Ataxian Athlete Initiative Grant Recipients

August 10, 2010- The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA), in partnership with the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation and The FA Project, is pleased to announce Jennifer Deneau of Michigan, and Nick Carbone of Massachusetts as grant recipients of the 2010 Ataxian Athlete Initiative (AAI).

The AAI is managed by Ride Ataxia – a FARA program. Part of the mission of Ride Ataxia is to promote active lifestyles among people with disabilities by providing adaptive cycling equipment to people affected by Ataxia – a devastating, progressive, neuromuscular disease. The 2010 AAI was funded by a quality of life grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation and The FA Project.

AAI is administered through a competitive grant application process. Applicants submitted an essay summarizing their experience with Ataxia and their efforts to stay active with the condition. Individuals then selected the most appropriate adaptive cycling equipment to suit their abilities and described how such equipment would help them to reach their fitness goals. All applications were reviewed by a panel of Disabled Athletes, Ataxians, and other representatives from the Ataxia community. Grants were awarded based on the merit of the applications, resources requested and resources available for funding.

Meet the 2010 AAI Award Recipients

Jennifer Deneau is a 27 year old Michigan resident who graduated from Central Michigan University in 2007 with a degree in Broadcasting and Communications. Jennifer was diagnosed with Friedreich's ataxia (FA) at age 10 and refuses to let disability get her down. Jennifer enjoys swimming, wheelchair basketball, floor hockey and shreds the ice as the only female member of the Michigan Sled Dogs Sled Hockey Team. Through the 2010 AAI Jennifer will receive funding for a Top End XLT Pro Handcycle.

Jennifer states, "My goals are very important to me and give me the motivation to make the most of my life. I have a dream of competing in handcycle marathons some day. Being competitive in sled hockey is also important to me. I love competing and contributing to the success of my Sled Dogs team."

Nick Carbone is a 23 year old alumnus of Fitchburg State College who is currently attending Massachusetts School of Law. Nick was diagnosed with FA at the age of 12 and

remains positive through his participation in sports. Nick says, "As a child I tried the best that I could to mask my disease; I was ashamed of my disease. Sports have done a world [of good] for me because I have met so many people in similar situations." Nick has enjoyed wheelchair basketball, rugby and tennis and is currently active in adaptive waterskiing and sled hockey. Through the 2010 AAI Nick will receive partial funding for a Top End Force Handcycle.

Nick states, "My goal is to do marathons in FARA's name and meet up with [Team FARA] at a Ride Ataxia Event. In the future I hope to use my law degree along with my personal and athletic achievements as tools to help me advocate for FA and other diseases as well."

About Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA)

The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to accelerating research leading to treatments and a cure for Friedreich's ataxia www.curefa.org.

About Ride Ataxia

The mission of Ride Ataxia is to Educate the public about ataxia by drawing attention through acts of physical endurance, Enable the advancement of ataxia research through collaborative financial support, and Empower Ataxians by inspiring, motivating, and providing opportunities to develop physical and mental strength www.rideataxia.org.

About the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation

The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation is dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by funding innovative research, and improving the quality of life for people living with paralysis through grants, information and advocacy. For more information, and to review the entire list of Quality of Life grant recipients, please visit www.christopherreeve.org or call 800-225-0292.

About The FA Project

The FA Project is committed towards creating awareness of Friedreich's Ataxia, a life altering disease. We aim to educate the public by increasing the visibility of related information & resources and creating a support system for those afflicted with FA. Ultimately it is our goal to provide those living with FA the tools and resources necessary to lead the best life possible www.thefaproject.org.

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