



Virginia has spent a lifetime in competitive and recreational exercise pursuits. Working out at Challenge Center has helped Virginia achieve not only her Olympic goals - but also her good health!



Just a few of Virginia's numerous medals and ribbons!

Challenge Center's Olympic Spirit

The Sochi Olympic torch may be extinguished, but that spirit lives on here at Challenge Center. Whether it is branching out of their comfort zones and going camping, taking their first stroll down a grocery store aisle, or gaining their balance to learn some new kitchen skills, each one of these individuals is a champion in our eyes.

Virginia - One Special Lady

Seventy-eight years young, Virginia has participated in Special Olympics swimming backstroke and free-style competitions since 1959. Over

her career she has amassed 25 medals and 85 ribbons.

While she hung up her competitive swim cap in 2012; Virginia hasn't slowed down! Her twice weekly participation in Challenge Center's Assisted Fitness Program has enabled her to keep up her weekly exercise rituals which include biking, swimming, treadmill, exercising in the pool, and playing volleyball.

Virginia's sense of humor motivates her to exercise daily. She laughingly states that "Exercise is very important; if I don't exercise my body gets fatter and I can't get through the door!"

Celebrating our own Olympic champion as well as those who have pushed themselves to new levels.

She will tell you seriously that her daily exercise routine enables her to follow her passion and give back to the community.

Known for her knitting skills, she makes blankets for cats at a shelter. Her family chides her, saying that she should make a blanket for herself. But knowing Virginia, she'll never slow down long enough to sit under it!



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Start Exercising Today!

You might be thinking “I don’t know how to exercise and I’m not really sure I can use machines in a gym.” Challenge Center understands that a one-size-fits-all exercise routine will not be effective for everybody. Fitness Program clients meet with a physical therapist who takes into account each client’s disability, additional health conditions, ability level, and goals and creates a customized exercise program to help them work toward their goals. Challenge Center has adapted exercise equipment for individuals with physical limitations, and can even provide the assistance of a Certified Personal Trainer for clients who meet a qualifying level of disability. Check out Challenge Center’s Balance and Conditioning class or try its Aquatics class. Join us for Challenge Center’s free Seated Exercise class on Wednesdays from 11:15 a.m. to noon.



Benefits of Exercise - Post Stroke

by Jaime Casey, PT

Everybody wants to feel good and be happy, but at times these basic desires can feel like more of a challenge to achieve for individuals who have survived a stroke. Following a stroke, people may feel weak, out of shape, and possibly even depressed. But just because one has had to endure and fight to overcome the effects of a stroke, doesn’t mean he or she must also endure all the secondary physical and emotional challenges that can occur! Experts across the board agree that regular exercise can help prevent many of the side effects and secondary health complications following a stroke.

Often times, people who have had a stroke find it more difficult to move around and, usually unknowingly, become more sedentary. A less active lifestyle can lead to muscle weakness and loss of range of joint motion, both of which make it even harder to move about following a stroke. Additionally, a sedentary lifestyle can decrease cardiovascular and respiratory fitness which may leave people feeling slow, groggy, and fatigued. To further complicate matters, poor cardiorespiratory fitness increases the risk of developing additional health complications and even increases the risk of a second stroke. Fortunately, exercise can help!

Participation in regular exercise can bring multifaceted benefits to the stroke survivor, including improved strength, flexibility, balance, and may even improve one’s self esteem, mood, and overall feeling of well-being. Aerobic or cardiovascular training can improve your heart health thus decreasing the risk of heart attack or a second stroke. Additionally, exercise can help reduce the risk of other secondary health complications such as high cholesterol and diabetes.

When a Trip to the Market Becomes So Much More

For most of us going to the grocery store is just one more mundane task in our day - but for two Challenge Center clients, it was a huge step in their recoveries.

This is my store!

Last month, Scott Boney, who owns and designed the Windmill Farms Store in Del Cerro, made his first steps pushing a grocery cart down his store's aisles. (This is a man whose wife was initially told that if he lived at all, he would be in a vegetative state for the rest of his life.)

Scott later walked into Challenge Center regaling us with stories that he suddenly recalled about building his store. We were all curious about his sudden recollections, given he had been in the store several times since his injury. He quickly reminded us, "Yes, but I was in a wheelchair during all those trips. When I stood up, all those memories came rushing back to me." Amazing how the brain works - and what can happen when someone has the opportunity and tenacity to give it their all.

Just like old times!

Challenge Center client Karyn Harding, who just over a year ago awoke from surgery unable to walk, made her first solo trip down a Sprouts grocery store aisle this month. She'd gone to the store with her husband, but had intentionally sent him off to another part of the store so she could venture on her own. Who knew that pushing a cart down a grocery store aisle could be so liberating!

Her outing was such a success that a woman in a powered shopping cart, not realizing that this was Karyn's maiden voyage, was somewhat annoyed when Karyn did not spring out of the way to allow the powered cart to pass. For Karyn, the thought that she was able to walk down an aisle, and have someone perceive her as capable of jumping out of the way, made her day!



Not Even a Mountain Can Stop Me!

The age old concept that “you’ll never know what is possible until you try” isn’t exactly a novel concept at Challenge Center. Our clients are often challenged, and pleasantly surprised, when they accomplish something new in Physical Therapy or Fitness, but what about beyond our walls? We were excited to partner with Walking Trout Foundation (WTF) to give Challenge Center clients **Mirella Solis** and **Armando Diaz** the opportunity to go outside their daily routines to participate in a WTF sponsored camping trip to the Sierra Mountains. Mirella and Armando returned with smiling faces and a new level of confidence. Despite their mobility limitations, with a little help, they were able to participate in all of the activities that make camping such a joy.



WTF describes themselves as a group of 40-something high school and college friends who love to backpack and camp. They wanted to share this love of camping with a group of people with mobility limitations, who might not otherwise have had the ability or means to go camping. The Foundation rented vans, provided food and camping gear, and located "accessible" campgrounds. When asked about the accommodations, Armando cheerfully explained that he was "impressed by their cooking." The group visited a fish hatchery outside the town of Independence, spent time fishing at Rock Creek Lake, went on a tour of Mono Lake, and did a driving tour of Mammoth Village and Twin Lakes. Nights were spent around a campfire, which Mirella described as one of her favorite activities.



Both Mirella and Armando enjoyed seeing the lakes, and Armando further stated that he really enjoyed fishing even though "we didn't catch anything but seaweed!" Additionally, he expressed that it was a good opportunity to "get away from the house." With a smile, Armando reported "I would do it again... but I would like it to be a little warmer" (from what we understand, the nights were quite chilly). Like Armando, Mirella also had a positive experience. The trip left her feeling like "I can do anything," and it inspired her to do more traveling. She explains "Not everything will be accessible... I want to do more traveling, **not even a mountain can stop me!**"

Challenge Center Helped Me Find What Was Possible

When I started coming to Challenge Center about four years ago I never thought that I would enjoy working out; but for the first time I was comfortable. Now, not only do I have a place to work on my physical self; it is good for my mind. I have formed so many great friendships, we all have different disabilities but we share our ups and downs, and we all have become a great support system for one another. Some of my favorite times are during the Balance and Conditioning class, which I enjoy taking. We work on balance, cardio, and core. Health and Wellness Program Manager, Karen always makes sure it is challenging, saying "that's why it is called Challenge Center."

I have also found that it is a great resource center. I will never forget the day I came in frustrated because I could not put on my socks and tie my shoes when I was home alone. After discussing this with Karen, she told me about a company and within a week I had the tools to take care of my problem. I recently attended a cooking demonstration that PT Assistant Maren organized, which showed tools for people with limited mobility or lacking strength in their arms. It was great!

Thanks Challenge Center for helping me discover what is possible!

Ann Marie Grant, Challenge Center Client



The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Visits Challenge Center

As an 8-time Quality of Life awardee of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, Challenge Center was recently visited by Niketa Sheth, Senior Vice President, Quality of Life and Robert Volland, representing their Board.

Challenge Center client, Veronica, who is paraplegic, demonstrated one of our cutting edge technology computerized functional electrical stimulation (CFES) bicycles, some of which were paid for through a Reeve grant. These bikes deliver electrical stimulation to paralyzed extremities and results in muscle contractions

sufficient to pedal a bike, which in turn achieve cardiovascular fitness and muscle strengthening.

As Niketa states in the Foundation's blog, "There's a reason we've now granted close to \$100,000 to this innovative center over the years: they continue to change the lives of so many people living with disabilities in their community."

You can find the complete Reeve Foundation blog describing their visit and impressions at <http://www.spinalcordinjury-paralysis.org/blogs/16/2019>.

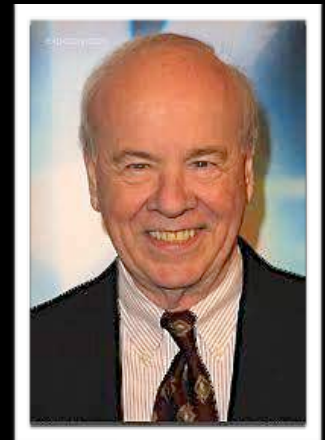
Maddie taking a spin on the CFES bike



Veronica rides the CFES bike for 45 minutes three times a week

Save The Date - September 12, 2014
17th Annual Comedy Night
Starring The Legendary

Tim Conway



A six time Emmy winner, Tim is adored by generations of fans for his hilarious antics on ***The Carol Burnett Show*** and ***McHale's Navy***. Mr. Conway continues to hone his craft and recently brought the house down on ***Two and A Half Men*** and ***Late Night with Jimmy Fallon***.

Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy an intimate evening with this comic genius at the new San Diego Central Library Shiley Special Events Suite and Qualcomm Dome Terrace.



Challenge
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