



## E-NEWSLETTER

### October News



The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation board of directors extends our condolences to the family of Indianapolis 500 Champion Dan Wheldon, who passed away due to a racing accident on Sunday, October 16. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Dan's entire family and particularly his wife, Susie, and their two sons, Sebastian and Oliver.

Dan was a big supporter of the Foundation and played an integral part in our Day at the Races program. His engaging smile, quick wit, and graciousness made the program even more special for every one of our guests. Dan will long be remembered and always missed.



To view more photos of Dan at our Day at the Races programs, click [here](#).

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### Gettin' It Done: Joe Stone, Isaac Schreurs and Chris Salas

It has been a challenging time for everyone connected with the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation and Sam Schmidt Motorsports (SSM). With great sadness we report the sudden passing of Chris Griffis, Team Manager of Sam Schmidt Motorsports, on September 12.



The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation's Day at the Races trackside events would not be possible without the cooperation of many people, including the Sam Schmidt Motorsports team. Chris was a great friend of the Foundation and will be missed by all of us. Our hearts go out to his family and many friends.

Griffis, a native of Akron, Ind., was hired by SSM in January 2004 and led the team to 46 Indy Lights race wins and four series. He also served as team manager for SSM's Indianapolis 500-Mile Race efforts most recently for drivers Townsend Bell and Alex Lloyd. Prior to working for SSM, Griffis helped several other teams to Victory Circle, including Panther Racing, Patrick Racing, Chip Ganassi Racing, Bernstein Racing and PacWest Racing.

Griffis is survived by his wife, Mari, and two daughters.

The following is a statement from Sam Schmidt: *"Chris was a great individual with a tremendous amount of integrity and a hard work ethic. I didn't*

## Joe Stone, extreme sports hand cyclist

*A year ago, Joe Stone's life as he knew it came crashing down on a Montana mountain.*



Photos courtesy Lido Vizzutti/Flathead Beacon and Joe Stone

An experienced skydiver and avid outdoorsman, Stone had just taken up speed flying, an extreme sport using a parachute-type canopy and skis to glide down mountains at high speeds close to the ground. His parachute became tangled and he slammed to the ground, sustaining a spinal cord injury – paralyzed from the chest down.

Inspired by "Murderball", a 2005 documentary about quadriplegic athletes who play rugby, Stone determined to not give up on his love of athletics and the outdoors. He learned to ride a handcycle and decided to make his mark on para-athletics by completing a 100-mile adaptive bicycle trek through Montana's Glacier National Park. To read about Joe's journey, click [here](#). To read his blog, click [here](#). To see handcycling from the rider's perspective, click [here](#).



In August Joe Stone tackled Logan Pass's Going-to-the-Sun Highway, including the 12 mile climb to the summit. To read about the successful completion of his ride, click [here](#).

It was certainly an impressive accomplishment, but the effort is every bit as important as the success.

*hire him for what he said in the interview because he never said much. I hired him because of the massive amount of respect and admiration people had for him in the paddock. One thing for sure is, we wouldn't have any trophies in the case at the shop without him. My thoughts and prayers have been with Mari and his two girls since I got the news. I feel like I lost the brother I never had. He will be greatly missed."*

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## Research Report: 2011 Sam Schmidt Sell Fund Award Recipient



*The Sam Schmidt Sell Fund Award is the result of a productive partnership between the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation, a respected foundation dedicated to the lives of individuals with spinal cord injury, and the American Spinal injury Association (ASIA), which has provided professional support to researchers and clinicians in the field of spinal cord medicine for nearly 40 years.*

Established in 2009, the award is designed to encourage the research of early career investigators.

The 2011 recipient is James Crew, M.D. of Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. Dr. Crew is a graduate of the Creighton University in Omaha, did his internship and residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation, and was clinical fellow in spinal cord injury medicine at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Dr. Crew is currently Associate Chief, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at

Joe was recently invited to be a guest on a radio show where he spoke about his life since the accident and plans for the future. To listen to the radio interview, click [here](#). We are sure to hear a lot more from Joe Stone in the future.

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Photos courtesy Isaac Schreurs

### **Isaac Schreurs, sprint car driver**

*The top wing of Isaac Schreurs' dirt track sprint car is emblazoned with the well-known "wheelchair accessibility" graphic. His personal motto is "Never say I can't!".*

In 2005, 14-year-old Isaac was racing motocross when a jump threw him off the bike and he landed on square on his back. As soon as Schreurs hit the ground, he knew something was not right. "I couldn't feel my legs," said Isaac after the incident. At the hospital he was told that he had fractured his T-3 vertebrae and was paralyzed from the chest down.

Eventually Isaac came to realize he needed to make the best of his situation and make the most of his love of autosports. He started racing a quad on flat track ovals, determined that one day he would be in a sprint car.

As quoted in a 2010 interview with South Dakota's Keloland TV, "Racing is definitely in my blood, just like any other racer. I just wanted to keep going. Nothing really to stop right now, no reason to stop," Isaac said.

Isaac soon looked into outfitting a sprint car with hand controls. "It doesn't get any more crazy than sprint cars. It's

Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, San Jose, California; and Clinical Instructor, Department of Orthopedic Surgery, at Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, California.

Dr. Crew's research proposal is entitled, "Vitamin D Deficiency in Persons with Spinal Cord Injury." He will be invited to present his findings at a future ASIA meeting.



### **Making a Stand for SSPF... A Lemonade Stand, that is**



*Meet our newest Hero for Hope, Alexis ("Lexi") Lewis. An enterprising young lady from Indianapolis, Lexi set up a lemonade stand this summer to raise money for the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation.*

Besides lemonade, her menu listed bottled water and mom's homemade cookies, which Lexi helped bake.

the craziest thing you could probably do on dirt. With the horsepower, the weight, the speed, 20 other cars. It's pretty intense," Isaac said. With the help of his family and friends from the racing community, Isaac developed a car that fits his special circumstances.

As quoted in DriverWebsites.com, "... Just needed an electric throttle and basically an e-brake for the brake. And it's worked out well, just change a couple of little things. Other than that, it was pretty easy to accommodate with this sealed engine." With hand and throttle brake controls, Isaac was ready to hit the track and begin his sprint car career.



Throughout the 2010 season, the young and determined, paralyzed driver from Brandon, South Dakota managed 13 top five finishes and 22 top ten finishes including his first sprint car win. In the 2011 racing season he branched out to several other racetracks, including the Sprint Car Capital of the World, Knoxville Raceway.

To learn more about Isaac Schreurs, visit his website at [www.team612.com](http://www.team612.com)

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### **Chris Salas, founder of the support group "Rolling Inspiration"**



Photos courtesy **OMAR**

[PEREZ/operez@express-news.net](mailto:PEREZ/operez@express-news.net)(mysanantonio.com) and Chris Salas



The poster size menu also displayed information about the work of the Foundation on behalf of people with spinal cord injury and other disabilities.

Lexi raised hundreds of dollars for the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation with her lemonade stand, while raising awareness about the Foundation and its goal of a cure for spinal cord injury.

This was anything but Lexi's first foray into philanthropy. She raised the most pledges in Indiana 3 years in a row jumping rope to benefit the American Heart Association, and every summer she sets up a lemonade stand to benefit a chosen charity. Past beneficiaries of Lexi's lemonade stand sales have included Riley Children's Hospital and Bright Side of the Road Foundation. Along the way, she is also learning about business management and the personal satisfaction of philanthropy.

Lexi advertised her lemonade stand on Facebook and Twitter, and told all her friends about it in advance. Fortunately, it was a steamy 92 degrees in Indianapolis that day, prompting lots of people to stop by for a cool refreshing glass of lemonade or a bottle of water.

A sincere thank you to Lexi Lewis, budding entrepreneur and our newest Hero for Hope. To read more about the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation's Heroes for Hope program, click [here](#).

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**Sam Schmidt**

*The way for you to make your mark on the world might be through volunteering, like Chris Salas of San Antonio Texas.*

After his spinal cord injury, Salas spent years of what he calls 'just surviving'. "It was tough at first," he said. "I spent a lot of time feeling sorry for myself and doing nothing. I went through this phase of wanting to die, and then I didn't want to die."



Salas began volunteering for the transportation system at the community center where he went for rehab and counseling after his accident. One day he was asked to talk to a new spinal-cord injury patient, and his support group "Rolling Inspiration" was founded.

"The counselor here would keep calling me to talk to people, so I figured I must be doing something right," Salas said. "It wasn't so much what the patient got from talking to me so much as the feeling I got talking to them. It kind of inspired me to do it more."

The initiative of Chris Salas to start a support group in his own community for people with spinal cord injury has brought him national notice and the personal satisfaction of knowing he is helping others who need the support as much as he did.

To read more about Chris Salas and Rolling Inspiration, click [here](#).

The advice Sam Schmidt gives our Day at the Races program guests is to "find your passion and follow it". Even the attempt is a form of victory. So make your plans, get involved, network with others and find a way!

***Remember: If you try something and can't do it, you haven't actually failed. You just haven't succeeded.... yet.***

## **Paralysis Foundation Honored by National Fraternity Psi Upsilon**

***The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation has been named as Psi Upsilon's first fraternity-wide philanthropy.***



Sam Schmidt was the founding president of Lambda Omega Sigma Fraternity at Pepperdine University. In 1998 the group became the Lambda Sigma chapter of Psi Upsilon. After graduating, Sam became an IndyCar driver until an accident in practice left him with a C-3/4/5 spinal cord injury.

"Since my injury I have learned so much about the tremendous needs of people suffering from spinal cord injuries. There are three areas the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation concentrates its efforts. The first is medical research. The second, innovative equipment that can be used for rehabilitation. And, third, I want to help people with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities by addressing quality of life issues"

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation will look to Psi Upsilon to assist in a number of events including Day at the Races, where race fans with disabilities are treated to VIP status at Indy Lights or IndyCar events. In addition, Sam's foundation sponsors Run, Walk, Wheelathons in several

locations in North America.

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## Schedule of Events

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation is wrapping up a very busy 2011 schedule of events, which included our annual May Gala, several Day at the Races quality of life events, Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon fundraisers and local fundraisers.

*Reports on our recent Racing to Recovery Golf Tournament and "Concert to 'Beat' Paralysis" will be featured in our November issue.*

Our 2012 schedule of events will be posted in future e-newsletters and on our website, <http://www.samschmidt.org>, as soon as the information becomes available.

Our mailing address is:

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[www.samschmidt.org](http://www.samschmidt.org)

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