

Dear CrossFit Family:

I am reaching out to you to participate in the first annual fundraiser for a phenomenal cause.

** if you're not into wordy mission statements, feel free to skip to "So here's the rub".*



The Mission:

I should tell you more about who I am and why I'm doing this before I ask you to take part in another fundraiser WOD or donate money. I write to you as a fellow CrossFitter, as a physician in the field of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and also as a person with a physical disability. In 2008, I sustained a spinal cord injury from a gymnastics accident. My 30th birthday was spent in a hospital bed being fed by my family because I was unable to use my hands or move anything below my chest. Over time, I was fortunate to have made enough functional gains to enable me to live and work independently, and also able to enjoy a level of fitness that most able-bodied individuals do not. This is in large part due to my involvement in CrossFit, which I started nearly a year and a half after my injury.

In 2011, I ran a WOD with the help of my CF coach, Micah Macbeth, and our box (CF 215) in which we raised money for persons with spinal cord injury. I posted a video that chronicled my recovery from when I was first in an acute rehabilitation facility up to the day of the fundraiser workout. The fundraiser webpage, which has the video embedded in it, is linked below:

<http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/stanyoo/wodforsci>

Not only did I have a great time doing this, I also was blown away by the level of support I received and the people I managed to reach. I realized that this has the potential to be so much more. There is a great need to empower persons with disabilities to become more active in their communities, and we as CrossFitters can help. Specifically, we embody the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and we can help individuals with disabilities get access to physical activity and recreation.

As someone who has been involved in athletics most of my life, as a doctor of Physical Medicine, as someone who lives with disability and as a Crossfitter, I understand how much being physically active elevates your quality of life. I joined CrossFit when I was far more impaired than I am now, and while the amount of functional return I have achieved since joining is invaluable, what is just as significant is the sense of self-esteem, purpose and confidence that I have gained. CrossFit is something that saved my life. In speaking with others in my box, none of whom have a physical disability, this is a common sentiment. Physical and mental activity drives us all to integrate into the community and become eager participants in society. However, it is difficult for persons with disabilities to engage in physical activity. Challenges like the social stigma that individuals with disabilities face in the community, limited options for adapted recreation, and the high costs of adaptive sports equipment limit recreational opportunities. My goal is to raise the nation's awareness and understanding for those with disabilities, and to promote physical activity and everything that comes along with it – self-esteem, camaraderie, and purpose. I am appealing to all of you because I believe that this is something that people in CrossFit understand more than most others. We all started this sport because we believe in fitness as a lifestyle, and not just a means to looking good. Because of that, we have embraced something that is unconventional, and in doing so we have collectively begun to redefine for the better what it means to be "fit", "strong", "healthy", "feminine", or even "human". We are in the business of obliterating old conceptions and stereotypes, and the increasing popularity of CrossFit is a testament to the power of our message. It is

exactly this reshaping and reconceptualization that needs to be achieved for those who live with disability.

So here's the rub:

On February 21st, 2015, with the help of Micah Macbeth, my CF coach and owner of CrossFit 215, we will be hosting the second annual "**Ability WOD**". All proceeds collected will be donated to the Global Abilities Foundation, an organization that enables people of all abilities to participate in sports and recreational activities. Funds collected will help provide adaptive sports equipment and fund recreational activities. If you are local to the Philadelphia region, I invite you to our box to participate in what I hope to be a great event on so many levels.

The Global Abilities Foundation (GAF) provides resources to help persons with disabilities become independent, productive members of society. By providing access to education, assistive technology and adaptive tools, and instilling motivation by focusing on ability, rather than disabilities, GAF empowers individuals to excel in school, work, recreation, and social life. GAF hosts an annual Rec Fest, an inclusive recreation expo for all ages and abilities. Global Abilities also manages wheelchair rugby and racing teams that give persons with disabilities an opportunity to challenge themselves through competitive sports.

I ask that you spread the word about this event to your friends in the area and contacts across the U.S. and worldwide. Like before, my plan is to make a video of the WOD, but this time **I call out to all persons with disabilities in the CrossFit community to participate** as well. If you cannot make the event at CrossFit 215, we invite you to host an Ability WOD at your local CrossFit box.

The Ability WOD is a focus on ability, a showcase of inspiring stories in the community, and proof that the goals of persons with disabilities are the same as the able bodied. Ultimately we are no different and should all be afforded the same opportunities and held in the same regard. Everyone deserves to feel included, and the lack of a ramp accessible facility, or a piece of adaptive equipment or proper, safe instruction, or the lack of understanding and acceptance from those who are able-bodied should not be what keeps someone from what makes life worth living.

Thank you so much for reading, and I sincerely hope that you will consider helping to make this event a national and worldwide phenomenon.

Sincerely,
Stan Yoo



All donations to the Ability WOD are tax deductible.