

Envision Blind Sports Receives \$30,000 Grant from The Hartford

Company surprises local youth athletes with custom-fit sports equipment

MERCER, PA, USA, April 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Envision Blind Sports, a non-profit organization based in Mercer, PA, was recently awarded a \$30,000 grant from The Hartford for new adaptive sports equipment.

The grant enabled Envision Blind Sports, a member of the Move United member network, to purchase adaptive sports equipment for athletes who are blind or visually impaired. The grant allowed Envision Blind Sports to purchase 50 custom equipment bags for blind athletes to use in schools and communities. Each equipment bag included a goalball, a blind soccer ball, a running tether, a blind multi-purpose hockey ball, eyeshades, blind tennis ball.



Emma Papariella, Raffi Wilbur, and Julia Murray pose with their new adaptive sports equipment provided by The Hartford

The Hartford also surprised 22-year-old Emma Papariella and 20-year-old Julia Murray, who both participate in blind hockey, with custom fit ice hockey equipment, including blind hockey pucks to use with their local team. In addition, The Hartford surprised Raffi Wilbur, who turned 10 years old on the day of the unveiling. Raffi received adaptive ski boots modified to fit his prosthetic legs as well as a new pair of skis and bindings. This equipment will allow Raffi to participate in one of his favorite activities, skiing, while having properly fitted and comfortable equipment.

Wendy Fagan, the executive director of Envision Blind Sports stated that “The grant from The Hartford and Move United will enable Envision Blind Sports to reach more blind athletes and provide them with adapted equipment to increase their participation in community and school sports and activities. The distribution of the equipment will also allow our organization to be an advocate for blind sports and educate teachers, families and community leaders about the opportunities available to blind athletes and how to adapt sports to make them more accessible. The mission of our organization is to increase opportunities for blind athletes and this grant will



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*Wendy Fagan, executive
director of Envision Blind
Sport*

provide us the ability to not only educate but provide key specialized equipment for free."

Envision provides year-round opportunities for their athletes including outdoor adventures, educational support, seasonal clinics, and an annual summer camp. The program is inclusive and welcoming of all blind and visually impaired athletes regardless of their age and even offers opportunities for families and friends of athletes to participate, as well. Each year, Envision reaches athletes from multiple states, the furthest being from Hawaii.

Their biggest upcoming event is the annual summer camp

this July that brings in 70-80 athletes and around 100 part-time and full-time volunteers. This year's camp will feature an extensive list of 25 different sports and activities including sailing, ice hockey, goalball, archery, and much more. Camp will be held at Penn State Behrend in Erie, PA and will include a few field trips to nearby ice rinks and state parks.

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