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Invisible Disabilities Champions Join the Expedition

Colorado-based Invisible Disabilities Association honors individuals and organizations from Colorado and around the nation at fifth annual awards banquet in Lone Tree, Colo., October 14, 2012.

Parker, Colo.—September 27, 2012— The Invisible Disabilities Association (IDA) will present honor awards to the following Colorado recipients. Frances Owens will receive the Volunteer Honors Award for her lifelong long, passionate volunteerism with multiple charities serving people living daily with illness and disability as well as those recovering from tragedy. Dr. Marshall Thomas will receive the Medical Honors Award for his passion to provide exceptional clinical care and research for patients living with mental health disorders through his leadership as the Executive Director of the University of Colorado's Depression Center. Dick Layton will receive the Founders Honors Award for his personal involvement with IDA's founder as a mentor and as a strategic advisor to the entire IDA organization. Nine other individuals and organizations will receive honor awards as well.

Nationally recognized radio host, Rick Crandall of KEZW 1430 AM will be the Master of Ceremonies. Roselyn Saunders, local community volunteer extraordinaire, is this year's Honorary Banquet Chair. Roselyn encourages everyone to "Join the Expedition" with her at this amazing event featuring keynote speakers, Antarctic Mike (Pierce) and his wife, Angela. Adventure sports have changed Mike's life in many ways, including teaching him the importance of being mentally focused and conditioned to run the most challenging and important marathon, that of helping Angela manage her lifetime disability.

"One of the most common things my wife hears is, 'But you look good!'" said Wayne Connell, founder and president of the Invisible Disabilities Association. "Even people who knew and loved Sherri just didn't understand what she was going through."

Sherri Connell led an active life as a singer, dancer, model and actor who enjoyed riding her horse. However, due to multiple sclerosis, Lyme disease and multiple chemical sensitivities, she now struggles to take a shower, get a meal, or go to a doctor's appointment.

"There is a tremendous need to raise awareness about diseases and chronic conditions that have significant impacts on people's lives, but are not physically apparent," said Connell. "Even people close to you may not understand what you are going through if you have a debilitating condition, because on the outside, you look the same."

Wayne continues "Believing a loved one when they say they are sick or in pain is the most important thing we can do. Just because we can't see from the outside, what they are battling on the inside doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Belief, validation and support can give a friend or family member the strength they need to continue the fight!"

The annual awards banquet is an opportunity to raise awareness and funds, and honor individuals and organizations making positive contributions to understanding and treating invisible disabilities.

IDA is also thrilled to have renowned St Louis based artist and IDA Ambassador, Russell Irwin paint an original Peyton Manning 24 X 30 portrait in acrylic autographed by both Russell and Peyton Manning. This painting will be the centerpiece of the live auction at the banquet.

Additional 2012 honors award recipients include:

Advocacy Award – Suzanne Mintz, CEO and Founder– National Family Caregivers Association - www.nfcacares.org

Caregiver Award – John O'Brien, CEO and Co-Founder - Central Coast Senior Services, Inc. - www.centralcoastseniorservices.com

Corporate Award - Deborah Marriott Harrison, Senior Vice President – Marriott International, Inc. - www.marriott.com

Healthcare Award - Kermit Crawford, President – Walgreens - Pharmacy, Health and Wellness Services and Solutions – www.walgreens.com

Impact Award - Jan Chambers, President - National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association - www.fmcpaware.org

Inspiration Award - Bob Woodruff, Founder – Bob Woodruff Foundation – www.remind.org

Invisible Hero Award Anna Bigham, Founder and Executive Director - Hidden Wounds - www.hiddenwounds.org

Perseverance Award - Angela Pierce - www.fallingoffthemountain.com

Research Award – Esteem Implant - Envoy Medical Corporation - www.envoymedical.com

Banquet details:

Date: Sunday October 14, 2012

Place: Marriott Denver South 10345 Park Meadows Drive Lone Tree, CO

Time: 5:00 Registration & Silent Auction - 6:15 Dinner & Program

Tickets \$75 Guest. \$150 Patron. Corporate sponsorships available.

Live and silent auction items needed.

Business, dressy attire or expedition wear.

RSVP at www.JoinTheExpedition.org

ABOUT IDA

The Invisible Disabilities Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Parker, CO which encourages, educates and connects people and organizations touched by illness, pain and injury around the globe through its website, online social network, literature, projects and seminars. For more information, visit www.invisibledisabilities.org.

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