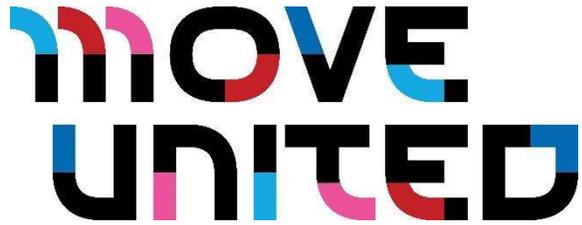


Move United Media Toolkit & Disability Etiquette Guide



A comprehensive resource for media professionals covering adaptive sports and the disability community

Quick Reference

Move United uses sports to push what's possible so everyone, regardless of ability, has equal access to sports and recreation in their community.

Mission and Vision: Move United's vision is that every person, regardless of ability, has an equal opportunity to participate in sports and recreation in their community. Our mission is to provide national leadership and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, confidence, and fitness through participation in community sports, including competition, recreation and educational programs.

Founded: 1956

Locations: 245+ community organizations in 45 states + DC

People Served: 131,000+ annually

Key Fact: We're the largest nonprofit provider of adaptive sports to injured veterans (2,000+ annually)

Table Of Contents

1. [About Move United](#)
2. [Key Programs](#)
3. [Language Guidelines](#)
4. [Media Best Practices](#)
5. [Quick Reference Guide](#)

6. [Resources & Contacts](#)

About Move United

Our Story

Since 1956, Move United has been redefining disability through adaptive sports. We provide year-round opportunities through our national network of 245+ community organizations, serving 125,000+ individuals with disabilities annually across 70+ adaptive sports.

Recognition & Accreditation

- U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee affiliate
- USOPC Amazing Leader Award (2019) and Rings of Gold Award (2024)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award (2021)
- Forbes Accessibility 100 List (2025)
- Better Business Bureau highest accreditation
- GuideStar Platinum charity

Our Brand

Move United's name reflects our vision to lead a united movement. Our logo is based on deconstructing and reconstructing the word "disability," while our patchwork design represents the community-based organizations that are our foundation.

The Power of Sport

Sports make us more—more determined, more powerful, more ourselves. This truth applies to everyone, regardless of ability. Through adaptive sports, we show what people with disabilities are capable of, challenge perceptions, and build inclusive communities.

Sport has the power to change the world, pushing people further and bringing people closer together.

Key Programs

Move United Warfighters

The largest nonprofit provider of adaptive sports to injured veterans, serving 2,000+ veterans and family members annually at no cost.

Competition Programs

- **The Hartford Nationals:** North America's oldest and largest multi-sport event for athletes with physical disabilities (400+ athletes annually)
- **30+ sanctioned competitions** across the United States
- **USA Wheelchair Football League**
- **Move United Adaptive Shooting League**

Other Programs and Initiatives

- The Hartford Ski Spectacular
 - Annual Education Conference
 - Training seminars, sports guides, and other educational products
 - Recreational programs through our 245+ member organization network
 - Distributed over \$2.5 million in grants to local adaptive sports organizations
 - Grants for adaptive equipment and training/travel support for individuals
 - Adaptive sports magazine and weekly podcast
 - National Adaptive Sports Hall of Fame
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Language Guidelines

Person-First Language

People should not be defined by their disability. Reference disability only when relevant to the story.

✓ DO SAY	✗ DON'T SAY
People with a disability	The disabled
Tonya has a physical disability	Tonya is a paraplegic/crippled
Joe uses a wheelchair	Joe is confined to/wheelchair bound
Sam has a congenital condition	Sam has a birth defect
Accessible parking	Handicapped parking
Bobby needs or uses...	Bobby has special needs/problems
Claire is a little person	Claire is a dwarf/midget*

*Note: "Dwarfism" is acceptable medical terminology but can be offensive in non-medical contexts.

Key Terms to Avoid

- "Suffers from" or "victim of" (implies reduced quality of life)
 - "Confined to" or "wheelchair-bound" (wheelchairs liberate, don't confine)
 - "Special needs" (everyone has needs)
-

Media Best Practices

1. Perspiration Over Inspiration

- **Show capability, not just inspiration.** Athletes with disabilities are skilled competitors, not just inspirational figures.
- **Avoid "inspiration porn"** - Don't portray ordinary activities as automatically inspirational simply because someone has a disability.
- **Frame stories authentically** - Not every story needs to be about "overcoming obstacles." Focus on athletic performance, strategy, and achievement.

2. Just Ask

- **Ask directly** - Speak to the athlete, not their companion or interpreter.
- **Ask about specifics** - How does their equipment work? What's their training like? What are their goals?
- **When in doubt, ask** - "How would you like me to describe your disability in this story?"

3. Story Relevance

- **Only mention disability when relevant** - If covering adaptive sports, disability is relevant. If covering unrelated news, it may not be.
- **Focus on the whole person** - Include interests, achievements, and personality beyond their disability.

Adaptive Sports Terminology

Key Definitions

- **Adaptive/Para Sports:** Competitive or recreational sports modified for people with disabilities
- **Paralympic:** From Greek "para" (alongside) + "Olympic" - parallel games existing side-by-side with Olympics
- **Adaptive Equipment:** Tools modified to enable participation (sport-specific or everyday use)
- **Classification:** System ensuring fair competition by grouping athletes with similar functional abilities

Common Sports Categories

- **Amputee Sports:** For athletes with limb differences
 - **Wheelchair Sports:** Racing, basketball, tennis, rugby, etc.
 - **Visually Impaired Sports:** With guides or audio cues
 - **Intellectual Disability Sports:** Modified rules or formats
 - **Multi-Class Events:** Multiple disability categories competing together
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Quick Reference Guide

Story Angles to Consider

- Athletic achievement and competition
- Training methods and techniques
- Equipment innovation
- Team dynamics and coaching
- Career goals and professional development
- Community impact and accessibility

Questions to Ask Athletes

- "What's your training routine like?"
- "How does your equipment give you an advantage?"
- "What are your competitive goals?"
- "How did you get started in this sport?"
- "What misconceptions would you like to address?"

Red Flag Phrases to Avoid

- "Despite their disability..."
 - "Inspiring just by participating..."
 - "Normal people vs. disabled people"
 - "Brave" (for ordinary activities)
 - "Victim" or "suffers from"
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Resources & Contacts

Move United Information

- **Website:** moveunitedsport.org
- **Adaptive Sports Directory:** moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-sports/
- **Local Organizations:** moveunitedsport.org/locations/

Additional Resources

- **National Center on Disability and Journalism (NCDJ):** ncdj.org
- **U.S. Paralympic Committee:** teamusa.org/us-paralympics
- **Disability Language Guide:** ncdj.org/style-guide/

Media Contacts

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*Last updated: January 2026