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MEDIA RELEASE

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TEAM JIGGER FOUNDATION LAUNCHES CHAIR AWARE 2021

(Lacombe, Alberta)

To experience true empathy and understanding of another's perspective, struggles and motivations one must 'walk a mile in their shoes', as the idiom goes.

But what if walking isn't an option?

The Team Jigger Foundation has partnered with MNP and is pleased to announce their first ever 'Chair Aware' event: a fundraiser geared towards identifying and understanding the barriers and struggles that the mobility challenged face each and every day.

From September 20th – 24th, 2021, participants will experience an 8-hour glimpse into the lives of the mobility challenged by dedicating themselves to a wheelchair and attempting to make it through the day as they normally would. Seemingly simple tasks, such as crossing the street onto a sidewalk, shopping for groceries, fueling a vehicle or entering their place of work may present a new level of complexity that would otherwise go unnoticed.

"The point of Chair Aware is not to belittle or lessen the personal and intimate challenges faced by individuals who live with mobility issues," says Jason "Jigger" Lunn, founder of the Team Jigger Foundation. "The point is to allow able bodied people to experience a limitation that is a daily part of life for us, and to take this experience forward with them when considering accessibility and inclusion issues in their future."

Confined to a chair himself after a high speed collision in 2011 that resulted in a STARS Air Ambulance ride and months of recovery, Lunn founded the Team Jigger Foundation to provide needed resources and fill the gap between injury and rehabilitation.

"Our foundation works on three fronts," Lunn says, "First, to raise awareness of accessibility issues and barriers in our community and throughout Central Alberta. Second, to provide mentorship, resources and assistance to those born with or experiencing a loss of mobility or function. And third, to acquire

specialized physiotherapy equipment that has been modified for paraplegics, quadriplegics, brain injury recoveries, MS patients, those with balance or cardiovascular issues, amputees or degenerative conditions – you name it – we want to ensure they have access to equipment not normally available at a physiotherapist or hospital to help contribute to their recovery physically and mentally, and to reach the peak of their adjusted ability.”

Those pieces of equipment are not only uncommon, they are also expensive. That’s why participants of Chair Aware will be soliciting donations in addition to experiencing the sometimes-frustrating restrictions of a wheelchair.

Originally planned for May, but rescheduled due to COVID-19 restrictions, the goal of Chair Aware is to raise enough money to fund the purchase of additional modified equipment for the Lacombe-based Team Jigger Foundation.

“Once our Lacombe location is fully equipped, we will be able to focus our attention on outlying communities and ensure their accessibility needs are being met.” Says Lunn. “The board, volunteers, supporters and donors of the Team Jigger Foundation have big dreams, and each event, each piece of equipment, each individual or family or community that we help is forward momentum in realizing those dreams.”

“This event struck a chord with us at MNP,” says Angela Law, both a Board member with Team Jigger and a Partner at MNP. “Most everyone knows somebody who has experienced a loss or decline of mobility through an accident or disease. Not all of us stop to think about the everyday challenges and restrictions that able bodied individuals may take for granted. The work the Team Jigger Foundation is doing is something MNP can get behind, and we hope to make a huge difference in the lives of Central Albertans”.

MNP will have participants at many of their Central Alberta offices, and will be assisting in the organization and execution of this inaugural event. Seats will be limited, so those wishing to participate are encouraged to reach out early.

“It’s going to be huge,” says Lunn, “and when our participation is maxed out, there will still be opportunities to volunteer to help make this awareness event as successful as possible.”

The Team Jigger Foundation Chair Aware Event, in partnership with MNP, runs September 20th to 24th throughout Central Alberta. Anyone interested in participating, donating or volunteering can visit www.teamjigger.com or call (825) 640-8326 for further details.

“We hope this is the first of many awareness events” adds Law, “and that the generosity, compassion and understanding of Central Alberta will shine like it always has.”

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