



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**NORTH SUBURBAN YMCA**  
2705 Techny Road  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
[www.nsymca.org](http://www.nsymca.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Journey of Hope Bike Team Returns to YMCA for Wheels vs. Wheels 2017**

**Northbrook, IL** – The North Suburban YMCA will welcome the Journey of Hope cross-country bike team for their eighth annual friendship visit on July 25. They will be joined by wheelchair athletes from the [Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association](#) (GLASA), as well as players from the Northwestern University football team and [North Shore Youth Football](#). This annual event educates and encourages children and adults to participate in “play” and athletics regardless of a disability or special needs. This event encourages families that no one should sit on the sidelines.

Open to the community, everyone is invited to experience this high energy sport, through the eyes of disabled athletes. The event will be held at the Y, located at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook, beginning at 6:30pm.

The annual Journey of Hope cross-country ride is sponsored by [The Ability Experience](#), a national philanthropic organization of the Pi Kappa Phi national fraternity. The ride is completed by fraternity members of [Pi Kappa Phi](#), who travel 4,000 miles together from the West Coast to Washington, D.C. The vision of the organization is to “create a community, one relationship at a time, where the abilities of all people are recognized and valued.”

Attendees and [North Shore Youth Football](#) will be invited to meet the players and run football drills while experiencing the challenges of wheelchairs. Demonstrations and the Northwestern University Football “meet and greet” will begin at 6:30 pm. Immediately following, GLASA wheelchair participants and Journey of Hope cyclers will face off in a friendly, high-energy “Wheels vs. Wheels” wheelchair football game.

Pat and Stacy Fitzgerald, head coach of Northwestern Wildcats Football and President of North Shore Youth Football respectively, will be supporting the event again this year. The Fitzgeralds were honored for this support at the NSYMCA Strong Kids Dinner last March.

“We’re thrilled to welcome these outstanding organizations back to the Y for our second Wheels vs. Wheels event,” says Kim Nyren, NSYMCA Director of Community Investment. “The Journey of Hope team’s visit has become a cherished Y tradition, and our partnerships with GLASA, Northwestern Football, and North Shore Youth Football have expanded the event to bring a wider spectrum of the community together. Everyone is invited to meet these athletes and share in their inspiring experience.”

Thanks to the success of last year's event, the Y has new supporters including Whitehall of Deerfield, BY YOUR SIDE Autism Centers, and Waterway Carwash. "Amazing partnerships like these make events like this possible," adds Kim Nyren.

The NSYMCA provides high quality, inclusive opportunities in dance, yoga, art, fitness, and aquatics for children with special needs so they can learn, play, and interact with their peers within the context of the YMCA community. Children in the programs learn confidence, responsibility, and social skills while making new friends and developing important character traits in a supportive, nurturing environment under the guidance of highly qualified Y staff.

This unique event is free and open to the public. The Y encourages families to come dressed in their favorite team football jerseys.

Guests are asked to RSVP for the event by July 20 by calling the Y at (847) 272-7250 x. 1215 or emailing Kelly Clippinger at [kclippinger@nsymca.org](mailto:kclippinger@nsymca.org).

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#### **About the [North Suburban YMCA](#)**

The North Suburban YMCA serves 15 northern suburbs of Chicago, and for over 48 years has provided programs and services that address youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility every day. Working together for good is who we are: An association of people united in a common effort to help individuals become healthier, more connected, and confident. There is no other nonprofit quite like the Y: We have the national and local presence and partnerships to not just promise, but deliver, positive change, making sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. For more information, visit [NSYMCA.org](http://NSYMCA.org).

#### **About [The Ability Experience](#)**

Founded in 1977 as Push America, The Ability Experience is the national philanthropy of Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity. Its mission is to instill lifelong service in its members and enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities. The organization uses shared experiences to support people with disabilities and develop the men of Pi Kappa Phi into servant leaders. Their vision is to create a community, one relationship at a time, where the abilities of all people are recognized and valued through programs that support their core values (abilities, teamwork, empathy, and integrity) while serving others. For more information, visit [AbilityExperience.org](http://AbilityExperience.org)

#### **About the [Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association](#)**

GLASA operates under a mission to promote and support optimal development and well-being of youth, adults, and military veterans, who have physical or visual disability through the provision of inclusive recreation, fitness, and competitive sports activities. Founded in 1999, the agency strive to provide health and wellness programming to a segment of the population that is not often served by traditional physical activities and health promotion programs. Today the organization reaches over 3,000 youth and

adults each year through education and outreach initiatives. To learn more about GLASA, please visit [GLASA.org](http://GLASA.org).

**About [North Shore Youth Football](#)**

North Shore Youth Football participates in The Chicagoland Youth Football League (TCYFL), the largest independent youth football organization in the country with over 48 participating communities. The NSYF creates better competition and fair play opportunities for all, offering tackle football for ages 6 thru 14 and is the only youth organization in the North Shore area to offer safe, tackle football for 6-9 year olds. For more information, visit [NorthShoreYouthFootballClub.org](http://NorthShoreYouthFootballClub.org).

**About [Whitehall of Deerfield](#)**

With the luxury and comforts of a hotel getaway, Whitehall of Deerfield delivers superior post-hospital rehabilitation following orthopedic surgery, hip fractures, strokes, cardiac illness and other medical conditions. Reflecting the highest standards of clinical care and outcomes, Whitehall of Deerfield received Medicare's highest rating five-star quality rating. [www.whitehallofdeerfield.com](http://www.whitehallofdeerfield.com)

**About [BY YOUR SIDE Autism Centers & Therapy Services](#):**

For the past 8 years BY YOUR SIDE has offered a variety of services to assist clients on the autism spectrum, ranging from age two to twenty one. At the BY YOUR SIDE centers clients are evaluated and, depending on individual needs, receive ABA, speech & language, augmented alternative communication, feeding, occupational, cognitive therapy and social groups. The BY YOUR SIDE centers are specifically designed to emulate a home-like environment so it is familiar, less stressful, and helps to make the therapy more relevant. BY YOUR SIDE also offers ABA therapy to families in their homes. The particular approach that BY YOUR SIDE takes is unique and centered around building communication skills. To set up an evaluation for your child, call 866-4-BYS KIDS (866-429-7543) or visit [www.byoursideac.com](http://www.byoursideac.com) to begin the enrollment process.



*Photo Caption: The Ability Experience's "Journey of Hope" cross-country bike riding team will return to the North Suburban YMCA on July 25 for an evening of inclusive football-based fun, open to all children and their families.*



*Photo Caption: Athletes from the GLASA Wheelchair Football League will play a "Wheels vs. Wheels" football game with the Journey of Hope bike team and Northwestern Football players at the North Suburban YMCA on July 25.*