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NON-COMPETITIVE DIVISION

Leveraging All Abilities for a True Whole Community

What do Tamika Catchings, Marla Runyan, Erik Weihenmayer, Noah Galloway, and Shaquem Griffin have in common?

On the surface, not much:

- Tamika Catchings starred on the University of Tennessee women's basketball team from 1997-2001 and won four Olympic gold medals;
- Marla Runyan placed eighth in the 1,500 meter at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the highest finish by an American woman at that event;
- Erik Weihenmayer reached the summit of Mount Everest on May 25, 2001;
- Noah Galloway was a third place finalist on Dancing with the Stars; and
- Shaquem Griffin signed a four year NFL contract worth \$3,258,620.

They're all more athletically gifted than most of us; they're also differently-abled. Though they may be more famous, they are not the exception. Every

community has a wealth of similarly talented people ready to collaborate on emergency plans, participate in exercises, or help in any way that's needed.

2010 U.S. Census records showed 19% of the population with a disability. With ever-shrinking funding, emergency managers cannot afford to overlook a fifth of their communities. They must be aware of opportunities to engage and utilize everyone for a true whole community approach. How can we better partner for comprehensive functional and access needs inclusion? How can we create a culture in which someone using a wheelchair or an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter becomes the norm?

Our poster will consist of qualitative interview data and a literature review, and will include examples of ways to engage anyone in all phases of emergency management.