

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National #BlindSportsDay – October 6, 2018

Hundreds of Americans with visual impairments to engage in sporting events across the U.S.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (September 27, 2018) – NewView Oklahoma and OKC RIVERSPORT will be participating in National Blind Sports Day on Saturday, October 6 at the Chesapeake Boathouse.

The United States Association of Blind Athletes has established a day dedicated to providing Americans who are blind and visually impaired with opportunities to participate in a variety of sports and physical activities, and to raise awareness of blind sports in our society. National Blind Sports Day (October 6, 2018) is a day in which people across the U.S., visually impaired and sighted, can engage in sports and fitness in their local communities. The date coincides with Blindness Awareness Month which also includes World Sight Day (October 11) and White Cane Day (October 15).

“The goal of National Blind Sports Day aligns with the vision of our organization,” said Mark Lucas, Executive Director at U.S. Association of Blind Athletes. “That every American who is blind or visually impaired will lead a healthy lifestyle by actively participating in sports, recreation and physical activity.”

The NewView Oklahoma adaptive dragon boat team, The Drifters, and adaptive rowing team, The Vipers will be participating in a demonstration beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Chesapeake Boathouse on the Oklahoma River. Representatives from NewView and RIVERSPORT will be on-hand to answer any questions and give the public an opportunity to learn more about getting involved in the sports of rowing and dragon boating.

“We’ve partnered with New View for many years and are pleased to be able to get these athletes on the water,” said Mike Knopp, executive director of the OKC Boathouse Foundation and RIVERSPORT. “We have a great group of sighted volunteers led by Gary Mayo who make this program possible. And you should come out to see these teams race. They’re very competitive.”

Obesity rates are oftentimes higher among people with visual impairments due to the barriers and misconceptions about their abilities. More than half of the people who are blind and visually impaired in the United States do not participate in even a limited physical fitness routine, but research has shown when those individuals become active with the goal of improving their health, they have higher energy levels, a lower risk of health-related diseases, improved psychological health, and lower rates of depression and anxiety.

“This is a great opportunity for those in the community to see our teams in action,” said Lauren Branch, president and CEO of NewView. “It’s also an opportunity for people to understand that just because someone lives with a visual impairment, it doesn’t mean they can’t live a full life and participate in sports and other physical activities.”

At the time of this release, 24 cities across 15 states are hosting events in celebration of National Blind Sports Day. Visit www.usaba.org/blindsportsday for a current list of participating organizations and agencies. Events include tandem bike rides, 5k walk/run, a blind soccer clinic, [goalball](#) games, a beep kick ball tournament and more. Individuals are encouraged to participate, even if there is not an event near them, by doing any fitness activity and posting about it on social media using the hashtag **#BlindSportsDay**.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES: Media representatives are invited to capture coverage of the NBSD event and/or conduct interviews with participants to help raise awareness about sporting opportunities available to individuals who are blind and visually impaired, and how these athletes' lives are being positively impacted through sport.

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About NewView Oklahoma:

NewView Oklahoma is a private, not-for-profit organization founded in 1949 with a mission to empower people who are blind and visually impaired to achieve their maximum level of independence through employment, low vision rehabilitation, and community outreach. NewView Oklahoma is the leading employer of the blind and visually impaired individuals in Oklahoma and offers the only comprehensive Low Vision clinics in the state. Visit online at www.newviewoklahoma.org or follow on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#).

About the OKC Boathouse Foundation:

The OKC Boathouse Foundation promotes the use and development of the Oklahoma River as a world-class urban aquatic venue and provides access to rowing, kayaking and fitness programs for people of all ages and abilities. OKCBF programs pursue the highest goals of sports and embrace the principles of the Olympic spirit, which inspire athletes to work toward personal excellence, embrace the power of teamwork, and practice respect for all people and the environment. To learn more or get involved, call (405) 552-4040 or visit riversportokc.org.

About U.S. Association of Blind Athletes

Since its founding in 1976, USABA, a community-based organization of the United States Olympic Committee, has reached more than 100,000 blind individuals. The organization has emerged as more than just a world-class trainer of blind athletes, it has become a champion of the abilities of Americans who are legally blind. USABA's mission: to empower Americans who are blind and visually impaired to experience life-changing opportunities in sports, recreation and physical activities, thereby educating and inspiring the nation. www.usaba.org | Twitter: [@USABA](#) | Facebook: [United States Association of Blind Athletes](#)