

# THE JOSEPH GROH FOUNDATION

*A Beacon of Hope*

## *The Lighthouse - From Our Founder Joe Groh*

Welcome to the Winter-Spring edition of the Lighthouse! Here in Texas, that means a pretty nice winter overall is giving way to the blooming of red buds and the sound of lawns being mowed. The talk of baseball is in the air and the Rangers are in first place – but the season has a long way to go! The Dallas golf tournament is one month away and we have added a fourth tournament this year, see details for all our tournaments below. In December, members of the foundation attended the annual meeting of HARDI, a major Association for the distribution segment of the HVACR (heating, ventilation, air conditioning & refrigeration) industry. Read this article to see why. It never ceases to amaze me what people can accomplish who have been marginalized by mainstream society because of their disability. See what Aaron Fotheringham has to say about all this. Assistive technology is a term we use a lot at the foundation, read more about what it entails, and more importantly, what it has done for people with disabilities. The organization we profiled in the last newsletter, Service Nation, held a charity auction at their recent meeting in Nashville. Read about the results below. In 2022 the foundation launched a program called Luminary, which is a subscription program allowing individuals to help support our organization for as little as \$10 per month. Recently, the foundation launched a program whereby businesses of all types can support the foundation in many different ways, and we call it the Business Partner Program. See our article for more details. Finally, your favorite column (or at least mine) – A Day in the Life. Enjoy!

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Special Points of Interest

- HARDI Meeting
- Charity Success
- Business Partner Program





# GOLF EVENTS

*The Joseph Groh Foundation*



## **DALLAS, MAY 1: HERITAGE RANCH GC, FAIRVIEW, TEXAS**

THE FIRST EVENT OF THE 2023 GOLF SEASON FOR THE FOUNDATION WILL BE HELD AT HERITAGE RANCH GC. LOCATED IN A 55+ COMMUNITY, THIS COURSE WAS RATED #3 IN DALLAS-FORT WORTH EAST BY AVID GOLFER IN 2020. THE SCENIC COURSE FEATURES ROLLING TERRAIN, STRATEGICALLY INCORPORATED WATER FEATURES, AND AGED TREES LINING ITS FAIRWAYS.

## **MINNEAPOLIS, JULY 17: LINKS AT NORTH FORK, RAMSEY, MINNESOTA**

THE SECOND EVENT OF THE 2023 GOLF SEASON FOR THE FOUNDATION WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE LINKS AT NORTH FORK. THIS TRUE SCOTTISH LINKS-STYLE GOLF COURSE HAS PLAYED HOST TO PRESTIGIOUS GOLF TOURNAMENTS SUCH AS THE US OPEN QUALIFIER AND THE SENIOR PGA 3M QUALIFIER. RATED 4 STARS BY GOLF DIGEST, THE LINKS IS HOME TO THE MOST COMPLETE PRACTICE FACILITY IN THE TWIN CITIES.

## **CHICAGO, SEPTEMBER 25: SEVEN BRIDGES GC, WOODRIDGE, ILLINOIS**

THE THIRD EVENT OF THE 2023 GOLF SEASON FOR THE FOUNDATION WILL BE HELD AT SEVEN BRIDGES GC. RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE TOP FIVE PUBLIC COURSES IN THE CHICAGOLAND AREA, SEVEN BRIDGES HAS BEEN RENOWNED AS ONE OF THE BEST PUBLIC ACCESS FACILITIES IN THE MIDWEST SINCE 1991. THE FINELY MANICURED COURSE FEATURES 100-YEAR-OLD OAKS, PICTURESQUE VIEWS, AND AT LEAST 7 BRIDGES.

## **PHOENIX, OCTOBER 2: THE RAVEN GC, PHOENIX, ARIZONA**

THE FOURTH AND FINAL EVENT OF THE 2023 GOLF SEASON FOR THE FOUNDATION WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE RAVEN GC. THIS TOP DAILY FEE GOLF PROPERTY HAS EARNED RECOGNITION AS ONE OF THE NATION'S BEST, INCLUDING 4.5 STARS BY GOLF DIGEST AND THE #1 GUEST SERVICE IN NORTH AMERICA. THE COURSE IS HOME TO 5,000 PINE TREES, MANICURED GREENS, AND AN EXPANSIVE PRACTICE FACILITY, MAKING FOR A DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE IN THE SHADOWS OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN.



# HARDI ANNUAL MEETING 2023

In early December, HARDI (Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Distributors International) held its annual meeting in Houston. John and Vicki Laplant and Eric Groh attended from the foundation. Why were we there? Today, HARDI represents more than 400 wholesale companies, nearly 300 manufacturing associates, and nearly 100 manufacturer representatives in the HVAC and refrigeration industries. It is estimated that members of this organization represent 70% of the dollar value of HVACR products sold through distribution, so the foundation was there to make new contacts. The Association exists to provide a means of disseminating information to its members while communicating with other segments of the industry. HARDI it is now the single marketing and distribution resource devoted to the advancement of the science of distributing products and supplies to the HVACR industry. John, Vicki and Eric made personal connections with such diverse organizations as Meritage Builders, CGNA Controls Group, Dispatchit Delivery Services, OxBox HVAC by Trane to a number of distributors and manufacturers representatives. We look forward to deepening our relationship with HARDI and its member companies to expand the awareness of the Joseph Groh Foundation.

**6 in 10**  
people worry  
about the  
financial impact  
of a disability,  
yet only **30%**  
own disability  
insurance.



Source: LIMRA and Life Happens 2013 Insurance Barometer Study

*Protect your paycheck with disability insurance.*

**Small business owners, are you looking for a way to protect your business and employees from unexpected illnesses, injuries, and accidents? We're here to help. Short-term and long-term disability insurance policies offer coverage for illnesses, injuries, and accidents, providing peace of mind for both you and your employees. Disability insurance is a valuable benefit that can help retain employees and attract top talent, and it offers a tremendous benefit for your employees that they may not even be aware of! Contact Chris Lane at Hashtag Insurance today at 972-905-9779 to learn more about how you can get started and help protect your business and its most valuable asset: your employees.**



# AARON FOTHERINGHAM

## Someone you should know:

### TAKING IT TO THE EXTREME:

Aaron is an extreme wheelchair athlete – yes, you are reading this correctly – who performs tricks adapted from skateboarding and BMX. Who knew there was such an activity? Aaron was born in Las Vegas in 1991. He was born with spina bifida, a birth defect of the spinal cord which resulted in him having no use of his legs. He is the third of six children, all adopted. As a baby, Aaron rolled over, sat up and even crawled on his hands and belly pretty much on schedule. He mastered crutches quickly, believing he could fly just like any other 4-year-old. At the age of eight he received his first wheelchair. He would accompany his brother to the skate park where he would watch him ride his BMX.

One day his brother told him he should try riding his chair in the park. His dad gave him the thumbs up, so they helped him get his chair up a 4 foot quarter pipe. It was scary, and the first time he fell – hard. Multiple tries resulted in multiple falls, but finally, he dropped in and rode away – and he was hooked! At the beginning of his career Aaron entered and won a few BMX Freestyle competitions, but that was always secondary to the joy of riding and hanging out with friends at the skate parks of Las Vegas. In 2005 he won the legendary Vegas AmJam BMX Finals, and in 2006 he placed fourth in the intermediate BMX division. Over the years, Aaron has challenged himself to pioneer even more difficult stunts. In 2005, he perfected a mid-air 180-degree turn. Then on July 13th, 2006, he landed the first wheelchair backflip. Four years later he landed the first ever double backflip.

However, there are also some items that are indeed being used but are no longer trending, so the price is not so expensive and still affordable, but this thrifting phenomenon is a shocking phenomenon where many collectors make a lot of profit from the sale of these second-hand goods, and it is also an advantage for people who want to buy branded goods but have limitations with budget thrifting.

*Your generosity has allowed us to fund 103 grants to families across the country in 33 states spanning more than a decade. Help us reach even more!*



**Board Memembers John and Vicki!!**



**Service Nation's Jim Hinshaw!!**

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# INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE AND CHARITY AUCTION EVENT

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The Joseph Groh Foundation recently held a charity auction at the International Roundtable event in Nashville, and it proved to be a remarkable success. The foundation, which is dedicated to providing financial support to individuals who have suffered catastrophic injuries, raised a total of \$34,400 during the event, \$28,000 of which came from the live auction portion of the event and \$6,400 from the silent auction.

The event, which took place on April 4th, 2023, was attended by a diverse group of individuals from all over the country who came together to support the foundation's mission. One of the highlights of the auction was a personalized coaching engagement with Service Nation Vice President of Sales, Jim Hinshaw. The winning bid for the experience was \$8,000, which went a long way toward contributing to the overall success of the event.

The silent auction also featured a number of highly desirable items, including jewelry, artwork, and gift certificates to popular restaurants and retailers. Bidders had the opportunity to bid on these items throughout the evening, with the winners being announced at the end of the event.

We are incredibly grateful to all those who attended and supported the event. We'd also like to thank all of our donors from this event; Service Nation, Jim Hinshaw, Daikin Comfort Technologies, Ultimate Technician, Go-Time University, Comprehensive Employment Services, and Ferguson. The foundation greatly appreciates you all. The funds raised will go towards supporting our important mission of providing financial assistance to those in the contracting industry who are living with life-altering disabilities.

Overall, the Joseph Groh Foundation's charity auction at the International Roundtable event in Nashville was a resounding success. The Joseph Groh Foundation is the official charity of Service Nation, and the result of these auctions show what can be accomplished when a leading and caring organization marries a truly worthwhile cause with its generous customers. It is truly a testament to the power of community and the generosity of those who support important causes. The event was a testament to the power of community and the generosity of those who support important causes.

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# Assistive Technology

## AN ENABLING FORCE FOR DIABILITIES

During World War II, paralyzed soldiers who survived their wounds were typically left in a military hospital until they died. In 1958, paralyzed Brooklyn Dodgers star Roy Campanella was one of the first to be cared for by a pioneering doctor who believed rehabilitation from such devastating injuries was possible. In the 1970s Joni Eareckson Tada learned to write and paint, using her mouth. In 1990, Dragon released the world's first voice recognition system for consumers. The technology explosion since then has turned the lives of disabled individuals into an existence that was merely the dream of people like Roy Campanella. The collection of such technology to assist those with disabilities has become known as Assistive Technology, and some of its key elements are discussed here.



***Grant Recipient with Assistive  
Technology on the Move***

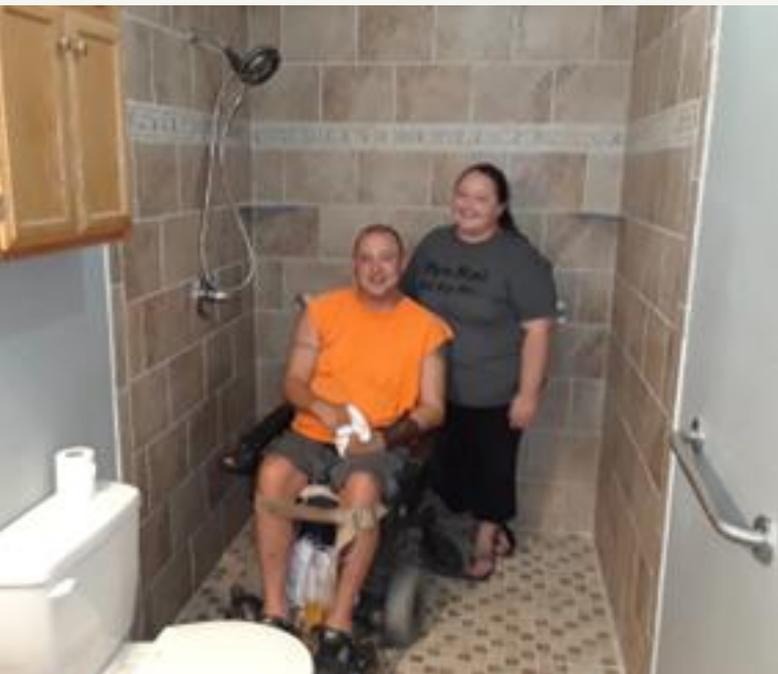
**Voice Recognition Software** – is perhaps the most widely known type of assistive technology. Dragon NaturallySpeaking not only enables those with disabilities to interact with a computer, it also improves the efficiencies of medical doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. With nothing more than one's voice, the software allows an individual to interact with a computer the way any able-bodied person would to produce documents, spreadsheets, presentations, surf the Internet, and much more. In fact, this article is being written with the assistance of Dragon NaturallySpeaking 15.0 software.

**Smart Thermostats** – allow anyone to interact with their thermostat from literally anywhere in the world, using just their phone.

**Amazon Alexa/Google Home** – through the use of voice, these smart speakers allow anyone to listen to music, the radio, and set alarms and reminders. When coupled with smart lights, smart plugs, and other smart devices, users can activate/deactivate lighting, appliances, and televisions/TV programming throughout the home with just their voice. They can also operate smart thermostats, smart window coverings, door locks, security cameras, garage door openers, open/close entry doors, and more.

# BUSINESS PARTNER PROGRAM

THE JOSEPH GROH FOUNDATION BUSINESS PARTNER PROGRAM OFFERS INFINITE WAYS THAT OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS CAN GIVE BACK TO OUR INDUSTRY IN AN IMPACTFUL WAY



## ***Support the Foundation:***

Now there are more ways than ever to participate with our foundation to help make people from the trades who are living with life-altering disabilities more independent, more productive, and live with greater dignity. It started in 2010 with one golf tournament in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In 2014 we added a second tournament in the Chicagoland area, and in 2016 we added a third in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. These golf tournaments primarily attracted business organizations in the HVAC industry. In 2021 we launched a program called Luminary which provided a means by which individuals could participate with the foundation for as little as \$10 per month. That program exceeded our expectations in its first year and is growing in year two. Now we are launching an expansive program for businesses to participate with the foundation in ways other than golf. We are calling this our business partner program. There is a separate tab on the website for this program, and we have shown its' brochure below. Feel free to contact us about how your organization can participate with us, simply send an email to; [eric.groh@josephgrohfoundation.org](mailto:eric.groh@josephgrohfoundation.org)

## BECOME A JOSEPH GROH FOUNDATION BUSINESS PARTNER TODAY!

### WHAT IS THE BUSINESS PARTNER PROGRAM?

Did you know that our industry peers who experience a spinal cord injury can incur \$5 million in health care expenses over their lifetime?

Driven by the mission that people aren't defined by their disabilities, the Joseph Groh Foundation is dedicated to assisting those living with life altering disabilities in the contracting and construction trades.

We are the only volunteer-led foundation specifically dedicated to individuals in the contracting and construction trades industry, and we are powered entirely by volunteers. To extend our impact, we're asking you to become a Joseph Groh Foundation Business Partner today.

The Joseph Groh Foundation Business Partner program offers infinite ways that our business partners can give back to our industry in an impactful way. From self-led volunteer days to employer match programs, cause marketing or giving for a legacy, your sponsorship will support the individuals who drive our industry forward every day.



### PROVIDING HELP TO 32 STATES:

- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Montana
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wisconsin

### EVENT & FUNDRAISING EXAMPLES

#### PLANNED GIVING

- Monthly or annual pledge of funds
- Employer match program – match up to dollar-for-dollar employee luminary contributions to the foundation
- Title, Platinum, Gold or other golf tournament sponsorship at any of our tournaments around the country
- Guidance from one of our board members to assist with planning

#### VOLUNTEER FOR A DAY AT AN EXISTING FOUNDATION EVENT

#### CAUSE MARKETING

- Support a specific foundation grant recipient or cause by raising and donating funds
- Promoting the foundation on social media
- Virtual visit from a board member to promote the luminary program (lunch and learn)

#### PRODUCT OR SERVICE DONATIONS

- Rehabilitative or assistive technology products
- Wheelchair accessible vans
- Medical devices
- Remodel labor, equipment or services

**CONTACT US TODAY AT [HOPE@JOSEPHGROHFOUNDATION.ORG](mailto:HOPE@JOSEPHGROHFOUNDATION.ORG)**

# *A Day in the Life*

**This feature is a sometimes humorous, sometimes offbeat, and sometimes irreverent look at life as seen through the eyes of a severely disabled person. Management takes no responsibility for these ramblings.**

## You Must Be Your Own Best Advocate.

Very recently my sister who is two years older than me passed away from breast cancer. When it became clear that her case was imminent and terminal, we sought the help of hospice. Hospice is not an area of healthcare that I had a lot of experience with, but my expectation was for caring, competent healthcare that provided for a peaceful transition from this life.

When I was growing up, rarely did I hear my parents or grandparents debate the wisdom of what they had been told by their doctors, and conversations with other members of my generation yielded similar sentiments. As a child, I remember talking about various families we knew, and when we hit upon a certain name my parents would exclaim, "His dad's a doctor." There was unmistakable reverence in their comments, and it built the impression of infallibility.

I'm not sure when that changed, but I am sure it didn't happen overnight. Perhaps it was fallout from Watergate, or perhaps it was the elimination of middle-class jobs with comprehensive healthcare benefits. It was likely due to many different factors, but something caused us to feel okay about questioning our doctors' diagnosis and prescriptions. As I journeyed through the years of my adulthood, my increasing exposure to the medical world caused me to no longer put the medical field in general or doctors in particular on a pedestal. My extensive experience with the medical community since my bicycle accident have made it clear that you simply must be your own best advocate when dealing with medical issues.

I think it started when I was in the hospital shortly after my accident. A technician drew blood during a routine procedure where no blood should have been present. She called for the doctor de jour who stopped by, and after a thorough 60 second evaluation, exclaimed "That could be a sign of cancer."

At first his words were concerning, but after the shock wore off, I knew it was simply a case of the tech having botched the procedure. I had a more serious example in the rehab hospital. Every morning a nurse would come around to take my vitals and administer pills.

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After that came a visit by the doctor in charge of spinal cord rehabilitation. On many occasions, I was running anywhere from a temperature to a slight fever, for which I was mildly admonished. I think the fact I was running a temperature inhibited progress toward my release. I did not realize at the time that the source of this problem was likely a UTI, for which I was never tested. I was released from rehab after about five weeks, but three months later (after a continuation of these symptoms) I developed sepsis, which is a life-threatening situation. While the vast majority of doctors I have worked with since my injury have been professional and caring, I have learned to do my own research. This way, I can either ask further probing questions regarding opinions that don't make sense to me or suggest alternative solutions if I feel it necessary. I always go to an appointment with a written list of questions, and I don't let the doctor wriggle out of my grasp until we have discussed all of them. This has led me to confront symptoms sooner and be on fewer medications since the start of my injury.

Once my sister was accepted into the hospice program, a hospice nurse came by the nursing home once a day to adjust medications and check-in on her situation. They were reluctant to admit her into full-time hospice care however despite our growing insistence that they do so. It wasn't until her medications needed a serious adjustment did they admit her into full-time hospice care. They told us however that once her medication issues were rectified, they would release her back to the nursing home in 2-3 days. Fortunately, that did not happen. I am thankful we had family members who stayed with her 24/7 and acted as her advocate the last six weeks of her life. I shudder to think how things might have been different had we not had that capability, and I truly feel sorry for all those who don't.



## THANK YOU BUSINESS PARTNERS:



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EMPLOYMENT SOLUTION



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CONTACT US TODAY to become a partner/sponsor of our Foundation.  
Help us make a difference in the life of someone from our industry  
who is living with a life altering disability.

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