

IMMEDIATE RELEASE JANUARY 28, 2021

## ONTARIO ATHLETIC THERAPISTS SUPPORT PARA SPORT ATHLETES NOW AND NEXT GENERATION

28 January 2021 – Toronto, ON – Ontario Athletic Therapists announced today a significant donation of \$20,000 to support the growth of Next Generation Canadian Para sport athletes through the Paralympic Foundation of Canada’s ImagiNation initiative. This donation will be matched by the federal government creating a total impact of \$40,000. Andy Playter, president of the Ontario Athletic Therapist Association (OATA), confirmed the importance of the committed funds in honour of the late Dr. Robert Jackson, one of the founders of the Canadian Paralympic Movement and an honorary Ontario Athletic Therapist.

### FACTS

- The roots of the Canadian Paralympic Movement began when Dr. Robert Jackson attended the 1964 Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan. Canada did not compete at the Games but Jackson, a medical student then, was working as an orthopedic consultant with the Canadian Olympic Team in Japan. He witnessed the Paralympic Games firsthand, questioning why the Canadian team was not participating. Canada would go on to compete for the first time at the 1968 Games.
- 1967 -- Dr. Jackson was one of the founders of the Canadian Wheelchair Sport Association (1967-72 Jackson served as founding president).
- 1976 -- Dr. Jackson was a driving force behind the organization of the Olympiad for the Physically Disabled in, Toronto, Canada (also referred to as the TORONTOLYMPIAD; these were the 1976 Paralympic Games).
- 1981 -- Dr. Jackson is a founder of the pre-cursor to the Canadian Paralympic Committee
- 2001 -- Dr. Jackson was inducted into the Canadian Paralympic Hall of Fame as a builder and OATA added to the distinction making him an Honorary AT for his decades of championing ATs working with Para sport athletes.
- Dr. Jackson passed away on January 6, 2010 and the OATA made a commitment to raise and commit \$20,000 by 2020 in his name. This contribution is the fulfillment of that pledge made on behalf of the over 1,000 ATs in Ontario.
- There are Canadian Para sport athletes involved in 27 Paralympic sports and Athletic Therapists, at different levels of engagement, in all 27 working with the athletes and medical teams.

## QUOTATIONS

### OATA

“As we celebrate the anniversary of Dr. Jackson’s passing, the Olympic & Paralympic Games are again being held in Tokyo, Japan making the fulfilment of this financial pledge more meaningful as it’s now 57 years since Dr. Jackson was inspired to create a Canadian Paralympic movement after witnessing his first international level Para sport Games. Plus, the Ontario Athletic Therapist Association was formalized 45 years ago thanks to the Ontario government’s push to support Canada’s national readiness efforts to host the 1976 Olympics (Montreal) and to host the TORONTOLYMPIAD linking the AT profession in Ontario to major games forever,” commented Andy Playter, OATA president.

### Para Sport Athletic Therapist

“It was an honour and privilege, as an Athletic Therapist, to work for 11 years with exceptional Para sport athletes, getting athletes and teams ready to perform at this elite global level of competition. Working with Para athletes was life changing, making me a better Athletic Therapist and better health care professional,” stated Tony Carbonette, OATA board director.

### Paralympic Foundation of Canada | See Backgrounder

“Athletic Therapists have long played an important role in the Canadian Paralympic Movement through their integral care and treatment of Para athletes. We are thrilled today to have the support of the Ontario Athletic Therapists Association through their donation in support of our ImagiNation initiative and Canada’s Next Generation of Para athletes. This significant gift will build upon Dr. Robert Jackson’s legacy in Canadian Para sport and help create opportunities in sport for Canadians with a disability for years to come.” - Dean Brokop, Director, Paralympic Foundation of Canada

### Federal Matching Fund

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE, HON. STEVEN GUILBEAULT, P.C., M.P.

*Statement made May 2020 on occasion of third anniversary of ImagiNation*

“Sport plays an important role in the lives of Canadians, and we will do everything we can to support sport in this difficult time. Our government supports all our athletes at every step, particularly the next generation who will proudly represent Canada at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. But we cannot do this alone. That is why we are happy to work with the Canadian Paralympic Committee and Paralympic Foundation of Canada by matching the Next Generation funds raised through the ImagiNation campaign. As Minister of Canadian Heritage, I would like to thank the Foundation and its generous donors, who support the rising stars of sport. Thank you for making Canada more inclusive by ensuring sport is accessible to all.”

The OATA is aligned with the Paralympic Foundation of Canada’s vision that no one with a disability should face a barrier to participation in sport and is proud to be investing in the ImagiNation program’s Para sport athlete pathway including early athlete development and Next Generation athlete development. Visit the OATA website ([www.ontarioathletictherapists.com](http://www.ontarioathletictherapists.com)) to hear from ATs involved with Para athletes preparing for the Tokyo Paralympics being held, August 24 to September 5, 2021.

### Contact

Nancy Coldham | OATA Secretariat | [info@ontarioathletictherapists.com](mailto:info@ontarioathletictherapists.com) | 905 946 8080