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The North Face Awards Explore Fund Grant to BlazeSports America
*BlazeSports supports a national effort to increase outdoor exploration
among Georgia youth with physical disabilities*

Atlanta, GA – July 19th, 2013 – The North Face, has awarded a \$2,500 Explore Fund grant to BlazeSports America for the project titled *'Blazing New Trails'*. The Explore Fund's mission is to inspire and enable the next generation of explorers by funding non-profit organizations that are working to connect children with nature. By encouraging an active healthy lifestyle and protection of our natural landscapes, a stronger connection of youth to the outdoors can be nurtured.

The goal of Blazing New Trails is to introduce youth with physical disabilities to a unique, life changing outdoor experience through the sport of climbing. In addition, the project will seek to enhance life skills in young people with physical disabilities. Climbing fosters a variety of unique skills such as confidence, teamwork, cooperation, communication and leadership and also requires individuals to literally step outside their comfort zone and achieve new goals they never thought possible. BlazeSports America was selected from more than 500 applications submitted in 2013. Since The Explore Fund was initiated in 2010, The North Face has provided more than \$1 Million in grants to non-profits all over the world working to connect youth to the outdoors with more than three quarters of that going to programs in the United States.

"BlazeSports America is delighted to receive this grant from The North Face Explore Fund. It is our mission to change lives through sport and this grant will enable us to do just that by offering young people with physical disabilities the chance to learn a new sport, increase their confidence and leadership skills and discover the great outdoors through the challenging and exciting pursuit of climbing," said Jeff Jones, Director of Sport and Community Programs with BlazeSports America

The *Blazing New Trails* Project will take place in partnership with Catalyst Sports, a non-profit organization providing adaptive climbing opportunities to anyone with a physical disability. The organization will provide their qualified staff, experience and knowledge to support the project.



Blazing New Trails will launch in September 2013 with a series of indoor climbing lessons offered to a targeted group of young people with physical disabilities. The project will culminate in an overnight camping and outdoor climbing experience in North Georgia.

To learn more about BlazeSports America and the Blazing New Trails project visit www.BlazeSports.org. For more information about The North Face Explore Fund, please visit www.explorefund.org

All of The North Face Explore Fund recipients were chosen based on their commitment to one of three different focus areas: access to front and back country recreation, education for personal and environmental health, and creating a connection to nature that will empower the future leaders of tomorrow.

About BlazeSports

BlazeSports America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, that empowers children and adults with physical disabilities worldwide through sport. Formed in 1993, as the direct legacy of the 1996 Atlanta Summer Paralympic Games, BlazeSports programs and services encourage lifelong health, build leadership skills, foster independence, and promote an inclusive society. See more at <http://www.blazesports.org/>

About The North Face®

The North Face, a division of VF Outdoor, Inc., was founded in 1968. Headquartered in Alameda, California, the company offers the most technically advanced products in the market to accomplished climbers, mountaineers, snowsport athletes, endurance athletes, and explorers. The company's products are sold in specialty mountaineering, backpacking, running, and snowsport retailers, premium-sporting goods retailers and major outdoor specialty retail chains.

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