

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Tricia Wilson LaBar – Turning Challenges into Opportunities



While her calm and friendly demeanor reveals nothing to us about this strong competitor, beneath it all Tricia Wilson LaBar loves challenges. “For me, a challenge is not a wall,” she says. “A challenge is an opportunity for me to exercise my brain and figure out how I’m going to adapt.” This 50-year-old entrepreneur from Rockwall, Texas, believes that the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are the perfect outlet for her to face new challenges and turn them into opportunities.

A former stocking and accounting specialist in the Army and Marine Corps, LaBar now owns her own business, *ABC Home Medical*. A medical supply business based in Texas, the company is also a bronze level sponsor of the Wheelchair Games. Her goal in business is to provide an opportunity for her clients to be more adaptive in their own lives, and to succeed in a world not necessarily designed for their needs. “When I’m working with clients who are not veterans, I realize how fortunate I am to be able to participate in the Games,” she says. “There are challenges and opportunities at these events that others will never be able to experience.”

Though LaBar has attended the Wheelchair Games since 1995, she insists that every year still brings new challenges. “Each year, there are new events to try and new improvements in equipment that can be explored and there are always new vets to meet and share experiences with,” she says. “New teammates keep the Games fresh for me, and quite often I make connections with people who I keep in touch with all year long. The National Veterans Wheelchair Games have been such an empowering experience in my life, and have allowed me to develop a family of hundreds,” she says. LaBar is adamant about that – the people she has come to know through the event, the participants, sponsors, coaches and volunteers are all very close to her. She says, “They’re not *like* family to me – to me, they *are* my family.”

When she isn’t busy with her business or her own family, which consists of three children and four grandchildren, LaBar loves to travel. During her trips, she is quick to point out improvements that hotel managers can implement to make amenities more convenient for someone in a wheelchair, while at the same time maintaining convenience for someone who is not. She says, “I don’t want to live in a world that excludes me, or excludes anyone without a disability – I just want to live in a world where everyone’s needs are included.”

“I don’t live in a worse world than I did before [I was injured], just a different one,” LaBar says. Whether she’s competing in the Games, busy at her job, enjoying family and friends or traveling the world, she remains ready to face any challenges she comes across so she can turn them into brand new opportunities.