

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Saddle Up! Co-Founder Lynne Evans receives award recognizing her work

FRANKLIN, Tenn. – Saddle Up! Co-Founder Lynne Evans will receive the EP Maxwell J. Schleifer Distinguished Service Award in ceremonies at the Friday, Aug. 17, Nashville Sounds game at Greer Stadium in recognition of her service to people with disabilities.

The award presentation is one of the highlights of Disability Awareness Night, sponsored by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) and Capital Financial Group, in cooperation with *Exceptional Parent Magazine* and the Nashville Sounds. Disability Awareness Night honors the contributions of 54 million Americans with disabilities, their families and caregivers.

Evans will receive the award from *Exceptional Parent's* Editor Jan Hollingsworth and Capital Financial Group's Conrad Slate at the pre-game ceremony at home-plate.

In addition to the award presentation, the evening will feature the first pitch thrown by Saddle Up! rider Matthew Berry, and an opportunity for many clients and staff of local disability organizations to attend the ballgame, thanks to free tickets donated by *Exceptional Parent* and Capital Financial Group.

On behalf of Capital Financial Group, Jason Bach will also make a \$2500 contribution to Saddle Up!. The check will be received by Saddle Up! Executive Director Cheryl Scutt.

Evans is Co-Founder of and a current Instructor at Saddle Up! the region's oldest and largest equine-based recreational therapeutic program serving children and youth with disabilities. For more than 17 years, Evans' mission has been to unite two passions – children with disabilities and horses. Her work emphasizes and nurtures the abilities of young people with disabilities who grow through their interactions with the horses.

Evans also served as a coach for the first-ever Tennessee Special Olympics equestrian team and helped one of her students build her skills to win a gold medal in the English Equitation class at the Special Olympics World Games.

Widely recognized for her accomplishments as a dressage equestrian and teacher, she has personal experience in dealing with disabilities due to multiple sclerosis and a broken hip.

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Learning of the award, Evans said, “What a surprise and honor to be selected as the winner of the E.P. Maxwell J. Schleifer Award! I am very thankful to *Exceptional Parent* magazine and Capital Financial Group/Mass Mutual for their involvement in this award and their desire to make the community more aware of disabilities.

“I realize from a personal experience that at any given moment in time we all can become the person with the disability,” she continued. “The children and parents at Saddle Up! have shown me how to deal with an adversity in a very positive and constructive way. I feel blessed to be a part of their lives.”

Scutt sang her praises, saying, “Lynne Evans and Saddle Up! are like Babe Ruth and baseball. You can’t think of one without the other. For more than 17 years, Lynne has been a quiet driving force behind this special program serving children and youth with disabilities, first as a founder and then as a volunteer and instructor in the horseback riding lessons.

“Lynne personifies and embodies the spirit of Saddle Up!, a spirit of compassion and can-do approach to living. She has shown this not only with her excellence in teaching scores of Saddle Up! riders but also in her personal experiences in dealing with multiple sclerosis and a broken hip. She remains a role model and inspiration to all who know her.

“Saddle Up! thanks *Exceptional Parent* magazine and Capital Financial Group/Mass Mutual for recognizing Lynne’s contributions to people with disabilities with this award, and we thank Lynne for being the remarkable woman she is,” Scutt said.

The EP Maxwell J. Schleifer Distinguished Service Award is named for the late founder and former editor-in-chief of *Exceptional Parent* who was an advocate for people with disabilities and other special needs. *Exceptional Parent* is the nation’s oldest and most widely read and referred to publication of its kind, reaching a wide audience of physicians, nurses, therapists, teachers and families involved in the care and development of children and adults with disabilities and special health care needs.

This year marks the sixth year of Exceptional Parent’s Disability Awareness Night (DAN) program, which began in 2002 with the cooperation of the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox. Since then, many professional ball clubs have joined the unique, emotional and powerful program of recognition and awareness.