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Wrestling calendar photo contest to help wrestling coach, transplant patient

Memphis, Tenn., Sept. 2, 2014 – On June 12, 2014, Jacob Calhoun, 29, traveled to Florida to compete in the Wrestling World Team Trials. He was a strong, healthy man, who not only competed, but was also the head wrestling coach at Muhlenberg College in Penn.

After an outdoor workout, he became extremely dehydrated, suffered a heat stroke and lost consciousness. These issues led to liver failure, acute encephalopathy and a kidney injury. Doctors said a liver transplant was crucial to Calhoun's survival. Thankfully, he received the lifesaving transplant on June 23, 2014.

This sudden, unexpected health crisis has completely jarred the stability and normalcy of his life. Calhoun is grateful for the love and support of his parents, who have relocated to Florida to serve as his caregivers while he recovers. It's been difficult to be so far away from his family and friends, as most of his tight-knit support group is in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Wrestling has been a lifelong commitment for Jacob; he loves coaching and competing at both the national and international levels. While going through months of rehabilitation, he won't be able to participate in the sport, and he's already anxious to return to coaching.

Volunteers are producing a 2015 calendar showcasing elite and up-and-coming wrestlers and coaches in all areas of the sport, and they are accepting photos & applications until October 15. Proceeds from the calendar will be provided to the National Foundation for Transplants in honor of Calhoun to assist with his transplant expenses. Submission of photographs that display and celebrate a love of wrestling are encouraged. Full details can be found at www.jakecalhoun.org.

The average liver transplant costs approximately \$575,000. Even with health insurance, he still faces significant medical expenses related to the surgery. He will need a lifetime of follow-up care and daily anti-rejection medications. These medications are very costly, and they're as important to his survival as the transplant itself.

To help alleviate the financial burden, Calhoun and his family turned to the National Foundation for Transplants (NFT) for assistance with some of these financial burdens. NFT is a nonprofit organization that helps patients raise funds to pay for transplant-related expenses.

"My heart goes out to Jake," said Samantha Palazolo, NFT fundraising consultant. "This has all happened so quickly and been such a frightening experience, but I'm hopeful that things will only get better from here. It's amazing to see how many people are rallying around Jake and doing everything they can to help emotionally and financially. At NFT, we're dedicated to helping him raise the funds he needs to focus on his health and happiness, not the medical expenses."

For more information about the calendar event, please contact Teri Jakob at 717-304-3746 or wrestler2015calendar@gmail.com.

To make a tax-deductible donation in honor of Calhoun, please send a contribution to the NFT Florida Transplant Fund, 5350 Poplar Ave., Suite 430, Memphis, TN 38119. Please be sure to write "in honor of Jacob Calhoun" on the memo line. Secure donations also can be made online at www.transplants.org--select "Find an NFT Patient" to locate Calhoun.

About NFT

NFT is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Memphis, Tenn. that has been helping transplant patients overcome financial obstacles since 1983. NFT provides fundraising expertise to transplant patients by organizing fundraising campaigns in the patients' own communities. NFT's fundraising campaigns have generated nearly \$65 million to assist patients. NFT assists more than 2,500 transplant candidates and recipients nationwide. For more information about NFT, please call 800-489-3863 or visit www.transplants.org.

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