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Training Matters

Dive professionals--Get the skills, experience & credentials needed to work with challenged individuals according to established standards and practices. Broaden your customer base and your horizons. For more information contact IAHD-Americas or visit us on the [web](#).

About IAHD-Americas

The International Association of Handicapped Divers (IAHD) is a global non-profit organization dedicated to sharing the magic of the underwater world with as many people as possible by offering adaptive scuba training. Founded in 1993, IAHD-Americas has nearly twenty years of experience in bringing the magic of scuba diving to the disabled community in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Based in beautiful Harleysville, PA, IAHD-Americas is currently in the design phase of a state-of-the-art indoor dive training facility, to be located within a one day's drive of over 100 million people. In-house and on-site training programs are currently being conducted from this location for dive centers, instructors and resorts throughout the territory.

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Welcome to our Special Race edition!

In the words made famous by comedian Steve Martin, it was "another wild and crazy month here" at [IAHD-Americas](#), as we return from one great adventure and get ready for our next road trip! October's special event found us visiting Tampa, FL, the home of the oldest underwater park in North America, [Weeki Wachee Springs](#). Against a backdrop of swimming mermaids and visiting manatees, it was a perfect venue for us to participate in the biggest underwater scooter race in the history of Formula H2O. Smiles and laughter were the order of the day, along with some competitive spirit, as we enjoyed three days in the crystal clear waters there.

And now we're loading the truck and getting ready to head to Orlando, FL for the annual DEMA show, the biggest trade show in the dive industry. This annual event brings together manufacturers, destinations, training agencies & dive professionals in a week-long event. The show and gathering offers opportunities to see new products, research new dive destinations, attend seminars and training, and socialize with other dive professionals, which ultimately is key to a social-based activity such as scuba diving.

Team IAHD-Americas will be there, along with our new travel partner Indian Valley Travel, in booth #1559. We'll be presenting our latest and greatest programs, announcing new partnerships, and creating even more opportunities for divers and non-divers alike to lead a richer life through adaptive adventure programs.

So check out the rest of our news, and if you're in Orlando Nov. 2-5, stop by and visit us at the DEMA show! Learn how to get involved, and make IAHD part of your life!

Weeki Wachee Race Results!

Disabled Veterans Groups team up for the biggest underwater race of the season!

The most famous home of the Mermaids, Weeki Wachee Springs, was the host site for the final event of [Formula H2O's](#) underwater scooter racing, the "Weeki Wachee Warrior Challenge." SCUBA diving is an excellent method of therapy for our Wounded Warriors by unlocking a world of underwater mobility that was lost due to injury. It's also a great opportunity to showcase the resources available to those who have given so much to serve our nation. This special three day event brought together various veterans support groups, dive training organizations, and several nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring and raising awareness of the contributions of our outstanding former warriors. Pictured at right are some of our racers getting ready to gear up and get in the water, including Nathan Cruz, Dave Reid, Sammy Lugo and Eric Burmeister. These American heroes were part of the contingent of nine different disabled veteran support organizations who turned out for the event.



Kelly Friend - the fastest woman under the sea!

"No racer left behind" was the theme of the day, as IAHD's Dave Valaika and David Hartman are shown carrying one of the participants down the water for his turn in the event. There was plenty of help on hand to make sure that everyone had a great time all weekend long. Races and training were conducted all three days over the course of the weekend.



And in spite of some torrential downpours on Sunday afternoon, the races went off without a glitch. Visitors and supporters had ring-side seats in the underwater theater, watching as the racers and the Weeki Wachee mermaids ran lap after lap around the entrance to the deepest freshwater spring in North America. The immense cavern system has been documented to over 400 ft deep and pumps out approx 165 million gallons of water each day - wow!



Scooters for the event were provided by a number of major manufacturers, including Submerge, Torpedo, Dive Xtras, Apollo, and privately owned units. Each scooter was thrust-tested to help ensure a level playing field, with the participants in each event racing scooters of similar power ratings. This really ramped up the competition amongst the racers, and it took some finesse in body positioning and trim in the water to reduce the drag and maximize the speed of the racers as they "swam for the roses".



The weekend was full of fun and surprises for the participants with the opportunity to test dive with full face mask systems provided by the team from ScubaNation and training by the IAHD-Americas team.

And congratulations are in order for our six newest PADI Diver Propulsion Vehicle Specialty Divers who earned their certifications this weekend including Sammy Lugo, Dave Reid, Erik Burmeister, Lizette Cruz, Brian Blakely, and Elwood 'Buddy' Sypher. We sure hope to see them at an upcoming event soon!

The Formula H2O staff will be spending the next few months putting together next years schedule and hope to have it up on the website shortly. We look forward to another great season in 2012!

IAHD-Americas welcomes our newest partner: Indian Valley Travel

Learning to scuba dive is a blast - you can't deny that! But one of the biggest challenges the divers we train face is the difficulty they encounter when they want to set up their next diving adventure. Accessible accommodations, travel considerations, appropriate shore entries or boat platforms, an understanding, supportive, and properly trained dive staff, adaptive equipment - these are just a few of the roadblocks and potholes on the road to enjoying a truly great travel and vacation experience.

Enter the IAHD-Americas' newest partner - [Indian Valley Travel](#). Founded on the belief that every journey should provide a sense of enrichment not only for the traveler but for the destination also, IVT is the industry leader specializing in Sustainable and Accessible adventures for travelers of all abilities.

Indian Valley Travel is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, and works to match travelers and adventurers with destinations that meet the needs and requirements of the participant, providing the maximum assurance of a surprise-free travel experience.

With destinations as varied as Fiji, Costa Rica, Haiti, Egypt, and domestic locations too, Indian Valley Travel provides a plethora of adventure opportunities to suit every level of ability and quest for exotic experiences. Each trip has an IVT-exclusive "accessibility rating" to help travelers determine appropriate destinations, and IVT's travel coordinators are ready to provide guidance and information for those choosing to travel with them.

Visit the [Indian Valley Travel](#) website and get ready to start packing your bags!

Where's the next stop IAHD-Americas train?

DEMA Show 2011

There's no better way to grow an already great program than by getting out and sharing the good news with others. And that's just what we'll be doing November 2-5, at the [DEMA](#) Show in Orlando, FL. Stop by and visit us to learn what IAHD-Americas has in store for 2012 and beyond!

Hope to see you there!