

## Summer Fun in Sunny Florida

By: Lorinda Y. Gonzalez

*“...it's a smile, it's a kiss, it's a sip of wine ... it's summertime!”*

— *Kenny Chesney*

The temperature is rising and soon everyone will hit the beach. Summers in Florida are epic, and people travel from all over the world to feel the warm sun on their face. As a motorized wheelchair user, I too enjoy the beautiful Atlantic Ocean and sandy beaches on our coast. However, a Florida beach day isn't as simple for me as putting on a bikini, packing towels, a beach hat and sunscreen. There's a lot more that goes into the planning process. Unless it's highly compacted and solid, getting your wheelchair on the sand is next to impossible. Good news! Here in Miami there are a number of recreational opportunities available for wheelchair users to enjoy in the summer festivities just like everyone else.

### **Sabrina Cohen Foundation**

The Sabrina Cohen Foundation (SCF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to developing adaptive fitness and recreational programs, in addition to funding innovative therapies that will provide a better quality of life for individuals living with paralysis and various disabilities. Throughout the year, Sabrina and her partners work with local municipalities towards making Miami's beaches more accessible for wheelchair users.

In direct collaboration with the City of Miami Beach, SCF is working to create the first fully-accessible beach, playground and state-of-the-art wellness center, featuring an adaptive gym for the disabled, including seniors, veterans and children with special needs. The programming will be open to residents and visitors in Miami Beach.

This summer, the foundation has an adaptive beach program that offers a full array of wheelchair accessible summer activities. Here's a quick glimpse of the most up to date schedule as of May 2016:

Events are held every Saturday from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm in Miami Beach (address TBD).

- 1st Saturdays of the month - Ocean Play / Adaptive Surf
- 2nd Saturdays of the month - Art Therapy / Yoga
- 3rd Saturdays of the month - Handcycling
- 4th Saturdays of the month - Themed beach day

Feel free to check out [www.sabrinacohenfoundation.org](http://www.sabrinacohenfoundation.org) for up to date information and new events.

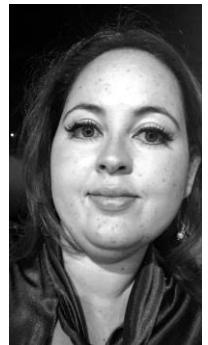
## **Developing friendships, self-esteem, and enjoying a healthy environment and lifestyle!**

Another great option for water connoisseurs is Shake-a-Leg Miami, located at 2620 South Bayshore Drive, Coconut Grove, Florida 33133. This 501(c)(3) non-profit organization is a community boating center that offers year-round aquatic programs and activities accessible for individuals with and without disabilities. Located in Biscayne Bay, the waterfront center offers a marina equipped with sailboats, kayaks, stand-up paddle boards, a boat yard and boat repair area, multi-purpose classrooms with multimedia labs, a rooftop observation deck, and eco islands. Shake-A-Leg Miami's dedicated management, staff, and volunteers are passionate about getting people of all abilities out on the water. Their unique setting allows for a fully integrated experience for everyone.

Whether you're into taking a boat ride on the Atlantic or enjoying the warm Florida sun beachside, Miami offers great opportunities for individuals with disabilities to go, out get a tan, and enjoy in the summer fun!

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**Author:** Lorinda Gonzalez resides in South Florida with her family and service dog, Remy. She was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy at the age of three, and has used a motorized wheelchair for mobility since the age of nine. As an avid writer and reader, she has worked as a grant writer and editor since 2009. With the help of her family, it has grown to become a successful endeavor. Lorinda holds a Bachelor in the Arts Degree in English Writing and Rhetoric, and is currently completing a Masters of Arts Degree in Communications. She is a co-founder of NMD United, a 501c3 and on the board of multiple non-profit organizations.



In her free time, Lorinda enjoys spending time with family and friends, painting, listening to music, and traveling to historical locations.