

## No Barriers Wraps Up Spectacular Festival at Shake-A-Leg Miami

Erik and the No Barriers team recently concluded the No Barriers Festival 2009, held at Shake-A-Leg Miami, which showcased some of the most cutting-edge ideas, approaches, techniques and technologies enabling people with challenges to push through their own personal barriers to live more full and adventurous lives. No Barriers shared its mission with participants from as far away as Hawaii and Alaska, Venezuela and Columbia , and Switzerland and Israel . It brought together pioneers, many with disabilities themselves, who are pushing the envelope in a variety of fields, from technology and science, to art and athletics, to adventure and humanitarian causes.

The festival included numerous adaptive clinics, which demonstrated innovative techniques for open water swimming, paddling and scuba diving for amputees and paraplegics. Adaptive yoga classes helped those with severe mobility issues to increase flexibility and reduce pain. A scientist from MIT demonstrated his own pair of prosthetic legs, with computerized ankle joints, controlled by his cell phone. A blind sailor led tours for other blind participants using a talking GPS to navigate. A paraplegic athlete showed off his hand cycle which morphs into a wheelchair, enabling him to instantly rise to the height of a standing person and fit through narrow doorways. Capping the festival off was Molly the Pony, who lost her leg during Katrina and became one of the first ponies to be fitted with a prosthetic leg.



A participant tries out a morphing hand cycle at No Barriers / Andrea Kennedy

In addition to highlighting adaptive technology, No Barriers places a high importance on the human spirit. The goal is to spark in people an attitude which leads them to confront their formidable obstacles head-on, to believe they can solve their own challenges, to become their own advocates, and ultimately to determine their own futures. No Barriers is a universal message for all of us who, despite our backgrounds, circumstances, or abilities, wish to shatter barriers and pursue our dreams.