

# WORLD CHAMPION NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

BY LONIE PAXTON

## PATRIOTS IN THE COMMUNITY

**GROWING UP** in Corona, California, I attended high school with my best friend, Brook Duquesnel. While I was playing football at Sacramento State, Brook was aspiring to be a professional snowboarder. In an attempt to join the pro circuit, he spent most of his time performing in videos and participating in photo shoots to get recognition in the industry. One particular event took him to Mammoth Mountains in California. Everything was going well for him until I got a phone call letting me know that Brook had been in a serious accident on the slopes and was airlifted to a hospital in Reno. Brook had suffered a spinal cord injury and was paralyzed from the waist down. Another friend and I drove to Reno where we spent a week with Brook, helping to care for him.

Having gone through such a difficult situation with my best friend, the bond between us grew stronger. Brook, not losing one bit of motivation to live life to the fullest, continued to pursue his love of extreme sports. It didn't take long for him to find that there are not many extreme sports that provide equipment necessary for a handicapped person to participate. His family and I decided to raise money to buy Brook a four-wheel downhill mountain bike. It's pretty much the same thing as a bicycle except it has four wheels and no pedals.

In his efforts to find better mountain bikes and other extreme sporting equipment for handicapped athletes, Brook decided the best idea was to design the equipment himself. That's when we started the Active Force Foundation, an organization with a mission to design and build extreme-adaptive sports equipment for handicapped kids. Once the equipment is designed, we want to be able to give it to handicapped kids who otherwise couldn't afford it.

The foundation is fairly new, so we're still in the process of raising money and developing designs for the sporting gear. We're going to start with designs for mountain bikes, and hopefully we will be able to move into other sports in the future, such as sit-skis, kayaks and sit-surfers. The equipment is very intricate and includes specialized seats and controls necessary for people who are physically challenged. That's why the gear



**The Active Force Foundation raises money to build extreme-adaptive sports equipment such as the bike shown here.**



**Lonie Paxton is now in his fifth season as the Patriots long snapper.**

is so expensive and isn't always available to everybody who may want to participate.

Right now, I'm working hard here on the east coast to raise money and awareness of the Active Force Foundation, while Brook, over in California, supervises the equipment design. We hope to recruit corporate sponsors that are interested in supporting a team of bike riders. One idea we have come up with is a sponsorship program where a company could sponsor a set of about 10 bikes that would be available for handicapped individuals to ride. We would also like to create recreational programs for the handicapped where people could rent the bikes at popular mountain ranges and slopes.

If you visit [www.activeforce.org](http://www.activeforce.org) you can learn more about the foundation and how to donate money or auction items for fundraisers. There are also pictures on the site of the kind of bikes we hope to distribute. It is my hope that the Active Force Foundation will be able to provide handicapped people with a way to remain mentally and physically active.

Thank you for your support of the New England Patriots, and enjoy the game!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lonie Paxton". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed over a white rectangular background.

Lonie Paxton

