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## ROBYN BENINCASA IS A 2014 CNN HERO

**Project Athena Founder has helped Survivors live their adventurous dreams since 2007**



*Patricia Spiro, Robyn Benincasa, Mary Beth Villanueva, Alli Morgan.*

May 16, 2014 San Diego, CA – CNN has selected San Diego firefighter, Robyn Benincasa, as a [CNN Hero](#). Inspired by her own [medical challenge](#) of two total hip replacements, [Benincasa started the non-profit Project Athena Foundation](#) to help women who have had serious medical setbacks live their adventurous dreams as part of their recovery.

“I’m honored to be chosen a CNN Hero, but the Athenas (Survivors) who reach their recovery goal of a Project Athena adventure are the true heroes,” Benincasa said. “The mission of the foundation is to put Athenas in a position to inspire and amaze themselves – to be the very best they are today.”

Foundation grants (Athenaships) have enabled Athenas to make their dreams realities - like running a marathon on the Great Wall of China, [hiking across the Grand Canyon](#), learning to surf in Costa Rica, riding a bicycle across Iowa, kayaking and cycling from [Key Largo to Key West](#), or [running their first 5k](#) surrounded by friends and family. Funds from [God/Goddess fundraisers](#) on adventures and sponsor donations make the grants possible.

[Project Athena](#) not only provides training, equipment, gear, entry fees, and travel expenses - their Chief Inspiration Officers and coaches (also Survivors) participate alongside the Athenas to support them and celebrate their success. The group of Athenas pictured gathered recently for training. Alli Morgan, Albany, NY, Patricia Spiro, Hanford, CA and Mary Beth Villanueva, Carlsbad, CA joined Project Athena staff for training in the San Diego area.

Benincasa is a [World Champion Adventure racer](#), ten-time Ironman finisher with two podium finishes at the Hawaii World Championships and holds [three Guinness World Records](#). She also shares her inspiring perspective through her [World Class Teams](#) Teambuilding and Leadership keynotes.

[CNN Hero](#) is an honor awarded for making a difference in the world through extraordinary humanitarian contributions. CNN features new, or updated heroes weekly on air and online. In 2013 there were more than 50,000 nominations. The Top 10 are selected each fall and the Hero of the Year is chosen through online voting.

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