

JONI EARECKSON TADA
Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Joni and Friends

Joni Eareckson Tada has lived in wheelchair as a quadriplegic for over 40 years due to a diving accident in 1967. Following rehabilitation, where she spent long months learning how to paint with a brush between her teeth, Joni wrote of her experiences in her international bestselling biography, *Joni*, and also reenacted the events in the full-length feature film with the same title.

Being catapulted to an international stage and having the desire to support and encourage other people affected by disability, in 1979 she established the international non-profit organization, Joni and Friends, and continues to serve as Founder and CEO. The organization offers enriching programs to support people affected by disability around the globe through: 30 years of radio outreach and a 2 seasons of a television program; refurbishing and delivering thousands of wheelchairs to donate to needy families in developing countries through the *Wheels for the World* program; supporting special needs families through *Family Retreats*; a global network of disability support through Joni and Friends offices and international charter support organizations, including NGOs on every continent; over 40 books covering topics ranging from disability outreach to the purpose for suffering.

As a highly sought-after conference speaker both in the U.S. and overseas, Joni has visited over 45 countries and has received numerous awards for her speaking, writing, music and art. She holds honorary degrees from six different universities and received presidential appointment to the National Council on Disability and served on the Disability Advisory Committee to the US State Department through which she has shared her perspective on right-to-life issues which affect our nation's disabled population.

Joni resides in Southern California with her husband, Ken Tada, who retired from 32 years of teaching in 2004 and now works alongside Joni as they travel across the country and around the world promoting support to those affected by disability.