

Day 3 – Paralympic Torch Bulletin Board

The Rio 2016 Paralympic Torch Relay arrived this Saturday (03) morning at the Northeast. The flame was lit in Natal, in Rio Grande do Norte, at a ceremony at Palácio dos Esportes Djama Maranhão, at Pedro Velho Square. At the Rio Grande do Norte capital, the Paralympic flame symbolizes inspiration, bringing in mind that it's possible to change lives through the stories and accomplishments of athletes.

- Débora Seabra was the messenger of the Paralympic flame in Natal, and she read a text about the value of inspiration at the opening ceremony. She is the first teacher with Down syndrome in Brazil, and she has given classes for 11 years for childhood education classes. In 2013, she published the book “Débora conta histórias”, with eight stories related to her life experience. “These are stories of exclusion in defence of inclusion”, she sums up.
- The first torchbearer of the day was Ana Cláudia Albuquerque, who received the Paralympic flame from Débora. “For me, who have acted on this area for 14 years, this is the most important moment in my life. I hope the torch will inspire people to pay ever more attention to Paralympic sport”, she said, thrilled.
- Ana Cláudia handled the Paralympic flame to Francisco Araújo, who is sight disabled and founder of the Rio Grande do Norte Association of the Sight Disabled. “It’s a historical moment for me, and it crowns all achievements I had during this years of working”, she declared.
- To facilitate the lives of people with disabilities when going to the beach is the proposal of the project developed by professor native of Rio Grande do Norte Arthur Medeiros. He carried the Paralympic torch at Sociedade Amigos do Deficiente Físico do Rio Grande do Norte (Sadef). “I was very happy for being invited. It was moving to carry the Paralympic flame”, said the teacher who developed Crabs, a device which will give more autonomy to users at the beach than the wheelchairs currently used.

- During the afternoon, the relay visited the Centre of Hearing Health (Suvag), where a choir performance took place, intertwining the Brazilian national anthem with demonstrative goalball matches. Afterwards, it proceeded to the Association of Orientation for the Disabled (Adote), which prepared a dance spectacle, and for the Heitor Carrilho Clinic, which provides rehabilitation care and promotes pedagogical activities.
- The relay proceeded late in the afternoon through the streets of Natal, starting at Portal do Sol Kleberson Nascimento, in Mãe Luiza. Among the torchbearers was Andreonni Rego, chosen as the best football 5-a-side goalkeeper in the world after achieving the first world championship of the modality in 1998. He participated at the Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, having won both. "In September, I'll go to Rio to pay tribute to my colleagues. Everyone in the national team has played with me", he said.
- Genezi Andrade, a swimming athlete who participated at five Paralympic Games, didn't conceal his joy upon carrying the torch. "The emotion today is the same I felt in Barcelona 1992", he said.
- Pan-American champion of weightlift, Maria Silva was also thrilled for carrying the Paralympic torch. "For me, this is a happiness which will never fade", she affirmed.
- José Queiroz, former trainer of Paralympic swimming, was one of the torchbearers in Natal. With 35 years of services provided for Paralympic sport, he celebrated his participation at the relay. "I'm very happy, because I know my long journey is one of the main reasons for the relay to pass by Natal today".
- A Brazilian hope for swimming at the Rio 2016 Games, Adriano Lima carries the torch at his home land. "I never imagined I would have a disability, but I suffered an accident at 17. Sports showed me that a person with disability can become someone in life", said the athlete who is going for his sixth participation at Paralympic Games.
- The last torchbearer of the day was Gledson Soares, first Paralympic swimmer of Rio Grande do Norte. "The emotion is so great, for knowing I made part of history. I have not swam for four years, but I feel as if today I ended my career in the best way possible", he declared. This Sunday, September 4th, the Rio 2016 Paralympic torch Relay arrives at São Paulo, the fourth of six cities to welcome the Paralympic flame.

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