



2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games: 7–13 February

CONTACT:

Cary McPartlin
Senior Manager, Media and Public Relations
+1 (202) 824-0298
cmcpartlin@specialolympics.org

Justine Sgalio
Manager, Media Relations and Communications
+1 (208) 377-7161 or +1 (208) 919-1062
Justine.Sgalio@2009WorldGames.org

For Immediate Release

Special Olympics Announces Celebrities Attending 2009 World Winter Games

Movie Stars, Olympic and Professional Athletes, Newsmakers and Government Officials Set to be Fans of Thousands of Special Olympics Athletes in February

(26 January 2009) Washington, D.C. – Special Olympics announced today the several celebrities, Olympic and professional athletes, senior government leaders and other key newsmakers that are scheduled to attend the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Boise, Idaho, from 7-13 February. These celebrity guests will participate in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Global Youth Rally and other events that week, helping cheer on the nearly 2,500 athletes from more than 100 countries that will be competing in the World Games.

Among those attending the 2009 World Games are: *Vivian Fernández de Torrijos, First Lady of Panama; Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Amina of Morocco; Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa); Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho); Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter (Idaho); Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (California); Maria Shriver, First Lady of California; Vanessa Williams, Actress/Musician; Tom Arnold, Actor/Comedian; Johnny Knoxville, Actor/Comedian; Mariel Hemingway, Actress; Darius Rucker, Musician/Artist; Kenny G., Musician/Artist; Scott Glenn, Actor; Lt. Andy Baldwin, TV Personality (ABC “The Bachelor”); Scott Hamilton, Olympic Figure Skater; Bart Conner, Olympic Gymnast; Nadia Comaneci, Olympic Gymnast; Donna de Verona, Olympic Swimmer; Sam Perkins, Former NBA Star; Lucas Radebe, South African football player; Teófilo Cubillas, Peruvian football player, Billy Kidd, Olympic Skier; Casey FitzRandolph, Olympic Speedskater; Carly Patterson, Olympic Gymnast/Singer; Kristi Yamaguchi, Olympic Figure Skater; and many more.*

“We are honored to have such great supporters attend our World Games and help champion the mission of Special Olympics worldwide,” said Timothy Shriver, Chairman of Special Olympics. “The global support we are receiving for these Games and other events is a testament to how Special Olympics creates unity throughout the world.”

In addition to taking part in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the World Winter Games, several celebrity supporters will host a two-hour interactive show during the first-ever Global Youth Rally

addressing the need for acceptance and inclusion. The youth rally will be a fast-paced, multi-media event with a strong call to action that students will carry back to their home communities and schools. In addition to the in-person event, the rally will be streamed live on Special Olympics Web sites so students can participate via school assemblies or classrooms worldwide.

Celebrity supporters will also help pass out medals to athletes, participate in various service opportunities, witness first-hand sports greatness and help show the world that everyone can be a fan of Special Olympics.

About Special Olympics:

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by promoting understanding, acceptance and inclusion between people with and without intellectual disabilities. Through year-round sports training and athletic competition and other related programming for more than 2.8 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities in more than 180 countries, Special Olympics has created a model community that celebrates people's diverse gifts. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. Visit Special Olympics at www.specialolympics.org.

About the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games:

The 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games will be held in Idaho, USA, 7-13 February 2009. Nearly 2,500 athletes from more than 100 countries are expected to compete. Surpassing the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic Winter Games in athlete numbers and participating nations, the World Winter Games will be the largest multi-day winter sporting event ever held in Idaho. Competition will take place in seven winter sports – Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing and Speed Skating. Competition and other activities will take place in communities and venues throughout Idaho including, but not limited to, Boise, Sun Valley and McCall. For more information, visit www.2009WorldGames.org.

Platinum, Gold and Silver sponsors of the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games include: Hewlett Packard, Lithia, Microsoft, Wal-Mart and Sam's Club, Sprint, the Micron Foundation, Boise Inc., Food Services of America, Canon, Fusion Imaging, Citrix, Avaya, Extreme Networks, Juniper Networks & S1 IT Solutions.

Venue partners include Bogus Basin Mountain Recreation Area, Qwest Arena, Expo Idaho, Sun Valley Resort, Ponderosa State Park, Boise Centre, Idaho IceWorld and Boise State University.

-###-