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Official Newsletter of Special Olympics Team USA

Team USA Newsletter

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April 2007

Vanderbilt University prepares for arrival of Team USA delegation in July

Athletes and coaches are excitedly preparing themselves for their trip to Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. on July 12-16. It's the 2007 Team USA Training Camp allowing athletes, their coaches and select alternates to meet for the first time as the official Team USA delegation.

"The folks at Vanderbilt truly understand what we are trying to accomplish with this training camp," said Trish Mazzone of Special Olympics Kentucky, who is also heading up plans for the camp as a director of the Special Olympics Team USA Management Team. "They are honored that their University was selected as the host site for the 2007 World Games Training Camp."

Head coaches will set up their practice schedules as eight of the sports will be training on campus and eight off campus. Athletes will also be taking part not only in uniform sizing, but can also look forward to a fashion show, featuring athlete models showing off the competition and casual wear the delegation will be seen wearing in China during the Games.

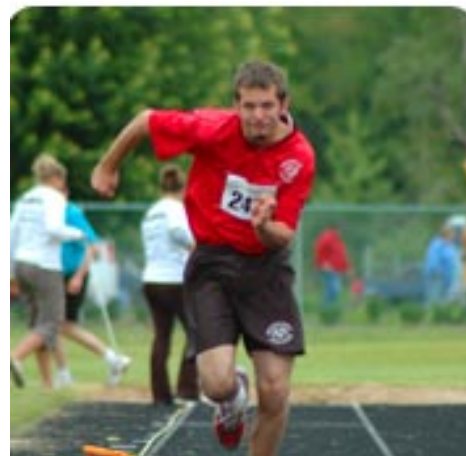
In addition, the delegation will take in some Chinese culture during "China night" as well as some great entertainment from Nashville stars, including Team USA spokesperson and country singer JoDee Messina, anxious to meet our delegation!

Host Town – A Time to Get Acclimated

After spending about 13.5 hours on a flight to China, Team USA will need some time to get acclimated to the new surroundings before competing in the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games. That's where the Host Town experience comes in.

Team USA will spend the first four days after arriving in China enjoying the Host Towns. The majority of the team will head to Shanghai's District of Pudong (one of 19 districts similar to suburbs of a major U.S. city). A small number of team members will fly directly into Beijing for their Host Town experience. That group will then travel to Shanghai the day before the Opening Ceremonies.

"The main outcome for the Host Town experience is to get acclimated to the time zone and foods of China," said Kathy Meagher of Special Olympics North Dakota, and the management team director organizing Host Town for Team USA.



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During the Host Town experience, Team USA will be housed in hotels, but likely will have the opportunity to visit Chinese homes and work with local citizens on food preparation (such as Chinese noodles) and will engage in some activity with Chinese people with intellectual disabilities.

In addition, the Host Town experience exposes and introduces the athletes to the Chinese culture, and educates people in China about children and adults with intellectual disabilities. There will also be some time for light sports training.

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let me be brave
in the attempt.

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Athlete Profile

Florida Athlete Trains With High School Team Preparing for World Games

In preparation for the World Games in China, Alberto Nieves, age 17 of Florida, has been practicing with his high school tennis team.

Every Monday and Wednesday afternoon, Alberto joins the Gulf Coast High School tennis team to practice. "It's great," he says, adding that he has become friends with the other students on the team. In addition to tennis, Alberto competes in basketball and aquatics with Special Olympics. At school, he also trains with the football team, lifting weights with them.

His mother, Maria, says that Alberto "really wants to go to school" and loves the interaction he has with the other athletes. "Everyone at school is very excited and proud" of Alberto's selection for Team USA, she added.

Alberto recently returned from the Special Olympics Tennis Championships at Hilton Head, S.C., where he earned a gold medal for singles and a bronze medal for doubles. His mother noted that it was Alberto's first experience competing in doubles.




Alberto Nieves of Florida shows some of the Special Olympics medals and awards he has received. He will compete in tennis at the 2007 World Games.

He truly exemplifies the reality of what Special Olympics does for its athletes: inclusion in school among peers without disabilities, wonderful training opportunities to enhance sport skills, and inclusion in society with the confidence and pride to hold a job just as everyone deserves the opportunity to do.



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Learning new things is nothing new for Alberto. Born in Puerto Rico, he speaks both Spanish and English. Alberto's family (mother, father, 3 brothers and 2 sisters) came to the United States in 1994 when he was four years old. "At home, everyone speaks Spanish," said Maria, "and at school, it's English."

In addition to school and sports, Alberto has begun a job through his school at Publix supermarket, where he bags groceries, restocks items and corrals shopping carts. He truly exemplifies the reality of what Special Olympics does for its athletes: inclusion in school among peers without disabilities, wonderful training opportunities to enhance sport skills, and inclusion in society with the confidence and pride to hold a job just as everyone deserves the opportunity to do.

Coach Profile

Sailing Is An 'All-Consuming Passion' for this coach!

Special Olympics World Games sailing Coach Jack Yoes of Houston, Texas, has an "all-consuming passion" that he hopes others in the United States will catch – sailing.

Yoes recently met with officials from US Sailing (the national governing board for the sport) and reports that US Sailing is very excited about creating a national partnership agreement with Special Olympics with the goal of increasing athlete participation in sailing all over the U.S. "I'm very excited to be working with US Sailing on that effort," Yoes said.

US Sailing maintains a "how to" program for its member organizations. "During this year, US Sailing will be generating that template for Special Olympics programs," said Yoes, making it easier for local sailing clubs to add a program for people with intellectual disabilities.

"I think it's going to be a great thing," he said. "It will help get more people sailing at the grassroots level." He noted that there are only about 13 Special Olympics state programs that offer sailing at varying degrees, with about 550 athletes participating in sailing. "It's a small number, but we're out to change that."

As head coach of the Team USA sailing team, he will lead five crews consisting of a Special Olympics athlete and a Unified Partner. The sailing team has one Level 2 crew, which means the athlete will drive the boat at least half of the time, and four Level 1 crews, which means the Unified Partner will drive the boat and the athlete is responsible for head sail trim.

The sailing crews will compete at Lake Dianshan, which is the only natural lake in the Shanghai area. The Chinese will supply the boats for all sailing competitors. Yoes has the specs for the boats to be used in China and has supplied the U.S. crews with information about three similar boats that they can practice for the most meaningful training experience.

Yoes is a sailing race officer, helps run regattas and is part of a team



that will put on several national level events this year. He also competes in Unified golf with his son, 26-year-old son Ken, who has been competing in Special Olympics since he was nine.

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Clipped Wings Formalize Grant to Assist Families Traveling to World Games

"This is my baby and I'm proud of it," said Patti Jacoby, past president of the Clipped Wings Members at Large chapter and active flight attendant with United Airlines.

As the chairperson of the Special Parents' Grant for her Clipped Wings chapter, Patti takes pride in knowing she and her counterparts are making a difference through their grant program in getting families of the Team USA Delegation overseas to watch their athletes compete.

Clipped Wings was organized in Chicago by former United Airlines stewardess Jacqueline Jos Ceaser in November of 1941. Jackie's original concept was to perpetuate airline friendships while contributing to others who were less fortunate. For the last 60 years, the profile of Clipped Wings members has broadened from that of mothers and homemakers to include working women (and men) with dual roles. The group includes a large number of active flight attendants, many of which devote countless hours to help people with developmental disabilities, while enjoying the friendship so important to its founding ideals.

"It was an eye-opening experience that many parents were not able to make the trip to see their athlete compete," she said. "Our focus for the grant is not to pay their way, but to assist them in some way to get to the World Games," she added after explaining how many families she noticed weren't able to make the trip to the 1997 Toronto Games.

In 1999, Patti's local chapter decided to unveil the Special Parents' Grant for the Special Olympics World Games in North Carolina as part of their philanthropy. Ever since then, the grant has continued and this, year Clipped Wings National will be offering eighteen \$1,000 grants for the World Games in Shanghai.

"All we ask is that the family shows an active participation in their athlete's life with Special Olympics," said Patti. "To give a gift without



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'ties' is to give a gift of love. I truly do feel this way about the grant: if I get to meet the parents, great! But if I don't, I know that they will be there for their athlete and that is what is most important."

For more information, visit <http://www.clippedwings.com>

Medical Team Treats Own "Addiction" As They Return Another Year to World Games

The previous newsletter featured the newest "1/3" of the Team USA medical team, but the delegation is honored to have two doctors return from the 2005 World Games to treat their own addiction to our Special Olympics athletes.

Dr. Pat Moore and Dr. Kristina Burns both came back from Japan in 2005 with many fond memories, but also great ideas to apply for the 2007 games. With the goal of facilitating the preparation and maintenance of our team's health leading to peak performance by each of our athletes, the medical team admits that trips overseas offer several challenges.

"The extended travel time, the significant time change and nutritional issues will certainly keep us on alert at all times," said Dr. Burns of Kansas City, Mo., who works at Research Medical Center. Dr. Burns is a member of Health Care Associated Emergency Physicians and is a Board Certified Emergency Medicine Physician in practice for the past 11 years since graduating from residency.

"With our athletes having cultural dietary differences and being on medications that will need a timing adjustment with our time change, it will be challenging to stay on top of these issues as they are all housed in four or more different locations," added Dr. Burns.

Dr. Moore expressed interest in participating in Special Olympics on an international level because of the positive experiences he has had on a local and state level over the past 20 years.

"It always seems I get so much more out of the experience than I am able to put into it," said Dr. Moore. "Special Olympics makes you want to be a better person. I hope I can somehow give back to the athletes a fraction of the joy I have received from them."

Moore is originally from Dickinson, N.D., but has lived and practiced



Dr. Moore



Dr. Burns

in Grand Forks, N.D., for the past 20 years. He is a Board Certified Family Physician, working in Altru Health System where he sees patients in an outpatient clinic setting. He also has a small hospital practice and periodically works in the Urgent Care Department of the local hospital.

The Team USA medical team will be available around the clock for any medical issues regarding the Team USA delegation including overseeing the dispensing of medications to all athletes, tracking the medical issues experienced by Team USA for future reference, and providing medical directives with the understanding that hands-on medical service will be provided by the GOC Medical Services in Shanghai. The team will work with Heads of Delegations to determine effective medical information flow to head and assistant coaches.

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