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Celebrity Winterfest® Raises Much-Needed Funds for Special Olympics

NORTH LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT KEY TO SUCCESS

INCLINE VILLAGE, Nev. -- Thanks to the generosity and efforts of local business sponsors, corporate teams, Special Olympic athletes and a group of celebrities and volunteers, the annual Celebrity Winterfest® last weekend at Diamond Peak Ski Resort and the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe raised more than \$250,000 to support Special Olympics Northern California and Nevada. Next year the event is scheduled for March 4-6.

All proceeds from the weekend, which included a corporate Ski Challenge and a Plungefest for Incline Village locals at the Hyatt Regency's private beach, will support more than 17,000 athletes in Nevada and Northern California who rely on donations to receive free sports training and competition throughout the year.

"This had to be one of the best Celebrity Winterfest® events we have had in our 14-year history of holding this event," said Rick Collett, CEO and President, Special Olympics Northern California and Nevada. "Our guests absolutely loved the venues at the Hyatt and Diamond Peak, and we felt great energy from our Incline Village hosts and the community. We are already looking forward to next year."

Some 250 guests attended the weekend's many Celebrity Winterfest® events, which for the first time were open to the local community. The welcome reception, Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament, awards dinner and live auction were attended by guests and local residents as well.

But perhaps the biggest surprise was the significant participation from members of the community for the first ever Plungefest. Lead fundraisers included Bill Horn, General Manager of the Incline Village General Improvement District and Mark Pardue, General Manager of the Hyatt Regency. Teams included Sierra Nevada College "Frozen Eagles", the Hyatt Regency "Leprechauns" and the Diamond Peak Ullr-God of Snow Team among others.

"Celebrity Winterfest was a complete success from our standpoint" said Ed Youmans, General Manager of Diamond Peak Ski Resort. "All the participants and spectators had a great time at a great venue that

really allowed Special Olympics to be front and center at the ski resort and showcased a meaningful event. We're really looking forward to Celebrity Winterfest 2011", Youmans said.

Those skiing at Diamond Peak during the Celebrity Winterfest® had a chance to watch corporate teams race down Show-Off for a chance to win bragging rights for fastest team, best dressed or best spill. Ten corporate teams were paired with a Special Olympics athlete and a celebrity skier. The California Police Youth Charities Team came in first place with a time of 2:48:51 followed by Team Ericsson Gate Crashers with 3:05:48. Blazent won best-dressed ski team, and Bay Area TV reporter John Sasaki earned honors for best wreck.

Participating celebrities included: Tim Abell (Buttermilk Sky, Soldier of God); Michael Buie (Mystery Alaska); Scott Michael Campbell (Brokeback Mountain); Melissa Dimino (US Olympian, speed skiing); Kevin Durand (Lost, X-Men Origins:Wolverine); Juliette Goodrich (anchor, Bay Area CBS 5); Thyme Lewis (Days of Our Lives); Tony Lopez (3x World Champion Boxer); Justin Melvey (Dancing with the Stars, Australia, General Hospital); Debbie Meyer (3x Olympic Gold Medalist- swimming); Rick Ravanello (Trial by Fire; Fatal Kiss); and John Sasaki (Bay Area reporter, FOX KTVU 2).

The 2010 Celebrity Winterfest® was presented by Blazent, a global IT-outsource company and co-sponsored by the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort and Casino and Diamond Peak Ski Resort. Media sponsors include the Bay Area News Group and KPIX-CBS Channel 5. The weekend's events are supported by Ericsson, Continental Airlines, Pacific Color Graphics, Ogden-Costa Creative Design, Hertz and The Bodhi Tree.

About Special Olympics Northern California & Nevada

Special Olympics Northern California & Nevada is a free year-round sports training and competition program for children and adults with developmental disabilities. More than 17,000 athletes compete in 178 competitions throughout the region in 12 sports. This requires the extraordinary support and time of 12,700 volunteers and more than 4,600 volunteer coaches. Programs are free to all eligible athletes. Financial support comes almost exclusively from individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations. For more information on Special Olympics Northern California, visit www.SONC.org. or www.SONV.org for Nevada.

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