



For Immediate Release

Contact Information:

Wanny Hersey

Phone: (650) 947-4939

Fax: (650) 947-4989

Website: www.bullischarterschool.org

Email: whersey@bullischarterschool.org

Bullis Charter School to Host Invitational Junior Olympics

1,000 kids from eight charter schools will compete at Stanford's Cobb Field

Will be cheered on by local Olympians

Los Altos, California, May 30, 2008:

"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."—the Olympic Creed*

More than 1,000 young people from diverse charter schools and communities throughout the Bay Area will seek to fulfill the Olympic Creed as they participate in the Bullis Charter School Invitational Junior Olympics. The day-long event will take place at Stanford University's Cobb Track and Angell Field on Sunday, June 8, 2008.

The young people will be cheered on and awarded medals by a variety of local Olympians and athletes, including:

- Ms. Susan Jones Roy, a swimmer in the 1968 Olympic Games
- Ms. Nancy Lippe, a member of the 1980 U.S. Olympic field hockey team
- Mr. Kerry McCoy, a wrestler in the 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games
- Ms. Sara Lowe, a synchronized swimmer in the 2004 Olympic Games
- Mr. Matt Gentry, a Canadian wrestler in the 2008 Olympic Games
- Mr. Vic Moreno, a wrestler and 2008 Olympic Trials Qualifier
- Mr. Michael Mitchell, a wrestler and coach at Stanford University
- Ms. Courtenay Stewart, a synchronized swimmer for Stanford University

“This should be an exciting and challenging event for the kids,” said Mr. McCoy, noting that it will provide them a chance to do their best athletically, while also learning about the tremendous fellowship and respect that is part of athletic competitions that bring people from different communities together.

“We are so excited to have the opportunity to partner with our fellow charter schools in an event that will reach beyond our individual school classrooms and communities to give our students a new athletic and character-building experience,” said Mrs. Wanny Hersey, principal/superintendent of Bullis Charter School (BCS), a K-6 school located in Los Altos, about her decision to spearhead this event.

Hersey noted that BCS reached out to charter schools that are located within a reasonable proximity to one another in order to facilitate coordination efforts. In addition to BCS, the charter schools that will participate in the program are located in Livermore, San Jose, Morgan Hill, and Richmond.

Seeking to echo the traditions of the International Olympic Games, students from all eight schools will participate in an opening ceremony that includes a performance of the National Anthem, a specially decorated banner for each school, and an individually choreographed dance routine.

The program will feature running relays (50m, 100m, and 400m), individual track events (100m, 400m, 800m, and 1600m), standard field events (the long jump, the triple jump, the shot put and the junior shot put), and other events that are geared toward the youngest children (the egg and cup race, football kickoff, and basketball shootout).

In preparation for the event, all of the participating charter schools are providing their students with special athletic instruction while also weaving information about the Olympic tradition into their curricula.

At BCS, for example, some 3-6 grade students are participating in a special elective class that is researching the history of the Olympics. And at the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) Heartwood Academy, a Grade 5-8 school in San Jose, students are preparing for the individual athletic events, while also studying the history of the Olympics and of Ancient Greece, said Mr. David Walton, the school's physical education coach.

Indeed, for all of the participating charter schools, the value of the day will go far beyond the individual athletic victories. "We have a slogan on our gym uniforms that says, "Strength means nothing without heart," Mr. Walton of the KIPP Academy said, "And this is the mantra that informs our kids' approach to athletic competition."

And at Charter School of Morgan Hill (CSMH), students in Mrs. Mosher's art class designed commemorative T-shirts, while Mr. Cross' Technology students developed an informational website for the event. "Getting our student body involved in all aspects of this event has been really gratifying," said Ms. Laura Hagiperos, the school's athletic director. "It was great for our 7th and 8th graders to feel as though they could really contribute to the event while learning new skills in the process," she said.

In keeping with this spirit of fellowship, the BCS Invitational Jr. Olympics will award medals not only to individuals in all of the track and field events that are held but will also provide a medal to the school that demonstrates the best sportsmanship.

Hersey and other charter school principals hope that the upcoming BCS Invitational Jr. Olympics is the beginning of a tradition that is continued for years to come. As for the work involved in coordinating the day-long program with the participation of eight charter schools that have not previously collaborated in this manner, Hersey was undaunted.

"We are all part of a local charter school community and we share a common experience of forming schools from the ground up. There is a bond that comes from such shared experience and also a fearlessness about breaking new ground and trying new things. It has been wonderful to see how our different schools are integrating the experience of the Olympics into their individual programs and empowering the students to take on leadership roles."

More than 1,000 children will benefit from this energy and commitment when the BCS Invitational Jr. Olympics take place on June 8 in a day of competition and fellowship that few young people are likely to forget.

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The eight charter schools that will be participating in the BCS Invitational Junior Olympics are:

- Bullis Charter School (Los Altos, K-6)
- Charter School of Morgan Hill (K-8)

- Escuela Popular Accelerated Family Learning (San Jose, K-4)
- KIPP Heartwood Academy (San Jose, 5-8)
- Livermore Valley Charter School (K-8)
- Making Waves Academy (Richmond, 5th)
- Rocketship Education (San Jose, K-3)
- Voices-College Bound Language Academy (San Jose, K-1)

*-The words of the Olympic creed are attributed to Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games according to the official U.S. Olympic Team website at usolympicteam.com