



JUNIOR BLIND OLYMPICS OFFERS ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUNDREDS OF BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN

Junior Blind of America and the Optimist Blind Youth Association Host 5th Annual Event Promoting Athleticism and Independence

LOS ANGELES (April 18, 2009) - Junior Blind of America, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping children and adults who are blind, visually impaired or multi-disabled achieve independence, and the Optimist Blind Youth Association, a non-profit organization committed to meeting the needs of communities and their blind youth, will co-host the 5th annual **Junior Blind Olympics on Saturday, April 18, 2009, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** at Junior Blind of America, 5300 Angeles Vista Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90043.

Providing a critical opportunity for children who are blind or visually impaired to participate in physical activities, the Junior Blind Olympics offers athletes ages 6 to 19 the chance to compete in Olympic-style events including shot put, long jump, archery, numerous races and Goalball, a game developed specifically for the blind and visually impaired. The event will be attended by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and District Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

“We are very excited to welcome more than 800 athletes, family members and volunteers to the 5th annual Junior Blind Olympics,” says Miki Jordan, President, Junior Blind of America. “With increased support from dedicated sponsors this year, we are able to provide more children with the opportunity to challenge their athletic abilities, overcome sight barriers and achieve their dreams.”

Sponsored by the Chumash Casino Resort, CVS/pharmacy and HBO, the Junior Blind Olympics promotes athleticism and independence among blind and visually impaired children. Currently, children who are blind or visually impaired exhibit significantly lower levels of physical fitness in comparison to their sighted peers, putting them at greater risk for health related issues, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity.

“Through fun and challenging activities, athletes are empowered to build the self esteem, confidence and independence that will enable them to live healthy and productive lives,” says Marcia Laski, President of the Optimist Blind Youth Association.

About Junior Blind of America

Founded in 1953 as the Foundation for the Junior Blind, Junior Blind of America remains an innovative leader in helping people of all ages who are blind, visually impaired or multi-disabled achieve independence. Each year, Junior Blind of America provides

services to thousands of individuals and their families through programs that offer individualized methods of early-intervention therapy, education, rehabilitation and recreation. These life-changing programs are designed to empower infants, children, teens and adults to reach their highest level of independence and self-esteem. To learn more, please visit www.juniorblind.org.

About Optimist Blind Youth Association (OBYA)

OBYA is a separate foundation working under the umbrella of Optimist International to continue "Bringing out the best in kids" by co-sponsoring the Junior Blind Olympics. The membership consists of dedicated members of Optimist Clubs throughout the Pacific Southwest, Pacific Southeast and California South Districts. Their affiliation with the Junior Blind Olympics has been a strong force for over 36 years, and they continue to strive to make the games a more challenging and enjoyable event for all those that participate and attend.

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