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**MORE THAN 200 BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN  
BECOME ATHLETES AT ANNUAL JUNIOR BLIND OLYMPICS**

*Junior Blind of America and the Optimist Blind Youth Association  
Host 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Event in Los Angeles on Saturday, April 9, 2011*

**LOS ANGELES (April 9, 2011) – Hundreds of blind and visually impaired children will gather early Saturday, April 9, 2011, at the Junior Blind of America to compete in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Junior Blind Olympics**, hosted by the 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. The event will begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 3 p.m. at Junior Blind of America, 5300 Angeles Vista Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90043.

At the Junior Blind Olympics, blind or visually impaired youth between the ages of 6 and 19 participate in challenging, fun and confidence-building Olympic-style sporting events, including shot put, running long jump, rock wall climbing, archery, 50-yard dash and goalball—a game developed specifically for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

**In total, nearly 1,000 athletes, family members and volunteers are expected to attend from throughout California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah.** Los Angeles County Second District Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, California State Senator Curren Price and California State Assembly Member, Holly J. Mitchell, will be on hand to lend their support.

“We are pleased to present the Junior Blind Olympics, an event where children who are blind or visually impaired become athletes and experience the thrill of competition and achievement,” says Miki Jordan, President of Junior Blind of America. “This event provides our athletes with the extraordinary opportunity to overcome their fears, challenge themselves physically and experience success.”

Dara Laski, President of the Optimist Blind Youth Association added, “We look forward to the Junior Blind Olympics each year. We see the athletes transform right in front of our eyes from shy and cautious in the morning to confident and eager by day’s end. They take that self-assurance home with them and it helps them to engage in more physical and social activities.”

**Sponsored by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Aetna, Occidental Entertainment Group Holdings, CVS/pharmacy, Echo Communicate, Inc. and PXP**, the Junior Blind Olympics consist of athletic competitions that have been modified so that children who are blind or visually impaired can participate and enjoy the benefits of socialization and physical activity. When compared with their sighted peers, youth who are blind or visually impaired exhibit significantly lower levels of physical fitness, putting them at greater risk for associated health

related issues, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity. The Junior Blind Olympics helps bridge that gap.

### **About Junior Blind of America**

Established as the Foundation for the Junior Blind in 1953, Junior Blind's mission is helping children and adults who are blind, visually impaired or multi-disabled achieve independence. Based in Los Angeles, we offer specialized services for thousands of infants, children, teens and adults at no cost to families. Through programs that offer early intervention, education, recreation and rehabilitation, our students learn essential skills to help them maximize their potential and achieve their goals. To learn more, please visit [www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org).

### **About Optimist Blind Youth Association (OBYA)**

The Optimist Blind Youth Association is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization organized in 1972 to assist visually impaired youth to participate in the annual Junior Blind Olympics. OBYA operates under Optimist International, an organization that continues to meet the needs of young people by “bringing out the best in kids” since 1919. Optimists conduct positive service projects aimed at providing a helping hand to youth. Club members throughout the world are best known in their communities for their upbeat attitudes. By believing in young people and empowering them to be the best they can, Optimist volunteers continually make this world a better place to live. To learn more, please visit [www.optimistblindyouth.org](http://www.optimistblindyouth.org).

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