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Local Special Olympics Athlete goes to Washington to Discuss the Impact of Special Olympics and Request Federal Funding

Las Vegas, NV, March 11, 2008 – Henderson Special Olympics athlete Cari Davis, 31 years old, is used to meeting difficult obstacles and getting plenty of attention for her efforts, but now she has a new challenge that might cause plenty of her peers to hesitate. Cari is going to Washington, DC next week to ask members of Congress for money. She wants to make sure that a growing number of developmentally disabled adults and children continue to receive the funding that will change their lives.

Cari hopes to meet with Nevada Senator Harry Reid, a strong supporter of Special Olympics as well as State Congressional Representatives Shelley Berkley, Dean Heller and John Porter. She will be among the more than 40 Special Olympics athletes from around the country who will discuss with her representatives the impact of Special Olympics and request continued and additional support for much-needed programming for the largest disability population in the world – people with intellectual disabilities.

“By supporting the goals of the Sport and Empowerment Act through funding of Special Olympics programs, our members of Congress will help educate people about our needs and everything we can accomplish,” Cari explained.

“For me to do my best, I also need to be a healthy athlete,” Cari said, adding that the request also includes a Healthy Athletes Program. “The Healthy Athletes Program helps teach doctors how to care for people like me, and make sure I can see the finish line and hear my coaches.”

“The Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act, HR 5131, is groundbreaking legislation which encourages and supports the growth of Special Olympics Programs in Nevada and across the United States”, said Marybeth McMahon, Executive Vice President of Special Olympics Nevada. “It also includes the expansion of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes and education initiatives around intellectual disabilities.”

“Although the legislation will not expire for over a year, we are seeking support now so when the bill is reintroduced next year we have plenty of support and can ensure it is quickly approved,” McMahon said.

In November 2004, President George Bush signed the Sport & Empowerment Act in to law, which authorizes \$15 million a year in federal funding for Special Olympics in the areas of education, health and worldwide expansion. In 2009, the 2004 Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act will need to be reauthorized. Through year-round sports training and competition, Special Olympics athletes develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community. These experiences transcend the playing field and Special Olympics athletes become better students, employees and contributing members of society.

About Special Olympics Nevada

Special Olympics Nevada is a free year-round sports training and competition program for children and adults with developmental disabilities. More than 3,200 athletes compete in some 23 competitions throughout the region in 19 sports. This requires the extraordinary support and time of over 5,000 volunteers and 523 volunteer coaches. Programs are free to all eligible athletes. Financial support comes almost exclusively from individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations. Find out how you can be a fan and visit www.SONV.org.