



Special Olympics Launches New “Be a fan™” Marketing Campaign

Movement positions itself to be society’s largest platform for acceptance and inclusion of all people

Washington D.C., February 4, 2009 – This week, Special Olympics will launch its first-ever global marketing campaign during their 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games. The **Be a fan™** campaign, created by Special Olympics International Board Director Andrew Robertson and his team at BBDO Worldwide, was developed to highlight the commonality of all people and the values we all share and admire. Be a fan is being used throughout the world by the more than 200 Special Olympics Programs in more than 180 countries, making this the first time in its 40-year existence, that the movement has launched a global marketing campaign.

Be a fan is a fully integrated marketing campaign designed to send a powerful message that resonates with the general public, tapping into core values and attributes that everyone can appreciate - **unity, acceptance, empowerment, dignity, courage, strength, pride, confidence and fun**. The campaign will help connect with people who are not already associated with the Special Olympics movement to bridge the “relevancy gap” and, ultimately, build a larger global family of fans.

The campaign launches with television, print and out-of-home advertising this quarter and is the theme of the 2009 World Winter Games, Special Olympics’ flagship event which highlights athletes’ year-round work and accomplishments.

“We need more people to realize that Special Olympics isn’t just about people with intellectual disabilities, but is an opportunity for everyone to be a part of a movement that unites people in the spirit of acceptance, hope and dignity, and celebrates the human race,” said Timothy Shriver, Chairman of Special Olympics. “It is our hope that people will see that the impact of our movement can ultimately transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby celebrate the similarities common to all people.

Using the powerful and compelling images of Special Olympics athletes by renowned photographer Richard Corman, the display advertising component and marketing communications materials of the campaign are not only artistic, but also show the true power of the human spirit. Corman has spent more than 15 years volunteering his talents to the Special Olympics by photographing Special Olympics athletes in every corner of the world.

“Special Olympics is not an organization, it’s a movement, a force for good, and everybody who comes into contact with it is richer for it,” said Andrew Robertson, President and CEO of BBDO Worldwide, Inc. “Be a fan is designed to enroll people in the movement. The best lines aren’t written, they’re repeated. And this one will be.”



Special Olympics will integrate this new brand direction and messaging throughout all aspects of the movement, including events, promotions, viral marketing, partnerships and collateral materials. Special Olympics' Web site (www.specialolympics.org) has been redesigned to reflect this new direction by drawing in visitors with rich media assets and features that help visitors to the site connect with the movement.

As part of the revamped site, Special Olympics has launched a new online Fan Community (www.specialolympics.org/fans) where anyone who is a fan of dignity and acceptance can share their stories, pictures and videos, as well as connect with others who have a similar passion and create communities of mutual acceptance and respect for all people. "We are encouraging everyone who values human dignity to come and share their contagious enthusiasm for acceptance and fun by uniting with others around the globe in our Fan Community," said Shriver.

An additional engagement aspect of the campaign is an awareness initiative surrounding the pejorative use of the word "retard." Special Olympics will be encouraging people to be a fan of respect and not say the "R-word." The R-word portion of the Be a fan campaign was also created by BBDO and reflects Special Olympics' continuing leadership efforts to educate people about the gifts and talents of people with intellectual disabilities and promote acceptance and inclusion. The R-word campaign supports other Special Olympics educational initiatives: SO Get Into It[®] curriculum, a school-based curriculum for K-12 grades; Unified Sports[®], a sport program for people with and without disability; and a new National Youth Activation Project — "Project Unify."

The launch of Be a fan as a fully integrated marketing and engagement campaign highlights to the world the very best in humanity and demonstrates that through the platform of sport, Special Olympics is creating a world of acceptance and dignity by building communities around the world not just for people with intellectual disabilities, but for all of us.

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by promoting understanding, acceptance and inclusion among people with and without intellectual disabilities. Through year-round sports training and athletic competition and other related programming for nearly 3 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities in more than 180 countries, Special Olympics has created a model community that celebrates people's diverse gifts. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. Visit Special Olympics at www.specialolympics.org.

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