

For Immediate Release

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2009 World Winter Games Athletes Shine

More than 2,000 Special Olympics athletes from almost 100 countries competed in seven Olympic-type winter sports at the 2009 World Winter Games: Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, snowboarding, figure skating, speed skating, snowshoeing and floor hockey.

Special Olympics involves athletes from all ability levels who have intellectual disabilities. A very small percentage of Special Olympics athletes also have physical disabilities. In order to assure fair competition, Special Olympics athletes are placed in "divisions" with other athletes of similar ability. Each division is a "final" allowing all athletes a fair opportunity to compete with a chance to place first or win. This system is designed to challenge each athlete to do his or her best while providing a meaningful and enjoyable experience.

Special Olympics is not about "swifter, higher, stronger"; it is about achieving one's personal best. Athletes show the benefits of months of training as they strive for new personal heights, and are rewarded by specially designed World Games medals.

The 2009 World Winter Games medals and awards, designed by World Winter Games Director of Brand Management Joan Scofield, incorporated patterns and elements of the signature snowflake from the World Winter Games logo, as well as the "look" of the Games through bold color palates.

"We look forward to seeing the genuine look of joy, pride and accomplishment on the athletes' faces when the awards are presented during competition at the Games," said Heather Hill, Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games. "This is something our athletes will be proud to wear back to their home countries as a symbol of their achievements and triumphs during their time in Idaho."

The medals are 24k gold and nickel plate finished and feature a satin finish with raised, high polished logos on each side. The hand struck medallions from hardened steel dies use one-thousand tons of pressure to strike both sides of the medals. A special trim tool was created to make the medallion rectangular and they are hand polished one piece at a time.

MTM Recognition, which has sponsored World Games medals and ribbons for Special Olympics since the 1991 International Games, produced the medals. "As an 18-year sponsor and licensee of Special Olympics, we are honored to help celebrate the achievements of Special Olympics athletes around the globe", said Roger Mashore, President and COO.

MTM is headquartered in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, creating and implementing recognition programs that celebrate achievement, reward performance, honor service, brand and reinforce company image. MTM offers comprehensive, meaningful, memorable recognition solutions.

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