



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hartford resident Albert Lognin joined other Special Olympians and Best Buddies Participants from Connecticut on Capitol Hill January 27 to urge Members of Congress to pass The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act.

Washington, D.C. – February 18, 2010 – In conjunction with their efforts on Capitol Hill, Special Olympics Chairman and CEO, Tim Shriver, and Best Buddies Founder and Chairman, Anthony Shriver, have announced an official annual day in honor of their mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, every fourth Saturday in September with the first this September 25, 2010. Mrs. Shriver was a trail blazing leader who broke down barriers to improve the lives of millions of persons with intellectual disabilities, their families and communities around the world for over five decades.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day honors the vision, commitment and achievements of Mrs. Shriver and the tradition of making a difference that began in her backyard. The day's events will honor her inspiration, impact and indomitable spirit and challenge generations to "play on" by becoming agents of acceptance and action in their communities. The Day will include a series of initiatives that celebrate Mrs. Shriver's legacy, including local sports clinics and seminars, the building of Unity Sports Fields to serve the world's poorest countries, and an online celebration inviting people to teach Mrs. Shriver's story, share new stories of change, and join Special Olympics' and Best Buddies' call to action for acceptance, skill and dignity.

Special Olympics and Best Buddies joined together on Wednesday on Capitol Hill to urge Members of Congress to pass *The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act*, which will continue a national commitment by the U.S. Congress made with passage of the *2004 Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act*. *The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act* also includes *The Best Buddies Empowerment for People with Intellectual Disabilities Act of 2009*, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in April 2009. This new legislation continues the legacy of Mrs. Shriver by authorizing funds for specific programs supporting persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in health, education and global program initiatives. Mrs. Shriver, who passed away in August 2009, founded Special Olympics in 1968 and was a longtime supporter and board member of Best Buddies, which was founded in 1989.

Over the course of Wednesday, Special Olympics athletes and Best Buddies participants, along with coaches, program leaders and family members from 43 states, participated in their annual Capitol Hill Day in honor of the legacy of Mrs. Shriver. More than 275 meetings were held, more than half of which were with Members of Congress.

On Wednesday, January 27, Special Olympics athletes and Best Buddies participants from Connecticut joined with coaches, program leaders and family members from 43 states to participate in their annual Capitol Hill Day in honor of the legacy of Mrs. Shriver. **Albert Lognin, a Best Buddies participant and Special Olympian for over twenty years and Special Olympics athlete, Katie Harrington, and three executives represented their state program on behalf of all of Special Olympics and Best Buddies to honor Mrs. Shriver and meet with seven state members of Congress.**

The day culminated in a reception in honor of Mrs. Shriver, which was attended by members of Congress including: Representative Roy Blunt (R-MO), Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), Representative Norman Dicks (D-WA), Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT), Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), , Representative Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), Representative Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), Senator Paul G. Kirk (D-MA) Representative Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ), and Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH). White House Disability Policy Advisor Kareem Dale also attended.

Also showing their support in attendance were Hollywood Records recording artist **Joe Jonas** of the Grammy nominated, platinum album selling **Jonas Brothers**, 10-time Olympic Gold medalist **Carl Lewis**, as well as Miss Maryland USA Simone Feldman, and Miss Maryland Teen USA Kamie Crawford.

Some of the highlights of the day include:

- A morning run on the National Mall with **Joe Jonas, Carl Lewis**, Special Olympics athletes, Best Buddies participants, **Tim Shriver** and **Anthony Shriver**.
- Special Olympics and Best Buddies meeting with **Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)** who made remarks including: "...Most important is what we can do in a matter of public policy, and that is our responsibility. So we look forward to passing *The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act of 2010*."
- Senator **Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee**, presented his official Chairman's gavel to Best Buddy Emilio Mark from Maui High School in Hawaii.
- As a result of today's meetings, nearly every delegation has Members of Congress interested and eager to sign-on as co-sponsors to *The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act of 2010*.
- **Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT)** gave Special Olympics Utah athlete Donna Gunn a ticket to the State of the Union address by President Barack Obama.
- **Vice President Joe Biden** met at his residence with a delegation of Special Olympics athletes and Best Buddies from Delaware, Nevada, and Texas.

Special Olympics and Best Buddies constituents are being empowered through the Capitol Hill Day opportunity to meet with their Members of Congress to share their success, but also their need for support of people with IDD's. The Special Olympics/Best Buddies contingent are seeking support for federal "seed dollars" make a critical contribution to allowing these global grass roots, volunteer driven movements to deliver critical services down to the local level around the world, including some of the most challenging environments. Many Special Olympics and Best Buddies Programs rely on this

funding to provide vital services to persons with IDD and their families, including the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes[®] program, Project UNIFY education program, and Best Buddies friendship, employment and leadership programs.

More than 200 million people worldwide have intellectual disabilities, making this the largest disability group worldwide. Intellectual and developmental disabilities cross racial, ethnic, educational, social and economic lines, and can occur in any family.

Special Olympics and Best Buddies are grateful for the generous support of CSC, which underwrote a reception for our Capitol Hill Day participants. CSC is a global leader in providing technology-enabled solutions and services through three primary lines of business. These include Business Solutions and Services, the Managed Services Sector and the North American Public Sector.

“CSC is proud to be part of this important day,” said David M. Parsons, vice president of Global Alliances & Solutions for CSC. “We believe that all people should have the opportunity to participate and contribute to society, and so we are inspired by Best Buddies and the Special Olympics’ commitment to creating new opportunities for people with disabilities.”

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to more than 3 million athletes in over 170 countries in all regions of the world providing year round sports training, athletic competition and other related programs. Special Olympics takes place every day, changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in places like China and from regions like the Middle East to the community playgrounds and ball fields in every small neighborhood’s backyard. 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.

About Best Buddies International

Best Buddies[®] is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs). Founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, Best Buddies is a vibrant organization that has grown from one original chapter to more than 1,500 middle school, high school, and college chapters worldwide. Best Buddies programs engage participants in each of the 50 United States, as well as 46 countries, with additional ones under development. Best Buddies six formal programs – Best Buddies Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Citizens, e-Buddies and Jobs – positively impact more than 700,000 individuals with and without IDDs annually. As a result of their involvement with Best Buddies, people with IDDs secure rewarding jobs, live on their own, and make lifelong friendships. For more information, please visit www.bestbuddies.org.

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