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Dallas Businessman Issues Statewide Challenge to Send Texas Athletes to China

T. Boone Pickens' challenge to benefit Special Olympics Texas

DALLAS -- T. Boone Pickens of Dallas has issued a statewide challenge that has the potential to raise \$200,000 for Special Olympics Texas (SOTX). The T. Boone Pickens Foundation has committed a matching gift of up to \$100,000 for all money raised to help send 63 SOTX athletes to compete at the World Summer Games in China this October.

When asked about the challenge, Mr. Pickens said, "I have long-standing ties with Special Olympics. They have strong leadership and a proven commitment to providing so many great opportunities through such spirited competitions. Investing in this program through a challenge match to help underwrite their efforts internationally was an easy call."

It costs approximately \$6,000 to send one athlete to China for the Games and cover the associated expenses, which totals more than \$375,000 for Texas' journey. Athletes help fundraise, and Special Olympics Texas is securing sponsors and donors to underwrite the costs. If you're interested in sponsoring an athlete or making a donation through the matching program for Team Texas' journey, call Janet Smith at 817.332.3433.

"Thanks to Mr. Pickens' tremendous generosity through his challenge match, you can double the impact that your gift makes on our athletes' lives," said Margaret Larsen, President and CEO of Special Olympics Texas. "When you make a donation for our athletes' journey to China, your gift will help provide a once in a lifetime opportunity for these athletes."

(MORE)

Earlier in the year, Mr. Pickens delivered a \$25,000 gift to Special Olympics Texas, after making a community challenge at Special Olympics Texas' Power of the Dream Black Tie Gala last November. Pickens challenged the community to raise \$25,000, which he agreed to match if raised. The community delivered, and so did he. That money was designated to support local program expenses including the cost of medals, equipment, trainings and competitions.

About the Special Olympic World Summer Games

Team USA, which includes 63 Texas athletes, will depart for the Special Olympics World Summer Games on September 27. This Games is the largest international sporting event to happen in 2007, bringing together nearly 7,500 athletes from 165 countries with support from tens of thousands of volunteers, family members and spectators, and offers a world stage to showcase the Special Olympics movement on a new level, celebrating the abilities and accomplishments of people with intellectual disabilities and fostering a new global vision of acceptance.

About Special Olympics Texas

Special Olympics Texas is a privately funded non-profit organization, providing year-round sports training and athletic competition for 25,841 children and adults with intellectual disabilities [mental retardation] in the Lone Star State. For more information about Special Olympics Texas, visit www.specialolympicstexas.org or call 800.876.JOIN.

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