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SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA CANCELS SPORTS TRAINING CAMP AT ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 9-15, 2009

(NORRISTOWN, PA, AUGUST, 13 2009) – Due to overriding concern for the health and safety of its athletes, volunteers and staff, leadership from Special Olympics Pennsylvania and the North American Council (NAC) of Teen Society of Orthodox Youth Organizations (SOYO) announced yesterday that it has immediately canceled the Multi-Sports Training Camp scheduled to take place August 9-15, 2009 at Antiochian Village in Bolivar, Pennsylvania.

In the days prior to the scheduled start of the SOPA/SOYO Multi-Sports Training Camp, over a dozen campers and staff currently participating in Antiochian Village's summer camp session started to develop flu-like symptoms.

“While we are sorry to disappoint our athletes and volunteers with this news, this joint decision by SOPA and the SOYO camp leadership was made with the health and well-being of athletes, volunteers and staff as our primary concern,” said Matthew Aaron, SOPA President and CEO.

The decision to cancel the camp session was made in part due to the fact that Special Olympics athletes and volunteers could not be assured that they would not be exposed to influenza due to the nature of how the virus spreads through droplets and contact, as noted by the Division of Infectious Disease.

“Both the staff of the Antiochian Village and the members of NAC Teen SOYO are truly disappointed that we will not have the opportunity to host the athletes and coaches of Special Olympics Pennsylvania,” said V. Rev. Anthony G. Yazge, Camp Director for Antiochian Village Camp & Conference Center. “Sports Camp is one of the true highlights of our year. We extend our apologies to all of the athletes and coaches and hope to see them in 2010.”

Approximately 150 Special Olympics athletes from across Pennsylvania ranging in age from 12 to 50-plus participate in this week-long training camp, featuring instruction in aquatics, athletics, basketball, bocce, golf, hiking, soccer, snowshoeing, softball, tennis and volleyball. The multi-sports training camp is staffed by 50 SOPA coaches and 50 church youth group volunteers from the North American Council (NAC) of Teen SOYO. Funding for camp, which equals an in-kind donation of approximately \$50,000, has been provided by NAC Teen SOYO led by Father Anthony Yazge, Antiochian Village Camp Director.

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) provides year-round training and competition in 23 Olympic-type sports to more than 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For more information about how to Be a Fan, visit our Web site at www.specialolympicspa.org.

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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation
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