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**UNIFIED OLYMPIAN/SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES RELAY TEAM TO RUN THE 30<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE ASICS LA MARATHON**

*Olympians will team-up with World Games participants in anticipation of Los Angeles' hosting of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games and the 2016 Olympic Team Trials for Men's and Women's Marathon*

**LOS ANGELES** (March 11, 2015)— LA MARATHON LLC today announced that it is teaming up with the Southern California Olympians & Paralympians and the 2015 Special Olympics World Games to form a Unified Relay that will run the ASICS LA Marathon. The team of Special Olympics Athletes and Olympians will have an honored role in the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the ASICS LA Marathon on Sunday, March 15, 2015.

"We are thrilled to host both local Olympic athletes and Special Olympics World Games participants at the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the ASICS LA Marathon," said Tracey Russell, Chief Executive of LA MARATHON LLC. "As an organization, we're honored to bring the 2016 Olympic Team Trials to Los Angeles and are also looking forward to supporting this summer's Special Olympics World Games. Both events help to further define Los Angeles as a city where world-class athletes and sporting events thrive."

The Unified Relay will consist of 13 pairs of athletes, a Special Olympics Athlete running side-by-side with an Olympian for approximately two miles of the 26.2 mile "Stadium to Sea" course. The relay team will have a commemorative start at Dodger Stadium prior to the general field and pass a baton among the athlete pairs as the team makes its way to the finish line just steps away from the Santa Monica Pier.

**Cobi Jones**, member of the 1992 Olympics U.S. Men's National Soccer Team and local LA Galaxy legend, is scheduled to run the first leg of the relay with Special Olympics Athlete Benjamin Bravo.

"I'm looking forward to kicking off the first ever Unified Relay as part of the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the ASICS LA Marathon," said Jones. "I've been running all my life on and off the soccer field, but I've never had the chance to participate in such an inspirational event. I'm honored to run as part of a team with World Games athletes who will be competing this summer, in the city where I grew up."

Some of the Olympians in the Unified Relay include:

- **Yuko Arimori**, Japanese Olympic Marathoner, Bronze in 1992 and Silver in 1996

- **Dain Blanton**, 2000 U.S. Olympic Gold Medalist in beach volleyball; 2004 U.S. Olympic Team member
- **Heather Bown**, 2008 U.S. Olympic Silver Medalist in volleyball; 2000 and 2004 U.S. Olympic Team member
- **Sky Christopherson**, U.S. Cycling Team athlete and alternate for the 1996 and 2000 U.S. Olympic Teams
- **Tamara Christopherson**, 2000 U.S. Olympic Team member; K-2 500m; Canoe & Kayak
- **Queen Harrison**, 2008 U.S. Olympic Team member, 400 meter hurdles
- **Jamie Nieto**, 2004 and 2012 U.S. Olympic Team member; high jumping
- **Taylor Ritzel**, 2012 U.S. Olympic Gold Medalist in rowing
- **Katherine Starr**, 1984 and 1988 Olympic Team member for Great Britain; swimming
- **Chris Soule**, 2002 and 2006 U.S. Olympic Team member; skeleton racing
- **Donald Suxho**, 2004 and 2012 U.S. Olympic Team member; volleyball
- **Jeff Williams**, 2004 Olympic Gold Medalist in baseball for Australia; 1996 Olympic Team member; former Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher from 1999-2002

“As we look forward to hosting 7,000 Special Olympics athletes from around the globe, the opportunity for our athletes to run the ASICS LA Marathon is a great way to celebrate the support of local Olympians and Paralympians,” said Pat McClenahan, President and Chief Executive Officer of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games. “The Special Olympics World Games will serve to unite the world through sports and we are pleased that the ASICS LA Marathon is creating a stage to celebrate the abilities and accomplishments of people with intellectual disabilities.”

The following Special Olympics World Games participants are scheduled to participate in the ASICS LA Marathon Unified Relay:

- **Benjamin Bravo**, Athletics; Hacienda Heights, CA
- **Laura Cook**, Athletics; El Monte, CA
- **Q Davila**, Tennis; Oceanside, CA
- **Erik Fido**, Bowling; Thousand Oaks, CA
- **Tiaunta Gray**, Bocce; Los Angeles, CA
- **Caelyn Griffith**, Gymnastics; Culver City, CA
- **Gregory Kozlowski**, Golf; Garden Grove, CA
- **Luke Rose**, Aquatics; Northridge, CA
- **Destiny Sanchez**, Athletics; Norwalk, CA
- **Mark Wolffer**, Athletics; Anaheim, CA

**About LA MARATHON LLC** LA MARATHON LLC, a subsidiary of McCourt Global, creates world-class experiences that ignite passion in athletes and connect communities through the transformative power of sport. The ASICS LA Marathon is among the largest marathons in the country with more than 25,000 participants, thousands of volunteers and hundreds of thousands of spectators. The “Stadium to the Sea” course, starting at Dodger Stadium and finishing near the Santa Monica Pier, is one of the most scenic in

the world, taking runners on a tour of Los Angeles past every major landmark. LA MARATHON LLC will host the 2016 Olympic Team Trials for Men's and Women's Marathon, awarded by USA Track & Field and the U.S. Olympic Committee, which will take place in Los Angeles February 13, 2016. For more information, please visit [www.lamarathon.com](http://www.lamarathon.com).

### **About Special Olympics World Games Los Angeles 2015**

With 7,000 athletes and 3,000 coaches representing 177 countries, along with 30,000 volunteers and an anticipated 500,000 spectators, the 2015 Special Olympics World Games - being staged in Los Angeles July 25 - August 2, 2015 - will be the largest sports and humanitarian event anywhere in the world in 2015, and the single biggest event in Los Angeles since the 1984 Olympic Games. The 2015 Special Olympics World Games, with the unparalleled spirit, enthusiasm, teamwork, joy and displays of courage and skill that are hallmarks of all Special Olympics events, will feature 25 Olympic-style sports in venues throughout the Los Angeles region. The Opening Ceremony, to be held July 25, 2015 in the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, site of the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games, is expected to attract 80,000 spectators. For more information on the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, including volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, visit [www.LA2015.org](http://www.LA2015.org) and on social with #ReachUpLA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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