

## Press Release

### **A very busy summer at Leicester Conferences**

As the 2009 summer season starts to take shape, universities up and down the country are gearing up for the mass influx of commercial guests now that the students have finished for this academic year. The customer mix will consist of typical residential conferences and events with a large portion of language and summer schools bringing overseas students for several weeks to study here in the UK.

In addition to this typical business model, Leicester Conferences at the University of Leicester will be hosting the largest ever sporting event to be held in Leicester - The Special Olympics 8<sup>th</sup> National GB Summer Games 2009.

Leicester Conferences has for the last two years been preparing to accommodate and cater for 2700 athletes, 1200 coaches and 1500 volunteers who will be descending on Leicester 25<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> July. The athletes will be competing in 21 different sports hosted in venues across the Leicestershire and Rutland area.

Celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the UK, the Special Olympics movement was founded in the USA in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister of the Late President John F. Kennedy. Officially a global charity and part of the International Olympics Movement, the Special Olympics is a non-elitist sport organisation that provides a free year-round training and competition programme for thousands of people with learning disabilities around the world. In the UK alone there are over 8000 members with work underway to reach a further 10,000 individuals by 2010.

As a major partner in providing and managing the accommodation and catering for the games' competitors, the University of Leicester has been planning the event which will require over 3500 bedrooms, breakfasts and evening meals together with over 5000 packed lunches each day.

Trevor Miller, Sales and Marketing Manager for Leicester Conferences comments "Organising the Special Olympics has been a very significant project since it not only involves dealing with the needs of 2500 plus delegates staying at the University but also coordinating with the many partners across the city involved with the games. Everyone here in Leicester is very excited and looking forward to welcoming the Special Olympians at the end of the month. As far as our regular conference and summer school

business is concerned, despite the economic climate we have managed to maintain business levels similar to those of last year with forward business looking healthy for 2010.

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