

## Press Release

### **The Special Olympics has arrived!**

**Over 3500 athletes and coaches descend on Leicester for the start of the Special Olympics GB National Summer Games 2009**

More than 3 years of planning have finally come together as the University of Leicester and the rest of the City gave a big welcome to all the Special Olympians who began arriving on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July.

The first regions arrived from Scotland and were warmly welcomed at Oadby Student Village on Friday afternoon to the sound of bagpipes and by many of the staff from Residential and Commercial Services.

The official start to the games was held at Walkers Stadium with a spectacular opening ceremony. It was attended by many VIP's who included from the University, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert Burgess; Registrar and Secretary, Dave Hall; Director of Residential and Commercial Services, Frances Stone and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Ian Postlethwaite.

As well as many local dignitaries, the opening ceremony was also attended by Prime Minister, Gordon Brown who took part in the ceremony by meeting many of the competing athletes during the stadium parade.

The Special Olympics will be taking place between 25<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July in 21 sporting venues throughout the Leicestershire region. The University has been a major partner and organiser of the games from the outset, having organised all accommodation and catering for the 3500 competing athletes and their supporting coaches and carers.

The Residential and Commercial Services operational team has been busy preparing all the accommodation at both the Oadby Student Village and City Living areas of Nixon Court and Opal Court. The scale of the event is quite staggering and all staff has risen to the challenge of the additional work involved, such as distributing and maintaining 70,000 portions of tea and coffee within the accommodation. Catering staff will be serving over 17,500 breakfasts and evening meals within the Oadby Dining Halls and Charles Wilson Building, City Campus. Lunchtime will involve the distribution of over 30,000 individually prepared packed lunches to 21 different sporting venues.

Trevor Miller, Conference Sales and Marketing Manager for Residential and Commercial Services comments: "Seeing the athletes finally arriving after so much planning was a truly remarkable and memorable moment. The University hosted the Special Olympics GB Summer Games back in 1989 and many of those arriving commented that it's great to be back in Leicester! I spoke to a couple of athlete coaches that stayed within Oadby in 1989 and they commented on how

much they were impressed with John Foster Hall. The coming week promises to be a very busy one and we wish all the athletes the best of success!"

Contact Details:

Mr Trevor Miller, Leicester Conferences, University of Leicester Conference Office,  
Stamford Hall, Stoughton Drive South, Leicester. LE2 2ND

Tel: 0116 271 9933

Fax: 0116 221 2053

Email: [conferences@le.ac.uk](mailto:conferences@le.ac.uk)

Internet: [www.leicesterconferences.co.uk](http://www.leicesterconferences.co.uk)