

For Immediate Release:

Contact:

**David Catalfamo
Lake Placid Regional Winter Sports Commission
917-573-2464**

**Sandy Caligiore, Stephanie Ryan
Olympic Regional Development Authority
518-523-1655**

“Gold Medal” Team to Educate Youth on Steroid Abuse

Lake Placid Regional Winter Sports Commission, ORDA, United States Olympic Committee and the Empire State Games collaborate with the Taylor Hooton Foundation, Luge Silver Medalist Gordy Sheer and the Albany County District Attorney’s office to fight steroid abuse

LAKE PLACID, N.Y. - On Saturday, February 23, 2008, the Lake Placid Regional Winter Sports Commission, Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), United States Olympic Committee and the Empire State Games will team up with the Taylor Hooton Foundation, Luge Silver Medalist Gordy Sheer and the Albany County District Attorney’s office to fight steroid abuse.

Don Hooton, President of the Taylor Hooton Foundation will speak at Saturday’s event. This steroid education program will be free, open to the public and will be held twice in the Olympic Center’s Lussi Rink at 1PM and 4PM.

The program will educate parents, athletes, and coaches about the physical, emotional, ethical and legal dangers posed by anabolic steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs. While these drugs have been in the headlines in every news outlet in this country in recent months, they aren’t front-of-mind with coaches and parents, who too often fail to see the warning signs that would tell them that their kids are using these drugs. Some surveys estimate that almost a million American youth used performance-enhancing drugs last year.

Mr. Hooton knows the challenges facing parents and coaches all too well. His 17-year old son, Taylor, committed suicide after using anabolic steroids. “Too often, our parents and coaches fail to recognize steroid usage that is going on right under their noses. The good news is that a properly trained eye can identify a steroid user and open the door to helping kids to avoid this terrible drug.”

Gordy Sheer, 1998 Olympic silver medalist in doubles luge said, “We all sacrifice, train and compete hard to win, but when athletes use steroids they sacrifice their honor, their bodies, their records and the spirit of fair competition.” He added, “My goal is to tell young athletes, future Olympians and their coaches to honor Olympic values, honor themselves, train smart and stay clean.”

The Office of the Albany County District Attorney has become a national leader in the fight to root out performance-enhancing substances from our communities. “Our focus is on destroying the distribution networks by identifying and punishing the people responsible for manufacturing and selling these substances,” commented District Attorney David Soares. “But I also want to make it very clear to coaches, parents and athletes that these drugs are both deadly and illegal, and if

caught abusing steroids or other performance-enhancing drugs, you won't just lose face, you'll lose your freedom."

"We are committed to the fight against performance-enhancing drugs in sport. We strongly support the type of educational effort that is being done in Lake Placid," said Chris Duplanty of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Carol Ash, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, which administers the Empire State Games, said: "Athletics are an important and healthy part of our children's lives. Hard work and determination are valuable assets for any athlete. However, we must also instill in young athletes a respect for their personal health and well-being. The drive to succeed in the present cannot blind athletes to the long-term dangers of steroid abuse. Coaches, athletes and parents must continue to work together to prevent steroid abuse and eradicate these dangerous drugs from sports."

Sandy Treadwell, President of the Lake Placid Regional Winter Sports Commission said, "We see the headlines everyday – now it's time for action. That's the reason why we are sponsoring this program."

"The legacy of Lake Placid has always been synonymous with pure sport," said ORDA President/CEO Ted Blazer. "We are proud that our facilities can be used in this manner to bring about awareness to athletes, coaches, parents and interested individuals."