

U.S. Olympic Hopefuls Receive The Support And 'Drive' Needed To Compete In Games

(NAPSA)—The sacrifices that Olympic hopefuls make to live out their dream go far beyond training. Of these sacrifices, none may have a greater impact on their quest of Olympic gold than the financial burden that confronts many U.S. athletes.

Unlike what happens in other countries, U.S. Olympic athletes must front most of the financial burden themselves while training for the Games.

While some athletes and families are able to handle this load, others are faced with the reality of paying bills, financing their training and traveling to and from competitions. Without the support of outside resources, many U.S. Olympic hopefuls would not be able to compete on the same playing field as some athletes here and abroad.

Increasingly, athletes in need of assistance have turned to the corporate community seeking their support. Many athletes have come to rely on these corporate programs and sponsorships to maintain a living, as well as a competitive edge. One such program that was designed to help athletes and their families alleviate some of those financial burdens, as well as provide them with a reliable source of transportation, is Chevrolet *The Team Behind The Team*.

This vehicle donation program has provided 40 Olympic hopefuls nationwide with one of four new Chevrolet vehicles. Since late June, aspiring American athletes have been receiving vehicles from Chevrolet *The Team Behind The Team* through Chevrolet's network of 4,300 dealerships nationwide.

The first athletes to receive vehicles were brothers Joe, a bobsledder, and Brian McDonald, a skeleton slider, from Kingston, N.Y. Earlier this summer, the McDonalds were surprised on national television when speed skating great Bonnie Blair presented the siblings with a Chevrolet Tahoe and Silverado, respectively, as part



U.S. Snowboard team member Anton Pogue shows off his new Chevrolet Silverado as part of the Chevrolet *The Team Behind The Team* program.

of the program.

"Being the driver of my bobsled team, I am responsible for all the travel and accommodations of my teammates," Joe McDonald said. "Receiving this vehicle has taken a great burden off my shoulders. Now I have a reliable source of transportation for my team. It's great to know that there are people out there who believe in me."

Joe McDonald is not alone in his appreciation. Other athletes selected as part of *The Team Behind The Team*, like luger and Florida native Chris Thorpe, echo his sentiment.

"My wife and I recently had our first child and needed a reliable vehicle," Thorpe said. "Receiving a new Chevy Silverado has helped us out tremendously. Now I can concentrate on training instead of how to pay for a new vehicle."

Selected athletes were put behind the wheel of one of four new Chevrolet vehicles they can depend on to meet their daily transportation needs: A Tahoe, Silverado, Venture or Malibu. Vehicle assignments are based on athlete training and transportation needs.

An Advisory Panel comprised of some of America's greatest U.S. Olympians ranked and selected the Chevrolet *The Team Behind The Team* athletes for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

Representing this year's Advi-

sory Panel are the following Olympic gold medalists: speed skaters Bonnie Blair and Dan Jansen; figure skaters Peggy Fleming and Kristi Yamaguchi; skier Phil Mahre and track and field athlete Evelyn Ashford.

U.S. Olympic Team hopefuls who were considered for one of the 40 Chevrolet vehicles submitted a detailed application consisting of financial information, competitive history and placements, and a short essay describing why they should be selected.

Selection was based on financial need, training and competition requirements and qualification as a U.S. Olympic team hopeful. Rankings were then tabulated to determine the recipients of the vehicles.

Chevrolet, which is General Motors' lead division for the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games, has a long history of supporting the spirit of the Olympic Games through partnerships with many National Governing Bodies of Sport, including the U.S. Ski and Snowboarding Association, U.S. Figure Skating Association and USA Hockey.

These partnerships, along with *The Team Behind The Team* program and Chevrolet's role as a presenting sponsor of the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Torch Relay, elevate Chevrolet's commitment to providing transportation solutions for the Olympic Games.

The Team Behind The Team program was first established in 1999 when it donated vehicles to 100 U.S. Olympic hopefuls who aspired to make the team for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. For more information, visit www.gm.com.

Chevrolet is the largest division of General Motors, which is the official domestic automotive sponsor of the U.S. Olympic Team through 2004. Headquartered in Detroit, Chevrolet fulfills the transportation needs of more than 36 million Americans daily with a broad lineup of cars, trucks and vans.