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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



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EI POMAR YOUTH SPORTS PARK TO CELEBRATE 10th ANNIVERSARY AND COLORADO SPRINGS LITTLE LEAGUE'S OPENING DAY

Colorado Springs, Colo. – Colorado Springs Youth Sports, Inc. (CSYS) will celebrate its 10th anniversary and Little League's Opening Day at **El Pomar Youth Sports Park at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 10, 2010 on Field 6.**

Opening day festivities will include:

- Welcome to the Park
- Introduction of Colorado Springs Little League teams
- Little League Pledge and National Anthem
- Presentation of Little Leagues' Bob Novak Volunteer Award
- Presentation of Little Leagues' First Annual Ray Weber Sportsmanship Award
- Ceremonial first pitch
- Little League baseball, soccer and lacrosse games will be played from 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- El Pomar Youth Sports Park Informational Open House, Photo Exhibit, and Meet local youth sports league organizers
- The park will be accepting donations of used sports equipment. Partnering with Let the Kids Play, a Colorado Springs based 501 (c)(3) non-profit, all donated gear will be distributed to underprivileged youth. Those providing donations will be appreciated with a Batting Cages punch card.
- Batting Cages will be open; free punch cards available to kids
- Concession Stands will be open
- Appreciation of local neighboring businesses and park sponsors

The park is located southeast of I-25 and Circle Dr. To attend the event, take Janitell Rd. south off of Circle Dr., and then go left on Executive Circle. Executive Circle curves to the right near the main entrance to the park.

Over the course of the Sports Park's ten-year existence, area youth have benefited from the positive effects of youth sports through more than 1 million playing experiences on the fields. The operations of the Park have achieved the vision of the founding partners, which include the City of Colorado Springs, El Pomar Foundation, Gates Land Company, Gates Family Foundation, Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado Rockies Baseball Club and Foundation, and Colorado Springs Little League.

A trip down memory lane, introduces us to Trevor Thomas a local youth who played baseball on the El Pomar Youth Sports Park fields in 2000 when the park first opened. As a kid, Trevor also participated in youth football and basketball programs and became a high school running back who earned a list of accolades including four-year lettermen, team captain, three-year starter, and was named to All Area teams.

Now, a 19-year-old freshman mathematical economics major at Colorado College, Trevor continues to remain connected to the park. He also draws on the lessons he learned in youth sports programs.

"El Pomar Youth Sports Park and youth sports in general have shaped me into who I am today. I cannot imagine where I would be if it wasn't for the El Pomar Youth Sports Park and the opportunities it provided me," said Thomas as he reminisced.

Thomas' passion for the park is undeniable. In 2009 he joined the staff as park intern, allowing him to combine his love of sports and his interest in business. He strongly believes the responsibility, accountability, work ethic, and respect for himself that he learned through youth sports will serve him well as he pursues his career goal of one day becoming a corporate executive.

As the Park celebrates its 10th Anniversary, we visited Shelby Williamson's rise as a college athlete. Williamson is a scholarship athlete for the Division I women's soccer program at the University of Kansas. She started playing soccer at age eight and played eight seasons with the PRIDE Predators under Coach Gary Evans. As a high school student at Air Academy she excelled on and off the field, as a National Honor Society student and as a member of four All-Academic teams.

"Nothing that's worth having in life ever comes easy. I think youth sports are important for kids because they give kids an opportunity to find something they are passionate about, love doing, and ultimately have fun doing as well," described Williamson. "Kids learn at an early age that you do need to work hard for the things you want but that you should also love doing it."

These stories and many more can be told from youth athletes, coaches and parents who have felt the positive effects of youth sports programs. On Saturday, El Pomar Youth Sports Park will celebrate these and the countless stories that make up youth sports in the Pikes Peak Region.

“Colorado Springs Youth Sports, Inc. is proud to have operated the El Pomar Youth Sports Park for the benefit of the community over the past ten years,” said CSYS Board President Steve Czarnecki. “We greatly appreciate the founding partners of the Park, City of Colorado Springs, sport league operators, and dedicated parents who have worked to improve the lives of area youth through sports participation.”

About Colorado Springs Little League (CSLL)

Little League Baseball has been a part of Colorado Springs for more than 35 years. CSLL is a nonprofit organization serving more than 400 youth in Colorado Springs (south of Garden of the Gods Road/Austin Bluffs Blvd/Stetson Hills Blvd.) by providing a quality youth baseball program that focuses on teaching the skills of America's pastime and also helping the young people of our community learn to work together as a team, develop individual leadership skills and increase their self confidence. CSLL is staffed entirely by volunteers who are dedicated to creating the best quality program possible for the children.

For more information about Colorado Springs Little League visit www.coloradospringslittleleague.com.

About Colorado Springs Youth Sports, Inc.

Colorado Springs Youth Sports, Inc. (CSYS) is a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization that provides opportunities and facilities for youth in sport and recreation through the management of the El Pomar Youth Sports Park. Built through a unique public/private/non-profit partnership and maintained by the City of Colorado Springs, the Park opened for play on June 20, 2000. Annually, more than 100,000 youth sport opportunities, including baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, and football, are played on the Park's 18 playing fields spread over 58 acres. Other amenities include an outdoor in-line hockey rink and a seven-station batting cage. The Park serves as a major trailhead to the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail.

Summer “Show-Me” camps have introduced more than 1,000 underserved youth to sports and fitness opportunities since 2001. CSYS also assists in providing athletic league scholarships for low-income youth and donates field use for physically and mentally disabled youth to participate in league sports.

El Pomar Youth Sports Park is home to Colorado Springs Little League, West El Paso Baseball, and Cheyenne Mountain Lacrosse. The park is also a major provider of playing fields for PRIDE Soccer, Rush Pikes Peak Soccer, Corinthians Soccer, Colorado Spring Athletic League, and several high school sports teams.

A variety of sponsorship and tax-deductible donation opportunities for individuals, corporations and foundations exist. For more information about Colorado Springs Youth Sports, Inc. and the El Pomar Youth Sports Park visit www.csyouthsports.org.