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GAY GAMES VII BIDS FAREWELL TO CHICAGO

*The Federation of Gay Games Urges Individuals to Continue
Participating and Training in Their Sport*

(Chicago – 25 July) Gay Games VII came to an end for nearly 11,000 participants at Wrigley Field in Chicago on Saturday, with officials of the Federation of Gay Games congratulating local organizers and looking toward Cologne, site of Gay Games VIII in 2010.

“Chicago truly welcomed the Gay Games and its participants,” said Roberto Mantaci, Co-President of the Federation of Gay Games. “We had tremendous support from the city, sponsors and volunteers as well as the board and staff of Chicago Games, Inc. Participants enjoyed the overall experience of the competitions and performances, as well as spending time in this beautiful and vibrant city.”

With nearly 11,000 participants in 30 sports and several cultural disciplines, the Gay Games is an Olympic-sized event. However, with a budget of less than US\$10 million, coordinating the many venues and necessary personnel adds an extra challenge. Chicago stepped forward to host the Gay Games with only three years to prepare instead of the normal five, when the original host, Montreal, announced it would put on its own sporting event instead.

“The ticket sales and finances of the Gay Games are important, but they shouldn’t obscure the records broken and friendships that are forged at each Gay Games,” said Kathleen Webster, Federation of Gay Games Co-President. “In fact, changing the world through sport and culture does not happen once every four years. It happens every day through training on a local level, through volunteerism, and through support of city teams and international sports federations. Our mission now is to go home and talk about our experiences with our friends, co-workers and families because that is where we most make a difference.”

In four years, the Gay Games will be held in Cologne, a German sports capital with a prominent LGBT community. Gay Games VIII takes place July 31 to August 7, 2010. Cologne has already announced specific outreach plans to Eastern Europe, an area of the world prime for the LGBT movement to grow in size and momentum.

“The Gay Games message of ‘Participation, Inclusion and Personal Best’ spreads as the event moves around the world,” Mantaci said. “The warm feelings we all had at Chicago’s closing ceremony will inspire us over the next four years in our training for Gay Games VIII in Cologne.”

For more information about the Federation of Gay Games, go to www.gaygames.org. For information about Gay Games VIII in Cologne in 2010, go to www.games-cologne.com.

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The Federation of Gay Games is the international governing body that perpetuates the quadrennial Gay Games and promotes the event's founding principles of "Participation, Inclusion and Personal Best™." The Gay Games was first held in San Francisco in 1982 with subsequent events in San Francisco (1986), Vancouver (1990), New York (1994), Amsterdam (1998), Sydney (2002) and Chicago (2006).