



Quest Dispatch

Quest for the Best!



Volume 1, Issue 4

Monday, July 28, 2008

Respect Among the Ages

“Live Your Life and Forget Your Age.” – Norman Vincent Peale

Each athlete comes to the Games with a different goal in mind. Some come to win medals, some to beat a personal record. A lot want to renew friendships from past Games and create new ones. Many of the first-time athletes, like 21-year-old Aaron McMihelk, a Marine Corps veteran from San Diego and the youngest athlete this year, views the week as a learning experience and a chance to benefit from the sage advice of older athletes. “I think I’ll learn a lot,” McMihelk said. “When hanging around older people, you really learn what the world is about. Wisdom is a great thing.”



Doris Merrill from Nanticoke, Pa.

With that point of view, McMihelk is sure to find a friend in Doris Merrill, 84, a WWII Navy veteran from Nanticoke, Pa., and the oldest participant this week. “I love meeting the young veterans at the Games,” she said with a smile. “They seem to look up to the older athletes and they see they are not alone.”

To claim the oldest athlete title, Merrill beat out Russell Worth, another 84-year-old Navy veteran by a slim 34 days. Worth, from Brown Deer, Wis., does have the distinction of the being the oldest male at the Games, however, and has attended the annual event for 15 straight years. That’s one honor he has over Merrill, who is attending her ninth Games. Competition, it seems, is everywhere.



Russell Worth from Brown Deer, Wis.

Worth has witnessed many young people coming to the Games and sees the positive influence the older athletes have. “Everybody is competing as a team to the best of our abilities,” he said.

Merrill, who has taken her share of gold and silver medals, has some advice to pass along to the younger athletes. “Never quit. Never,” she says with staunch determination.

“When I’m down, I don’t quit – that’s what I pass on to others.”

That’s good advice for Mitchell Bocik, 22, from Lake Holcombe, Wis., also participating for the first time. Bocik,

an Army veteran injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom, is enthusiastic about the week. “It’s sports, and for pretty much anything that has to do with sports, I’m there right away,” he said.

McMihelk and Bocik are both competing in the slalom and looked forward to it with anticipation and an eye on learning not just a new sport but new ways to function in everyday life. “I picked the slalom because I knew it would be a challenge,” McMihelk said. “Just watching other people gives me some insight on how to do things. Plus, it sounded like wheelchair off-roading.”

“Old Age and Treachery Will Overcome Youth and Skill” – Greek Proverb

While it seems that neither side is ready to claim bragging rights over which age group is better, each alludes to possible victories. As Worth said, “I do think our bodies are starting to age and that may be a disadvantage.” As if holding a secret weapon he added, “I do work out on some equipment at home and try to stay in the best condition that I can.”

Bocik, who participated in high school athletics, is a little more up-front about his chances. “I’ve always been a natural at athletics,” he said with a tone of both confidence and humility. “I was really good at basketball, so that may give me an advantage.”

That confidence is strongly echoed by McMihelk. “I will get the gold medal in weightlifting,” he said.

“For me, it’s going to be my experience as a weightlifter (that gives him the edge). All my strength has come back to me since I’ve been working out again.”

Remember of course, that this is the National Veterans Wheelchair Games – and that means serious competition that will become fierce, make no mistake. After the goals are scored and the points are counted though, the formidable opponents under the guise of competition will once again return to being the closest of friends. As Merrill explains it, “No one is envious of another. We are happy for each other when another person wins, even if it’s us they win against. It’s because the Games are beautiful and it’s a privilege and honor to be part of them.” Well said, Doris.



Mitchell Bocik from Lake Holcombe, Wis.

Veteran Receives Grant to Attend Wheelchair Games

A nighttime motorcycle cruise along an Illinois road in 1997 ended abruptly and unexpectedly for Joseph Chitty. The accident resulted in several injuries, the worst to Chitty's back.

"I broke my hand in three places, crushed my T4 and T7 vertebrae and fractured my C5 and C6 vertebrae," Chitty said.



Joseph Chitty from Tucson, Ariz.

If there could be a good side to this story, it's that Chitty later discovered the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. This year marks his sixth attendance at the event and he's been fortunate enough to receive financial assistance for the 2008 Games; Chitty is the recipient of the Colorado 500 Motorcycle Club Grant, a \$2,000

award given to a deserving veteran who was injured in a motorcycle accident, or was, or is a member of a motorcycle club.

According to Janet Lohman, the club's vice president, the applicant must display enthusiasm that is contagious to others, and also have a proven record of positive therapeutic performance in sports and the rehabilitation process. Chitty is the second athlete to be awarded this special grant.

Chitty, 60, who lives in Tucson, Ariz., had no problem meeting the award criteria. He volunteers weekly at the spinal cord injury center at his local VA medical facility, and has participated in several successful fundraising events for PVA's Arizona Chapter to help fellow veterans attend the Games. Although a motorcycle accident left him in a wheelchair, Joseph Chitty has no qualms about riding again. "My neighbor offered to take me in a modified sidecar if I buy one, but I haven't done that...yet," he said.

For more information about this grant, check out next year's registration packet for the 2009 Games. The deadline for applying is April.

Kids Day 2008 is a Big Hit!

Sunday was another toasty day in Nebraska, but the children with disabilities who lined up to participate in the wheelchair events at Kids Day hardly noticed. They learned about slalom, t-ball and archery from NVWG athletes chosen to mentor the children.

Kids Day began seven years ago at the NVWG held in New York City, as a way to reach out to the community hosting the Games and to provide an incentive to children with disabilities who are interested in wheelchair sports. Each year since its inception, Kids Day has proven to be a popular and motivational experience for the children, as well as the athlete mentors chosen to participate. This year was no exception, with nearly twenty local children enjoying the activities.

Rachel, 13, spent Saturday volunteering her time to serve the veterans at the Games. On Sunday, they returned to favor. Rachel, the youngest of four children, was cheered on by her parents, Tim and Kelly.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for Rachel to get out and be with other kids like herself," said Kelly. "She's met a lot of the athletes and is having a ball."



Maggie shows her skill at t-ball at Kids Day.

And this year, Kids Day has once again come full circle, bringing joy and inspiration to all who participate.

American Idol Finalist Visits the Games

Season Six American Idol finalist Phil Stacey will be joining us on Tuesday. Stacey will announce the Super G slalom event at 8:30 a.m., and perform during half-time of the basketball championship game (at around 3:45 p.m.) If time permits, he will perform at half-time of the power soccer finals as well.

A veteran himself, Stacey joined the Navy shortly after September 11, 2001. "I wanted to support the effort against terror," he says. "I was always proud of my dad, who was a veteran and fought in Vietnam."

While stationed in Jacksonville, Fla., as lead singer of the Navy band Southeast, Stacey drew on his extensive musical repertoire and performed music by a wide variety of artists, from Garth Brooks and George Strait, to Stevie Wonder and Neil Young. His true musical calling,

though, is country. In the fall of 2007, Stacey's defining moment on American Idol came during Country Week, well into the competition. His knockout performance impressed even the normally critical Simon Cowell, who acknowledged that the Kentucky-born singer had at last displayed his true identity in convincing style.

"...I was proud during Idol to represent the Navy and just kind of be a unifying factor for Americans," he says. "I feel my job as a singer is part of my job as a human being. I'm supposed to be touching other people's lives, doing the best I can to be a positive force in the world."

Come early to the Closing Ceremonies tomorrow evening as Navy veteran (and now Navy reservist) Phil Stacey entertains everyone entering the arena for the evening's events.



Monday Night at the Social Hall.... Memories of a Great Generation

Take a step back in time at a special event called “Monday Night at the Social Hall: Memories of a Great Generation” this evening from 7 to 10 p.m. in Hall A of the Qwest Center Omaha.

Relax and enjoy the camaraderie with your fellow athletes and celebrate how the American spirit (and British fortitude) enable us to overcome any challenge.



The evening includes entertainment by The Avi8ors Ensemble, a popular Omaha-based musical group, that performs the music of the 1940s in the style of a USO show. The ensemble performs in authentic World War II uniforms, and remains as true to the period as possible. Since 1999, they have performed for audiences all over the United States, and were ultimately honored by performing for the World War II Memorial dedication in Washington, D.C.



The Avi8ors Ensemble perform 1940s music

Desserts and refreshments from the era will be served. In keeping in the spirit of the theme, we encourage you to wear your old military uniforms (from whatever the era) and enjoy the fun.



You’ve met and competed against your fellow athletes on the playing field. Now, come out and celebrate your success and meet some new friends this evening.

Diet and Exercise: That’s a Team!

Your drill sergeant might not have used the same sayings your mom did. How about “You are What you Eat?” Or, “Food Makes the Man?” Some old adages remain true to this day. Eating a balanced diet rich in various, wholesome and non-processed foods will make you feel better and improve performance in your favorite sports.



A balanced diet, along with regular exercise, go hand in hand with achieving a healthy lifestyle. The new food pyramid recommended by the

Department of Agriculture is also endorsed by VA registered dieticians. New recommendations add an important piece to the six food categories – physical activity.

These new recommendations are an improvement from the old food pyramid’s four food groups, which had no integration of physical activity. The take-home message for a winning team of diet and nutrition are to make smart choices from every food group. Complex carbohydrates, like whole grains and high fiber fruits, are better than potato chips and donuts! The choices you make from each food group also help you get the most nutrition out of your calories.

It’s also important to find your balance between food and physical activity. Keep a journal, or go on-line with MyHealthVet to track what you are eating and how much you are exercising.

Here are some nutrition tips for before, during and after a strenuous event:

Before: Load up on carbohydrates the night before. There’s a reason why pre-event spaghetti dinners are popular!

This is also an important time to begin hydrating your body with water. Avoid drinking too much alcohol. Hot or cold cereals, bagels, fruit and yogurt are smart choices for the morning as they are high in complex carbs and have many vitamins and minerals that will fuel your body throughout the day. Enjoy a tall glass of cool, clear water.

During: No food consumption unless exercising for more than an hour. In that case simple sugars like fruit or energy bars and gels should do it. However, diabetic athletes have an exception. Exercise should stop with any low or high glucose reading – address the blood sugar issue immediately.

After: To help your muscles recover from a workout, eat foods rich in proteins and more complex carbohydrates (whole grain foods and high fiber fruit) within two hours. This helps replace the glycogen stores that are used up during exercising. This is also a very important time to hydrate. Remember that tall glass of water you had this morning? This is a great time to enjoy another right now – in fact, drink several throughout the day.

As momma always said, “The way to an athlete’s heart is through the stomach!” (Or something to that effect!)

Today's Clinical Corner



Volunteers Make a Difference

They have arrived in numbers never before seen at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games; they wear t-shirts and attend the events; they spend the day opening doors, stopping traffic for athletes crossing busy intersections, offering towels and water to parched participants, cheering and supporting, and so much more. Their mission: to serve. Who are these people, 3,900 strong as of Saturday morning, who make our Wheelchair Games the best and biggest in the world? Volunteers.

“I’m thoroughly enjoying it,” says Kathy Howard from Bellevue, Neb. “It’s great to see such a turnout of people here to help and I’m surprised at the number of athletes at the Games.” Howard works for Games sponsor TriWest Healthcare, but is volunteering because she wants to give back to the veterans. Her husband is on active duty with the Air Force. She is accompanied by her daughter Stephanie; this is their first Games experience.

According to Marty Naugher, a voluntary service specialist at VA Central Office, the response from the public has been tremendous. “We’ve had 51 people just walk-in off the street wanting to help.” He believes the current conflicts have a lot to do with the increasing number of volunteers. “People want to be involved; they want to help and this is something they can do.”



Kathy Howard and her daughter, Stephanie, from Bellevue, Neb., are volunteering at the Games this week.

“They want to know that what they are doing is meaningful.”

For Christina Shipp, 12, from Virginia, the Wheelchair Games are a family affair. Her dad, Chris Shipp, is the local organizing committee co-chair. Young Shipp flew to Omaha with her brother for the summer to visit family and was recruited to help at the Games. Her tasks have varied from giving water to athletes arriving at the airport to handing out t-shirts to fellow volunteers.

No matter the job, people are ready to get involved. And the heat hasn’t deterred volunteers from serving. At the handcycling event Saturday morning, volunteers lined 10th Street, cheering, offering towels and water to incoming athletes, and assisting with traffic flow. Omaha resident Karen Schrader was waiting past the finish line, armed and ready with mini bottles of water and fresh towels.

“Do you want to drink this or should I pour it down your back?” she asked Harold Taylor from Aurora, Colo., as he came to a stop after



Harold Taylor from Aurora, Colo., is offered a towel following competition on Saturday by volunteer Karen Schrader from Omaha.

Ulani Levy has plenty of experience working with veterans and volunteers. As a specialist intern with VA Voluntary Service in San Antonio, Texas, she participates in special events as well as day-to-day activities. Part of her job is to recruit volunteers. “The key to helping volunteers feel successful is being able to match them up with a person or a job that is in tune with what they want to do,” she says.

competing. As it turns out, Taylor was happy with a towel for his back and water for his thirst.

Schrader’s brother is a veteran and her son-in-law is a Purple Heart veteran. Her son’s best friend, who is considered an honorary family member, is a fallen soldier. “I cannot thank our veterans enough,” she says. “We ask them to defend and protect us; we have to be there when they come back. This is a way to show our support.”

Volunteers, you’ve proven your dedication and support for our nation’s veterans through your service at the Games. You make a difference!



Ulani Levy from San Antonio, Texas, and David Fusco from Lincoln, Neb., volunteer in the Media Center during the week of the Games.

Quest for the Best!

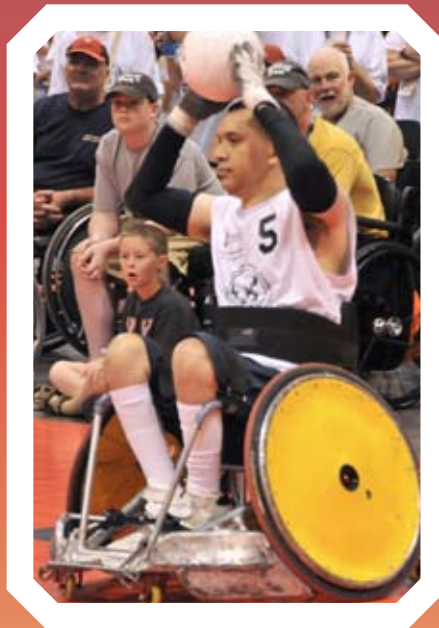
Michael Marten from Fareham, Hampshire in Great Britain, concentrates on the ball during his table tennis match.



Michael Thomas from Milwaukee, Wis., shows his skill in the manual chair slalom.



Johnny Cain from Lake Tapps, Wash., shows how it is done during his softball game.



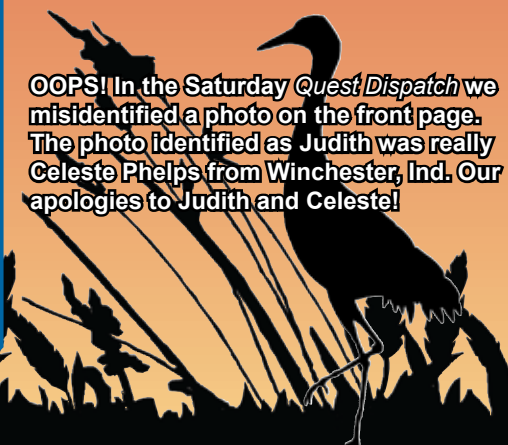
Gary Mokuau from Reno, Nev., starts a play in quad rugby.



Judith Ruiz from Chicago, Ill., competes in archery on Saturday.



OOPS! In the Saturday *Quest Dispatch* we misidentified a photo on the front page. The photo identified as Judith was really Celeste Phelps from Winchester, Ind. Our apologies to Judith and Celeste!



Charles Allen from Cedar Hill, Texas, coordinates a play in basketball on Saturday night.



If you're reading this at breakfast, it's probably not too late to drop off your nomination for the 2008 Spirit of the Games award. Hustle yourself over to the ballot boxes, located at the main hospitality desk and in Exhibit Hall A so you can drop off your ballot first thing this morning. We want your voice to be heard when we select this year's award recipient!



Departure Information

Luggage for the early flights on Wednesday July 30 will be transported Tuesday evening, July 29, from 5-8 p.m. The rest of the luggage will be transported Wednesday morning between 8-11 a.m. The departure tags that you picked up at your hotel hospitality desk **MUST** be attached to your luggage or it cannot be delivered to the airport. There are specific luggage instructions for the five primary Games hotels – the Hilton, Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton Inn, Homewood Suites and Courtyard by Marriott. **Be sure you pick them up at any of the hospitality desks and read them carefully.**

Shuttles transporting veterans to the airport start running at 4 a.m. Wednesday until 12:30 a.m. on Thursday. Please be ready to depart from your hotel at least three hours before your flight time.

Have a safe trip home!



Time is running out! If you haven't already scheduled an appointment to make history come alive by telling your story for the Veterans History Project (VHP), please do it now. The interviews are taking place today from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.; and tomorrow from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. in Show Office B (near Exhibit Hall B) in the Qwest Center Omaha. Once your interview is completed, you will not only receive a copy of your interview on DVD but you will receive a VHP tote bag and a one-of-a-kind VHP Challenge coin. Preserve the experiences of you and veterans like you, for future generations, by being a part of this national initiative.



"True champions aren't always the ones that win, but those with the most guts."
~ Mia Hamm

Awards... Presentations



For sports events with a clear first, second and third place winner, medals will be awarded immediately after the competition at the venue where the competition took place. A photo of the medal presentations will be taken and available for pick-up at the medal presentation area in the Grand Hallway of the Qwest Center Omaha.

For events that require the results to be tabulated, medal presentations will be delayed. All delayed awards will be presented at the medal presentation area in the Grand Hallway of the Qwest Center Omaha at the following times:

Monday, July 28	9 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Tuesday, July 29	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Athlete quote...

"Even though I use a wheelchair, it's awesome to know that I can still have a life and have fun being an athlete. It's good to be alive!"

*Nathan Brookshire, Army
Renton, Wash.*

Just for Grins...



"Why can't the rest of you be true team players, like Wilson?"

The Beholder

A Games official woke up from anesthesia after having surgery, and saw his wife sitting by his side. His eyes fluttered open and he said, "You're beautiful!" Then he fell asleep again. His wife had never heard him say that so she decided to stay by his side for a while.

A few minutes later, his eyes fluttered open and he said, "You're cute!" She asked, "What happened to 'beautiful'?" He replied, "The drugs are wearing off." (By the way, she left then and took away his meds.)





Daily Bulletin Board

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) is located at the Hilton Hotel in St. Nicholas Ballroom, Hilton Garden Hotel in the Haze Room and at the Hampton Inn in Meeting Room A. DME Hours of Operation:

Monday, July 28	On Call (402) 205-6051
Tuesday, July 29	6 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Wednesday, July 30	6 a.m. - Noon

The Games **Wheelchair Repair Shop** is located at the Hilton Hotel in the Hill Room on the 2nd floor and is open from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. July 28 - 29. There will be a wheelchair repair presence at every venue and at departure time, all day on Wednesday, July 30. Phone number: (402) 205-6087



Hospitality - Friendly staff and volunteers at the 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games hospitality desks look forward to having you stop by for information about Omaha, and discovering all the things to do and see in the local area. Hospitality desks at the Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn hotels will be open as follows:

Monday July 28	Noon – 9:30 p.m.
Tuesday July 29	7 a.m. – 6 p.m. 9 p.m. - Midnight

The Hours for the hospitality desk at the Qwest Center Omaha are:

Monday, July 28	7 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Tuesday July 29	7a.m. – 6 p.m.



Transportation leaves from in front of the Qwest Center Omaha on 10th Street on a regular schedule to the event sites. Specifics for each event are below:

Monday July 28

For Bowling III at Mockingbird Lanes with 8 a.m. event start	Loading starts at 6:45 a.m.
For Bowling II at ThunderBowl with 8 a.m. event start	Loading starts at 6:45 a.m.
For Bowling IV with 1 p.m. event start	Loading starts at 11 a.m.
For Bowling I at ThunderBowl with 1 p.m. event start	Loading starts at 11 a.m.
For Swimming with 6:30 p.m. event start	Loading starts at 4 p.m.

A shuttle will run daily on a regular schedule from the Qwest Center Omaha to each of the Games hotels starting at 6:30 a.m. and ending at 10 p.m.

Our Chef's Selections for....



Monday, July 28, 2008

Meals

Daily meal services continue today and end with lunch on Tuesday, July 29 at the Qwest Center Omaha in Exhibit Hall A.

Exhibit Hall A is located on the first floor of the Qwest Center Omaha. Meals will be served cafeteria style, with hot and cold entrees as well as á la carte items such as salads, grilled sandwiches, and an assortment of desserts and beverages. Athletes and others receiving complimentary meals will use their meal voucher provided during registration. Family members and guests may pay cash for each meal, and will not be required to purchase a meal pass for the entire week.

You may also choose to use your meal voucher at the concession stands in the event areas of Halls A, B and C.

Hall A Meal Hours: Through Tuesday, July 29 (unless otherwise noted):

Breakfast:	6 – 9 a.m.
Lunch:	10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Dinner:	4 – 6:30 p.m. (Monday)

Concession Stands Hours: 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. Monday, July 28. Tuesday hours, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Breakfast

Main entrees: Scrambled eggs, breakfast potatoes; maple glazed breakfast sausages or bacon

A' la carte: Bacon, assorted cold cereals with 2 percent milk, fruit, croissants and egg sandwiches

Lunch

Main entree: Buttermilk fried chicken with rice pilaf or meat lasagna with garlic breadsticks; honey glazed carrots and dessert

A' la carte: Soup, sandwiches and entree salad

Dinner

Main entrees: Baked fish or carved pork loin; baked potatoes, California vegetable medley and dessert

A' la carte: Soup, sandwiches and entree salad



Weather

Isolated Thunder Storms
High 93
Low 73

Quest for the Best!

Daily Schedule for...

Monday, July 28		
8 a.m.	Bowling II	Thunderbowl
	Bowling III	Mockingbird Lanes
	Slalom, Motorized (Hand, Head/Mouth)	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall A
	Softball Games 5, 6	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
10 a.m.	Softball Games 7, 8	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
1 p.m.	Basketball Games 7, 8	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Bowling IA, IB, IC, Stick, Handleball	Thunderbowl
	Bowling IV	Mockingbird Lanes
3 p.m.	Basketball Games 9, 10	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Bowling Ramp	Thunderbowl
	Bowling Ramp	Mockingbird Lanes
6:30 p.m.	Swimming	University of Nebraska, Omaha
7 p.m.	Weightlifting	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
7 – 10 p.m.	Memories of a Great Generation	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall A



HP's iCafé (internet café) is located at the north end of the Qwest Center Omaha's grand hallway. It features computer stations and two plug-in ports for personal laptops. It is open 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, except for Tuesday July 29 when it

closes at 2 p.m. *Thank you, HP!*

There are two **WiFi** "hotspots" are available in the Qwest Center Omaha, one at the grand hallway south end and the other near the entrance to the concert hall. Take advantage of these opportunities to check your e-mail, send messages about your athletic achievements and log onto the Games' Web site for the latest information.

NVWG Web site

www.wheelchairgames.va.gov

Share with your friends and family back home as you *Quest for the Best*. Daily editions of the *Quest Dispatch* are located on the main

home page, and individual news releases and photos are located on the "Athlete Information" tab. Event results and other information will be updated through Tuesday morning.

The Internet Places the Games at Your Fingertips

The 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games is receiving unprecedented online coverage. National and local media outlets are uploading daily webcasts and streaming video of athletes and events. Highlights of the Games can be found at Fox news www.kptm.com, CBS news www.kmtv.com, ABC news www.ketv.com/sports/index.html, and the Omaha World Herald www.omaha.com. In addition, Xable.com, www.xable.com/sports/vawheelchairgames/main, the interactive



media network for the disability community, latest online

episode of the Xable.com Sports Show features Tampa Bay athletes as they prepare for the Games.



Did you lose something? Did you find something? Lost and Found is located in the

Games Command Center in Room 211 of the Qwest Center Omaha and is available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.



Medical suites are available at the **Hilton Hotel in Room 4034** and **Hilton Garden Inn in Room 214**. They will be open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday, July 26 and will close Wednesday, July 30 at 8 a.m. Medical assistance will be available at all times during the Games. (Look for people wearing light green shirts with white crosses.)



For those athletes staying at the Home-wood Suites, Court-yard by Marriott or the Hampton Inn, medical assistance will be available daily Midnight – 8 a.m. If an athlete has a medical emergency during this time, the hotel operator should be contacted. The operator will take the veteran's name and room number, and communicate with the physician or nurse on call. If medical assistance is needed at other times during his or her stay, the veteran should go to the medical suites located at the Hilton or Hilton Garden Inn hotels, or at the Qwest Center Omaha.

The medical suite at the **Qwest Center Omaha, in Show Office C**, will be open daily at 6 a.m. and will remain open until the last event in that location has ended.

In the case of a life-threatening emergency, please have the hotel operator call 911.

Only registered athletes or registered volunteers on duty may be treated by Games' medical staff. A list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available for family members who need medical assistance.