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**LOUISIANA ATHLETES COMPETE FOR GOLD
AT THE NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION'S
2008 U.S. TRANSPLANT GAMES**

July 11, 2008, New Orleans, LA - They haven't hit the court or track yet and already this group of athletes has performed death-defying feats. They all carry an inner trophy – a new organ that qualifies them for the dream team in the game of life. The National Kidney Foundation proudly hosts the 2008 U.S. Transplant Games in Pittsburgh, Pa on July 11 – 16, 2008.

The U.S. Transplant Games, an Olympic-style event for athletes who have received life-saving organ transplants of every type – kidney, liver, heart, lung, pancreas and bone marrow – will feature athletes from all 50 states competing for gold, silver and bronze medals in 12 different sports including: track and field, swimming, cycling and basketball.

Competing for Team Louisiana are Timothy Baudoin, Kaplan, LA, Britney Dugas, Metairie, LA, Tad Gaspard, Lockport, LA and Matt LaBauve, Baton Rouge, LA.

“The Games visually demonstrate the success of transplantation and call immediate attention to the dramatic national organ shortage, says Julie Gable, National Kidney Foundation of Louisiana’s Director of Program Services and Manager for Team Louisiana. “Nearly 100,000 Americans are currently on the national transplant wait list and 18 people die every day while waiting for a donation. In Louisiana alone, the waiting list numbers over 1,800.”

Since the Games' inception in 1990 when 1,000 people convened in Indianapolis, the event has experienced meteoric growth. The U.S. Transplant Games attracted 7,000 in 2004 in Minneapolis when the 50th anniversary of the first organ transplant was celebrated. For the 2008 Games, nearly 10,000 people including athletes, families, donor families and transplant professionals are expected to participate.

In addition to athletic competition, the five-day event, presented by the National Kidney Foundation and sponsored by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, will feature special ceremonies honoring living organ donors and families of deceased organ donors, plus special workshops for donor families and an educational program for professionals involved in transplantation.

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For more information on the U.S. Transplant Games call the NKF of Louisiana at (504) 861-4500 or visit www.transplantgames.org. To get more information on organ donation and sign up to be an organ donor visit the Legacy Donor Foundation's website at www.organawareness.org

The National Kidney Foundation is dedicated to preventing kidney and urinary tract diseases, improving the health and well being of individuals and families affected by these diseases, and increasing the availability of all organs for transplantation.

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation is focused on enhancing the quality of life for transplant recipients through the development and introduction of novel drugs and technologies.

Legacy Donor Foundation, a partner in Donate Life Louisiana is a 501c3 nonprofit organizations whose mission is to educate the public about the urgent need for people to become organ and tissue donors.

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