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## **RELEASE DATE: IMMEDIATE**

### **BIG BEAR SENDS OFF OLYMPIAN TO RUN FOR THE GOLD** *Hometown Hero Gets Moral Boost with Pep Rally and Special Community Campaign*

BIG BEAR LAKE, Calif./ July 17, 2008 – Local Big Bear resident Ryan Hall is favored to win a medal in the marathon event at the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China. On Monday, August 4, 2008 the community of Big Bear will congregate together for a ceremonial pep rally to honor Ryan Hall and send him off with an encouraging farewell to the Olympics.

The Ryan Hall Send Off event takes place Monday, August 4 at Big Bear Middle School football stadium, 41275 Big Bear Blvd. in Big Bear Lake. Gates open at 4:30 p.m. and the ceremony begins at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Hall is scheduled to do a lap around the race track, followed by a formal address to thank the attendees for their support in his quest for an Olympic medal. The organizers of the event expect more than 1,000 people in attendance.

“I’m just blown away from the amount of support the community has given me,” said Ryan Hall.

In addition to the pep rally send off event, the community of Big Bear has established a special campaign for Ryan Hall titled, “Move a Million Miles for Ryan Hall,” which is a community spirit initiative designed as a moral support booster for the Olympic medal hopeful. The goal of the campaign is to reach 1 million miles in honor of Hall by August 24, 2008 (the date of the Olympic Marathon). As of July 15 there were 2,610 participant signed up for the program, and 659,980 miles have been logged.

“I’m really thankful to have an advantage that no other competitor will have out there in Beijing,” added Hall. “I’m the only one that comes from a community that logs miles for its local athlete.”

The program is open to anyone who wants to be part of this historic occasion. One can participate by running, hiking, jogging, walking, mountain biking, or any other form of exercise that calculates mileage without using a motorized vehicle. The program is considered the first of its kind that pledges support by logging personal miles for an athlete. It also gives participants an opportunity to personally connect with Ryan Hall’s Olympic Dream.

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“Ryan serves as an excellent role model for the young people of our community, not only as an exceptional athlete but a man of amazing conviction, work ethic and integrity,” said Beth Gardner, director of The Lighthouse Project, Inc.

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*About Ryan Hall:*

*Ryan Hall is from Big Bear Lake, California. He graduated from Big Bear High School in 2001, where he was a standout long distance runner for the cross country and track teams. He won two state track titles and one national title in the mile. He learned at an early age that high altitude training in Big Bear gave him an advantage over competitors from off the mountain. In November 2007 Hall won the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in a record time 2:09:02. He is the fastest American born marathon runner in history. He is being hailed as America’s next great long distance running icon.*

*About The Lighthouse Project, Inc.:*

*The Lighthouse Project is a non-profit organization responsible for organizing the send-off event and sponsor of “Move a Million Miles for Ryan Hall” campaign. Its mission is to create a proactive culture shift in the community by leveraging its assets toward common goals and a child honoring spirit.*