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Southern California Athlete Holds “Hoedown” for Charity.

La Canada, CA – July 31, 2011 – She likes the things that most teenage girls like—Saturday Night Live and the Twilight Saga by Stephanie Meyer--- but this 18 year-old Southern California athlete also follows one thing that most of her friends don’t even know exists—the Afghanistan Water Polo team.

Sally Clarie Gilles, a former Crescenta Valley High School water polo player from La Crescenta, CA, wants to help these athletes she’s never met, who are from a place where she may never go, which is more than 7500 miles away from the pool where she used to swim. But Miss Gilles, now a sophomore at California Lutheran University, has decided to help the Afghanistan Water Polo team members by doing something very American—throwing a western “Hoedown for Charity”. It’s a line-dancing event on August 12th which will raise money to help these strangers reach their dream. That dream is to come to the United States in November 2011 to practice and compete with water polo teams throughout Southern California.

Land locked Afghanistan does not have the facilities necessary to train athletes in their own war-torn terrain as there are only an estimated 13 swimming pools in the entire country, none of which is regulation size or safe for swimming. The Afghanistan Water Polo team is made up of 11 members, ten men and one woman, who have all survived the ravages of war and have never travelled outside of their own provinces, let alone gotten on an airplane.

Miss Gilles chose AWP because her mom is a big supporter of the organization and Sally just wanted to help out. The ultimate goal of the Afghanistan Water Polo team is to qualify for the Olympics in 2016. That journey begins this November and with the help of supporters and fundraisers like Miss Gilles, AWP will be able to stay through February of 2012 and start the training they will need to compete on the world stage.

About Afghanistan Olympic Dream: Afghanistan Olympic Dream was established to develop and promote sport and peace in a country where sports take a distant place to the realities of war, and supports the Afghanistan National Water Polo team. Sanctioned by the Afghanistan National Olympic Committee, Afghanistan National Water Polo is dedicated to developing local, provincial and national team programs, while providing opportunities for the people of Afghanistan to learn, grow, and compete.

By providing Afghans with the opportunity to experience other nations and cultures, we provide them with hope that their country’s re-emergence into the international community is a step closer. Together, our efforts can help stabilize a volatile region of the world, bring hope to the nation, and promote “Peace through sport.”

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